

Report of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group:



Children's Services Engagement:

Engaging with representative, community, voluntary and faith groups and organisations in the development of Slough's services for children, young people and their families.

March 2025

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Foreword



Cllr Rana
Chair

In September 2024 the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee convened this Task and Finish Group launched at its 26 March meeting) to consider the engagement of community, faith and voluntary groups, supporting children, young people and their families, to inform the development of services by Slough Children First (SCF) and Slough Borough Council (SBC) Children's Services.

The task and finish group adopted the principle that community groups themselves should lead the development of the principles, policies and practices of engagement, with the support of SCF and SBC Children's Directorate. It undertook the role of catalyst to put in place the foundations for such work to begin.

The recommendations (Page 3) are operational in nature and, although they may be considered modest, I am confident, because of the results of the survey, that they are the right actions offering the best chance of success.

The ultimate outcome will be that SCF and SBC Children's Services officers engage in purposeful involvement with community voluntary and faith groups across the borough with the aim of improving outcomes for Slough's children and young people. It will complement the Children's Participation Strategy which relates to ensuring that children and young people's views are central to our work.

I would like to thank my colleagues Cllrs Matloob and Mohindra for their commitment and support and the officers who brought their professionalism and experience to the work of the task and finish group.

I am especially proud that officers in SCF and SBC Children's services have acted so quickly on our recommendations to implement our key proposal of a summit with the result that an event '**Knowing me,,, Knowing you...**' will take place on 25 February 2025.

I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the event and an update on progress in 2026.



Executive summary and recommendations

A Scrutiny Task and Finish group was convened in September 2024. This had been proposed initially by the CEX of SCF and Director of SBCs Children's Services and was originally planned to be carried out in the latter part of the 2023/24 municipal year. [CISC Meeting 26 March 2024](#).

Due to a number of unrelated incidents and delays it was deferred until the following municipal year and first convened on 3 September 2024

The Task and Finish Group chose, on this occasion, to act as a catalyst and create the conditions for achieving the outcomes in the terms of reference and made the 3 key recommendations set out in section 5 and summarised as:

Recommendation 1: That SCF and SBC Children's Services should invite community, voluntary and faith groups (offering support to children, young people and their families) to a summit style event¹ in early 2025.

Recommendation 2: That the key goals of this event as being to:

- A:** Build on information already available, establish the concept of the map of community, faith and voluntary organisations and their remit ideally noting: The nature of the support/or service they provide; any geographical boundaries of their 'operations'; the specific interests/activities of the children, young people and families they support; and/or any characteristic that defines their target demographic (e.g. faith, age, nationality, etc);
- B.** Agree aims for ongoing joint working to develop the principles, protocols and practice of engagement in the development of SCF and SBC services for children, young people and their families;
- C:** Establish an opportunity for sharing information at the event and agree a vehicle to continue information sharing going forward; and
- D:** Agree to an increased presence of [this] partnership working across social media and Websites and the practicalities of how this can be achieved.

Recommendation 3: That there should be 3 key activities for the Summit event:

- A.** A '**marketplace**' where those attending could learn more about the different services available to children and their families [and vice versa];
- B.** An **opportunity to discuss** how those attending would like to shape a framework that enables engagement through the lens of relevant communities to inform the improvement, design and delivery of children's services going forwards; and
- C.** A '**put yourself on the map**' activity during the event to establish the concept of and kick start a map of community, faith and voluntary organisations and their remit.

The online survey of relevant groups and organisations (Appendix G) suggested acceptance of the proposed goals and activities as well as a willingness to attend the event.

¹ Whilst the task group referred to a summit event, feedback suggested that networking was a term preferred by community groups.

1. Introduction

Effective overview and scrutiny provides constructive ‘critical friend’ challenge and ensures the voice of the public is heard. It should be led by objectivity and evidence by people who take responsibility for their role and drive improvement in public services.

This report sets out the work and conclusions of a task and finish group of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC) that was convened in September 2024. The Task Group met on 5 occasions, the final meeting taking place on 5 December 2024 to inform this draft report and recommendations before submission to CISC on 05 March 2024. If approved by CISC, the report and recommendations will be put before Cabinet 17 March.

1.1 Membership

Councillors:

Neel Rana (Chair);
Fiza Matloob; and
Subhash Mohindra.

Supported by:

Rebecca Curley:	Community Development Officer;
Michael Edley:	Governance and Scrutiny Officer;
Victoria Gibbs:	Early Help Partnership Lead, Early Help, SCF;
Fanny Jacob:	Head of Service MASH, Referral & Assessment
Alix Macfarlane:	Programme Director - Communications and Engagement Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement.
Tom Overend:	Strategy and Policy Lead, Strategy;
Adriana Lozano Santos:	Early Help Advisor
Ben Short:	Director of Operations, Slough Children First

1.2 Terms of Reference

The broad terms of reference of the Task and Finish Group were as defined by outcomes in the Scope of work (Appendix A.). These outcomes were approved by CISC at its meeting on 26 March 2024.

In summary, the remit for this task and finish group was simple and focused: To be a catalyst for action by putting in place the following key foundation 'stones' for the development of an engagement framework and network:

- a. A 'map' of Community and Faith groups, and their remit which can be built upon as information becomes available.
- b. A vehicle for shared information between SCF and SBC Children's Services and community and faith groups. (locking in existing regular 'touch points' between leaders in SCF, SBC and the community)
- c. An event bringing together staff in SCF and colleagues in Community and Faith groups to set aims for ongoing joint working.
- d. Increased presence of partnership working across social media and Websites

2. Background

Local authority best practice is defined across seven overlapping themes (Fig 1) that reflect what most local authorities already do or are striving to achieve. While these themes are all interdependent, strong governance, culture and leadership underpin effective partnerships and community engagement, service delivery and the use of resources. Continuous improvement is the outcome of all the themes working well together.

Figure 1. The seven best-value themes



As is the case for Slough (<https://www.slough.gov.uk/commissioners>), it is these themes that underpin the basis of the Minister's intervention in a failing council and inform the Commissioners' directions and subsequent assessments. The Council's relationship and interaction with residents/customers features in 3 of the 5 corporate priorities (see Fig 2 below).

Figure 2: The 5 Strategic Priorities as set out in the [Corporate Plan 2023](#).



Of particular relevance in the context of this task and finish group is 'Resident focused', characterised as:

- We will serve the people of Slough first and foremost: responding to their concerns, ensuring their views are heard and delivering on the issues that matter most to them.

'Participation, voice and influence' is a workstream in the Children's improvement programme and in the most recent Commissioners report (April 2024), the following assessment was set out:

"This is an area which has been significantly underdeveloped in both SEND and social care. There are now early signs of improvement but there is more to do. There is now a focused workstream which is building on developments in 2023 to significantly strengthen this work and this now needs to progress at pace."

One key deliverable of this workstream is the [Children and Young People's Participation Strategy](#) and this task and finish group's key outcome is to act as a catalyst to build a complimentary approach that engages community, faith and voluntary groups and organisations to represent the views of children, young people and their families through the lens of the communities to which they belong.

The work of the task and finish group also directly relates to the Slough Children's First priority:

- we will work in partnership with colleagues across the Council and all services that work with children, young people and their families. We believe that it is only together that we can make a difference. We value our relationship with the Community and Voluntary sector partners and Faith leaders who know their communities well.

Task and finish group members were also aware of the work of the Strategy directorate in developing council-wide guidelines on communications and engagement that will building on previous work in the shape of the [Slough community-engagement-toolkit 2015](#). Task group Members were also aware of learning from a previous (Jan - March 2024) task group [CISC task group report on resident engagement and building trust](#).

3. Approach

The Task and Finish Group's approach, in response to its terms of reference, was through a combination of: discussions with officers (Appendices B-E); a 'testing-the-water' survey (Appendix F) of organisations (community, voluntary, faith) that represent and/or offer support and or provide services to children and their families.

There were also proactive informal conversations with Slough CVS and the Slough Faith Partnership and Slough Faith Standing Together and a review of relevant guidance such as that from the LGA² and CfSG³; as well as officers' own experiences of interactions with residents, children, young people and their families.

There was agreement in the task and finish group that the foundation for achieving its goals would be a face-to-face event to bring both SCF and SBC services for children together with community, faith and voluntary groups (representing children, young people and their families) to share information and agree together the next steps in formalising an approach to future engagement and communication.

Task and finish group members were unanimous in the view that prior to an event, it was important to gauge whether such an approach would be welcomed by relevant groups or organisations. It was agreed that a simple online survey would be most appropriate and at the same time provide the starting point for mapping relevant organisations across Slough.

A survey (Appendix E) was launched online on Slough's Citizen Space on 8 November 2024 and closed on 4 December 2024. The survey was advertised through officer's contacts, through Slough CVS, and by members. The results of the survey and informal discussions with Slough CVS and faith groups would inform the task and finish group as to:

- a. The validity (or otherwise) of its proposals for a networking event; and
- b. The style, content and practical aspects of the proposed event .

4. Findings

Community and voluntary groups and organisations have the potential to provide a community perspective on pertinent issues as well as to facilitate direct or indirect access to children, young people and families that belong to one or a combination of communities based upon 3 key identifiers:

- Geographical Location – the **places they live or work** for example,
- having one or more **interest/s** shared with others
- or being linked/**associated** to others by a common characteristic.

² New Conversations: An LGA Guide to engagement (Feb 2017)

³ A. Aiken, 2022: How to write effective survey and research questions. CfGS

These groups offer the potential for more issue-relevant, targeted, bespoke engagement, as well as the source of advice on the most appropriate means by which to engage particular groups of people.

These community and voluntary groups may also act as a conduit for the two-way flow of information for consultation exercises and other forms of engagement. Where the advocacy of a group may secure more and better-quality responses than the SBC or SCF might achieve independently.

With this in mind, the task and finish group had designed and launched a survey, targeted at voluntary, faith and community groups and organisations offering support or providing services to children, young people and their families to establish their appetite for a networking event as the start of discussions about engagement and communications going forwards.

4.1. Responses to the Survey

The full responses are found in Appendix G. 24 responses were received from 22 organisations with 100% support for the proposal to hold a summit workshop that would provide both:

- i. A 'marketplace' where those attending could learn more about the different services available to children and their families [and vice versa]; and
- ii. Opportunities to discuss how those attending (as a group that can represent community perspectives on behalf of children, young people and their families) would like to shape an engagement framework that captures the views, voices, and experiences of children, young people and their families in relevant and meaningful ways to inform the improvement, design and delivery of children's services going forwards.

Whilst 22 organisational responses might be considered a fraction of the relevant groups and organisations operating in Slough, the variety of organisations (Appendix G,3) was encouraging. 23 of the 24 responding also indicated a desire to attend the summit a good indication that such an event would be viable.

These 22 organisations are also the starting point for one of the outcomes of the task and finish group set out in 2.1a: A 'map' of Community and Faith groups, and their remit, which can be built upon as information becomes available'.

Eight respondents also took the time to offer helpful additional suggestions, ideas and comments as invited in Q7. The information provided in Appendix G7 b, d, f and h informed planning for the event, responses G7, a, e and g provided useful context to their support for the event.

The response at G7c, whilst supporting the event proposals, raised a number of specific issues, which, although not directly relevant to the planning for the event, were serious and substantial. The organisation was contacted directly by a senior officer in Slough Children First in early January to discuss the matters raised.

4.2. Arrangements/requirements for the summit/networking event

SCF and SBC Children's services undertook operational responsibility for the event informed by the work of the task group.

The core activities of the event (as proposed in the survey) were agreed as:

- A. **A 'marketplace'** where those attending could learn more about the different services available to children and their families [and vice versa]; and
- B. **Opportunities to discuss** how those attending (as a group that can offer communities' perspectives on issues relevant to children, young people and their families) would like to shape an engagement framework that captures the views, voices, and experiences of communities in relevant and meaningful ways to inform the improvement, design and delivery of children's services going forwards.

The desired outcomes of the event (as determined in the Task Group scope) are:

- a. In an activity running through the event, **to establish the concept of the map** of community, faith and voluntary organisations and their remit ideally noting: the nature of the support/or service they provide; any geographical boundaries of their 'operations'; the specific interests/activities of the children, young people and families they support; and/or any characteristic that defines their target demographic (e.g. faith, age, nationality, etc). The 22 organisations that responded to the survey should be the starting point together with those attending the event being invited to 'put themselves on the map'. Figure 1 and Table 2 illustrate a working solution.
- b. **To set aims for ongoing joint working** (In activity ii of the summit,). The task group agreed that the ultimate goal would be a toolkit or charter for engagement similar to that adopted by [Slough Adult Social Care](#). Logic suggests that establishing a working group to develop this could be a key objective of activity ii at the summit, ideally agreeing working group members, terms of reference and first meeting date. This working group will need to establish its relationship with the child/young person-centred approach set out in the [Children and Young People's Participation Strategy](#)
- c. **To establish a vehicle for shared information:** Activity i, is in effect the first iteration of this, and a means by which information can continue to be shared moving forward should be considered. Comments from the survey Appendix F, 7b, g and h are relevant. This could be a discussion point in Activity ii, which should be framed by the resources available to implement and maintain. In the short term, it could be as simple as a WhatsApp group or MS Teams Team space for example.
- d. Discussions associated with b and c above should also address the 4th desired outcome of increased presence of [this] partnership working across social media and Websites.

Figure 1

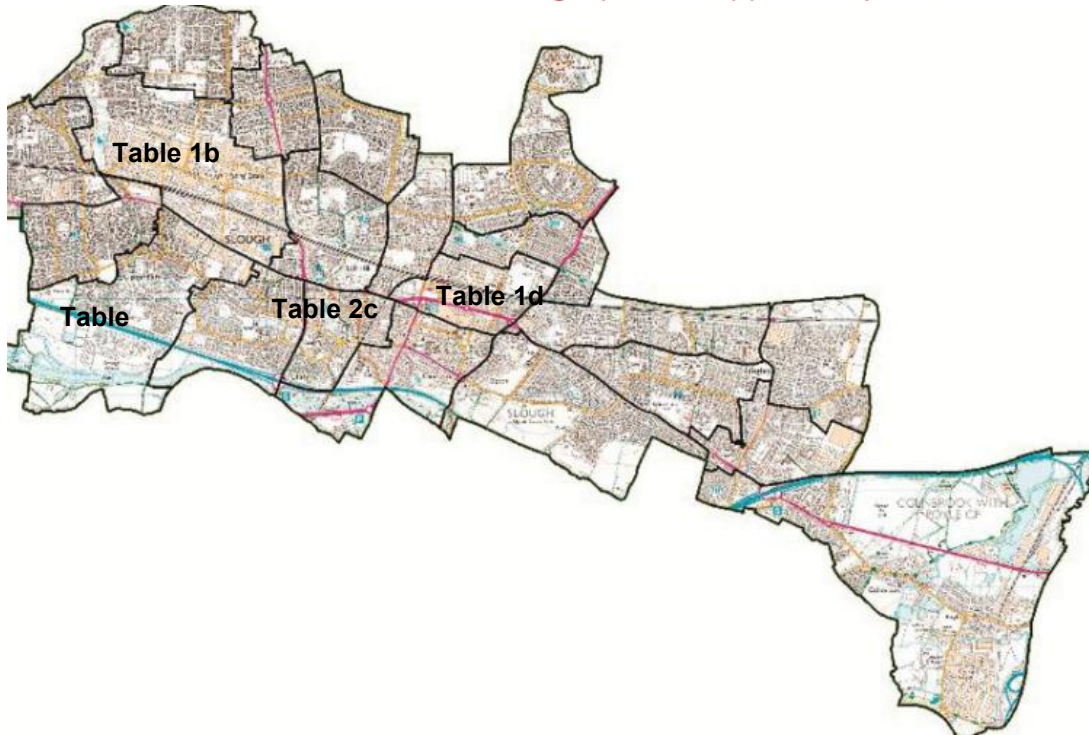


Table 1		Type of service/s.	Geographical scope.	Focus on interests.	Focus on associations.
Name and link of Org or Group					
a.	MHS	Mental Health	Slough		Learning disabilities
b.	CfBS	Support to new parents	Slough West		Pregnant mothers and partners
c.	FfAC	Coaching	Chalvey	football	Learning, physical and sensory disabilities
d.	ASCSC	After-school	Slough Central	Crafts	6-12 years

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This task and finish group was clear from its first meeting, that it would **not** follow the traditional scrutiny task group approach of conducting research and engaging with stakeholders and witnesses to develop a framework proposal for SCF and SBC's Children's services to consider. The proposal would have determined their engagement with and involve community, faith and voluntary groups in the development of services for children, young people and their families.

On this occasion, task and finish group members adopted the principle that the development of such engagement protocols and associated communications should be owned and led by the relevant community groups themselves in co-ordination with SCF and SBC Children's Services. The role of this task group was to act as a catalyst for action.

As a result, the recommendations are of an operational nature directed towards the CEX of SCF and Director of SBC Children's Services. It is important, however that the Cabinet and lead member for Children endorse these proposals and follow up on their delivery.

The task and finish group achieved its role of catalyst this by proposing an initial event that would bring together SCF and SBC services for children, young people and their families with community, faith and voluntary groups and organisations that provide support to the same in Slough. (**Recommendation 1**).

Recommendation 2 sets out the key goals of the event as being to:

- A:** Establish (based upon any existing information) the concept of the Engagement Map of community, faith and voluntary organisations and their remit ideally noting: The nature of the support/or service they provide; any geographical boundaries of their 'operations'; the specific interests/activities of the children, young people and families they support; and/or any characteristic that defines their target demographic (e.g. faith, age, nationality, etc);
- B.** Agree aims for ongoing joint working to develop the principles, protocols and practice of engagement in the development of SCF and SBC services for children, young people and their families; The final product could be in the form of a charter for engagement, a toolkit or a set of guidelines that SCF, SBC Childrens Services and the groups and organisations registered in A above, would follow going forward.
- C:** Establish an opportunity for sharing information at the event and agree a vehicle to continue information sharing going forward; and
- D:** Agree to an increased presence of [this] partnership working across social media and Websites and the practicalities of how this can be achieved.

The task group also proposed 3 key activities for the event (**Recommendation 3**):

- **A 'marketplace'** where those attending could learn more about the different services available to children and their families [and vice versa];
- **An opportunity to discuss** how those attending would like to shape a framework that enables engagement through the lens of relevant communities to inform the improvement, design and delivery of children's services going forwards; and
- A **'put yourself on the map'** activity during the event to establish the concept of and kick start a map of community, faith and voluntary organisations and their remit.

These recommendations were validated by an online survey of target community faith and voluntary groups and organisations indicating an acceptance of the proposed goals and activities as well as a willingness to attend the summit event.

The task and finish group is pleased to note that SCF and SBC Children's Services have acted on findings from the survey and the interim task and finish groups recommendations. The event: 'Knowing me....Knowing you' is planned for 25 February 2025 (Appendix H)

Following approval of this report by CISC:

- It will be presented to Cabinet on the 20 March 2025 by which time the CEX of SCF and Director of SBC Children's Service will be in a position to formally advise the Cabinet on its position with respect to the recommendations and provide an account of the event and an update on the next steps agreed by attendees at the event; and
- The SCF CEX may also wish to put the report before the SCF Board to seek its endorsement.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

SUMMARY: Developing Community Involvement between Slough Children First and Community and Faith Groups based in Slough		Last Updated: 7 September 2024	
Scrutiny Officer	Michael Edley	Task Group members	TBC
Project Leads	Fanny Jacob: Head of Referral and Assessment		
Strategic Leads	Ben Short: Director of Operations Sue Butcher: CEX of SCF, Executive Director of Children's Services	Other stakeholders	TBC

Desired Outcomes arising from scrutiny	Objectives	Outputs
<p>That staff in Slough Children First (SCF) have an increased knowledge and purposeful involvement with Community and Faith Groups across the borough working with children and families with the aim of improving outcomes for Slough's Children and Young People.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the Task and Finish Group will have implications for the work of the People (Children) directorate which provides educational support services including support for children with special educational needs and disabilities. (SEND). This will be assumed throughout the document.</p>	To establish an overview of SCF's involvement with Community and Faith groups across the Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'map' of Community and Faith groups, and their remit which can be built upon as information becomes available. (Faith groups are part of Early Help implementation group) • Shared information between SCF and community and faith groups. (there are regular 'touch points' between leaders in SCF, SBC and community) • An event bringing together staff in SCF and colleagues in Community and Faith groups to share the results of the Task and Finish group and set aims for ongoing joint working. • Increased presence of partnership working across social media and Websites
That Community and Faith groups have a wider understanding of the remit of Slough Children First and where joint working will add mutual value to each other's work and values.	To improve, where appropriate, working relationships and trust between these groups and SCF with the intention of gaining their trust and establishing joint working relationships.	
The engagement of Community and Faith groups where there is limited or no engagement at present and to improve involvement where there are already existing relationships	To identify Community and Faith Groups where there is currently no involvement with SCF and contact these groups to improve the overall involvement and support of children in need.	

In Scope	Out of Scope		Critical Success Factors	
Community and Faith groups based in Slough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and Faith groups that relate solely to adults Organisations based outside of the Borough (unless they have in-Borough remit) Schools National and regional organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active engagement by staff in SCF including the capacity to do so – ‘named community champions’ Willingness of Community and Faith groups to engage with SCF. Establishing trust between SCF and agencies/organisations involved in this exercise. Understanding of the different languages used by Community and Faith groups Ensuring that the work of this Task and Finish group keeps to its objectives and does not become unwieldy. Buy-in of SCF’s Company Board 		
Outcome (above)		Objectives	Outputs/milestones	BY ⁴
That staff in Slough Children First (SCF) have an increased knowledge and purposeful involvement with Community and Faith Groups across the borough working with children and families to support joint working with the aim of improving outcomes for Slough’s Children .		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish a baseline of current involvement To update the map and ensure that there is a system to update it on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A map of community and faith groups, and their remit, where there is already some involvement with SCF and their remit. A map that is updated at regular intervals to ensure it remains fit for purpose. 	April 2024 July 2024
That Community and Faith groups have a wider understanding of Slough Children First’s remit and where joint working will add mutual value to each other’s work.		Hosted networking event’ to provide an overview of the different type of work undertaken by SCF Faith and Community groups ‘market stalls’ open event to Children’s Services to increase community awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event held and forward planned to take place at agreed intervals 	July 2024
Increased presence of partnership working across social media and Websites		Shared communication opportunities to celebrate ‘good news’, resources and promote key events	Enhanced communication plan	July 24
Active engagement by relevant staff in SCF including the capacity to do so – ‘named community champions’		Named SCF staff or teams to act as key contacts or champions identified to keep ongoing awareness	Improved relationships Children and families benefit from staff who can support them to access their community	July 24

⁴ These delivery dates changed due to late convening of the task group

Appendix B Note of 1st meeting: 3 September 2024

CISC Task and Finish Group:

Children's services engagement with families and faith groups.

Attending:

Cllr Rana (Chair)	Victoria Gibbs
Cllr Matloob	Fanny Jacob
Cllr Mohindra	Tom Overend
Rebecca Curley	Alix Macfarlane
Michael Edley	Ben Short

After a brief round of introductions, the desired outcomes were discussed (see Appendix A).

Michael and Ben explained that the overall approach would be to work towards a Children and Families Engagement Summit consisting of:

- a market-place style component (bringing children's service providers (SBC and others) together with key religious and other groups that represent families and children); and
- an opportunity for groups representing families to shape a model for active two-way engagement with children's services going forwards.

Overall intended outcome: To connect and develop a framework for building and maintaining working relationships between children's services and groups that represent families and Children.

These ongoing relationships would support families from Slough's diverse family communities of place, interest and association to access advice, help, and services as well as enable children's services to seek guidance, advice and help so that their services met the needs of their service users and were fit for purpose.

It was noted that a corporate approach to engagement is being developed and it was acknowledged that the outcomes and recommendations of this task group must align with the corporate strategic approach as it took shape. Alix and Tom would be key to ensuring that this would be the case.

A provisional date for an event (as set out above) had been proposed in November. Becks Curley advised the task group that this coincided with inter faith week.

Initially it felt like the group may want to take a lead/integrate the summit event with inter-faith events being held that week. After some discussion, however, there was consensus that this would be 'too much too soon' and that the work of the group should focus on the identified task.

The November date also seems too soon to realistically co-produce a stall event with the various faith and other communities and we agreed that we should move this back to December or January to allow for some time to engage with them and plan something together.

Action: Establish and agree a date for the event.

Action: Michael to draft some questions to go out to the family representative communities to get an initial sense of whether they would be keen to engage in the event and how they think it could work.

This would enable us to co opt them into the group. This to be sent out in the next week with agreement of the chair and officers.

Action: Adriana will be asked to join the group from early help as she has some existing connections and will bring knowledge.

The next meeting will be in 3 weeks. Michael to add the date to diaries.

Appendix C: 22 September 2024: 2nd Meeting

Proposed outcomes from event

1. A 'map' of Community and Faith groups, and their remit which can be built upon as information becomes available. (Faith groups are part of Early Help implementation group) [what other groups are there like this, e.g. care council]
2. A vehicle for shared information between SCF and community and faith groups. (locking in existing regular 'touch points' between leaders in SCF, SBC and the community)
3. An event bringing together staff in SCF and colleagues in Community and Faith groups to share the results of the Task and Finish group and set aims for ongoing joint working.
4. Increased presence of partnership working across social media and Websites

Possible activities

Agenda

11:00 – 12:30 Market Place There are 10 SCF service areas

12:30 – 13:00 lunch

13:00 – Discussion session (to shape the terms of reference for and secure membership of a *Charter* Development task group)

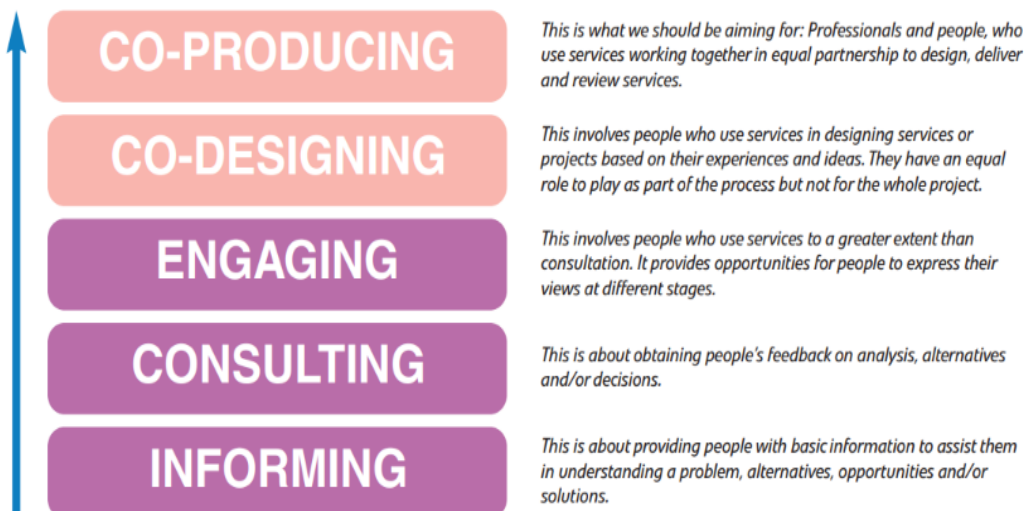
SBC knows it must better engage with its service users and their families.

Example of statement of commitment

We will undertake all of these engagement activities, but how will we decide which one, for what and when

What should this look like, The do's and don'ts

What is needed to make these work



Appendix D: Note of 3rd meeting: 23 October 2024

CISC Task and Finish Group:

Children's services engagement with families and faith groups.

Attending:

Apols:

Cllr Rana (Chair)	Becs Curley
Cllr Matloob	Alix Macfarlane
Cllr Mohindra	Tom Overend
Michael Edley	Fanny Jacob
Ben Short	
Victoria Gibbs	
Adriana Lozano Santos	

Issues discussed:

- Report to scrutiny will be delayed and MTE will ensure that this is changed in the scrutiny forward plan – this is to enable further traction and a useful report for scrutiny on the progress of the engagement between children's services and the faith and community sector.
- Sign-off of questionnaire. A number of people had commented and their comments have on the whole been included in final version.
- VG to test with some of her VC contacts as final screen
- MTE to prepare for launch of questionnaire
- MTE had had a first attempt to identify groups to target with limited success will ask Becs for her assistance.
- MTE will contact Kate P to identify other ways to advertise and any timing issues
- Other avenues would be CVS and through Members
- Duration of invitation – approx. 3 weeks

Pre-launch steps

- MTE to advise CLT prior to launch
- November meeting of Slough Faith Standing Together
- Officers have been identified (Donna Briggs and Shepherd Kombo from Children's Social Care (SCF))
- This will fall towards the end of the questionnaire consulting period but this event will support any later completion from faith sector,

Prep for event

- Ben will task officer team to begin the outline preparation for the event
- MTE can advise on content of day – suggest once team identified – MTE/Alix to join to support developing the content of the day.
- Some thought might be given to Next steps should responses show event **not** be supported.

MTE suggested [Engagement toolkit final.pdf](#) as something akin to what this task group might example as initial outcome following the summit.

Appendix E: Note of 5th meeting: 5 December 2024

CISC Task and Finish Group:

Children's services engagement with families and faith groups.

Attending:

Apols:

Cllr Rana (Chair)	Becs Curley
Cllr Matloob	Victoria Gibbs
Cllr Mohindra	Adriana Lozano Santos
Michael Edley	
Ben Short	

We will need to cover 4 key issues at this, our final meeting.

1. The results from the survey and resulting recommended next steps in response.
2. Discuss and recommend approach for the February 25 event - options for elements of the day and implications for venue etc (or vice versa).
3. the key outputs to be expected/drawn down from the day
4. recommended next steps driven by the outputs - in terms of activities in the short and medium term to deliver the outcomes of the task and finish group as set out in the scoping document.

These will form the key recommendations of the task and finish group and the deliverables in the report that goes to CISC for approval before going to cabinet in March and I assume SCF for their response.

Appendix F: The Survey Questionnaire.

ENGAGING WITH AND SHAPING SLOUGH'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Overview

Slough Borough Council's Children's services (including Slough Children First) would like to hear from you about how best we can work with local organisations, and community, faith and voluntary groups representing and supporting families and their children in Slough.

The council is proposing a one-day Summit meeting with two main aims:

1. To offer a space for community, voluntary and faith leaders, who support and/or represent Slough's many different communities of children, young people and their in Slough - families to meet officers delivering services for children and families to learn what each does and has to offer; and
2. To discuss the best way to involve representatives of the many and diverse communities in the design, improvement and development of services going forwards.

The Council would like to invite leaders, supporters and representatives of groups or organisations that represent families and children in Slough to a one-day summit where there would be:

- A 'marketplace' where you could learn more about the different services available to children and their families; and
- Opportunities to discuss how you (as a group that can represent the views of children and their families) would like to shape an engagement framework that captures the views, voices, and experiences of children, young people and their families in relevant and meaningful ways to inform the improvement, design and delivery of children's services going forwards.

As a first step, the council would like to ask you a few questions about what you think about the proposal for a one-day summit and how you think your community/faith group or voluntary organisation could represent the views of children and their families going forwards.

Why your views matter

The views and experiences of children and their families, especially of those who come into direct contact with the Council, must inform the improvement of our services and the design, development and roll out of new services delivering better outcomes for children, young people and families in Slough, which is a key corporate priority for Slough Borough Council.

We know that conversations about this have already started with some groups/communities, however, we need to broaden these discussions to fully reflect:

- Communities of place (e.g., children and families living in a particular ward);
- Communities that share an interest (e.g., young people playing a particular sport);
- The Community and Voluntary sector providing support and services to children, young people and their families; and/or
- Communities of association (e.g., children & families of a particular faith or children & families with a specific cultural identity).

Slough Borough Council, and Children's Services in particular, is therefore keen to hear from you if you provide support and services to or act as a representative, leader or advocates of children, young people and their families.

Introduction

We want to hear your thoughts as to how best we can communicate and actively engage with you, in your roles as support providers, community leaders, representatives and advocates. We want to understand how to begin the conversation in the short term and ultimately to ensure that the views and experiences of children and families can shape the services and support they receive in the future.

1. What is your name?

First/Given name *(Required)*

Family Name or Surname *(Required)*

2. What is your email address?

Your email address or the email address for your community/faith /voluntary group
(Required)

3. What is the name of the community, group or organisation you are representing?

Please provide the name of the community/faith/voluntary group you are representing
(Required)

4. Do you think a one-day Summit is a good idea?

The Council is planning a one-day summit event (early 2025) to bring together council staff involved in the design, development and delivery of services for children and families with representatives of groups/organisations/communities of children and families that receive these services.

The summit would offer:

- A space to meet and share general information about SBC's roles and responsibilities and the communities you serve, support and/or represent; and
- A place for discussion about how community, voluntary and faith groups can help secure the diverse views and experiences of children and families to shape the delivery of current services and the design of new ones.

Please select only one item (Required)

- Yes, this is a good idea in principle.
- No, this is not the best way to begin to shape the way we communicate and involve children and families in shaping the services they receive.

5. If you do not think that the proposed summit is a good idea, please explain why and/ or what you would prefer to see happen.

6. Would you be likely to attend such an event (or ensure your group, community or organisation was represented)?

Please select only one item (Required)

- Yes, I or a colleague would attend
- No, it is unlikely I would attend
- Unsure if I will attend

7. Is there anything you would like to add, suggest or any additional information you would like to provide.

Please attach a copy of any documents you wish to include to this printout.

if you would like to upload any information you think we will find useful, please do here.

Appendix G: Responses to Questionnaire: Engaging With And Shaping Slough's Children's Services

This report was created on Thursday 05 December 2024 at 08:30. There were a total of **24** responses to this survey as follows:

1: What is your name?

There were 24 responses to this question.

2: What is your email address?

There were 24 responses to this question.

3: What is the name of the community, group or organisation you are representing?

There were 23 responses to this question.

e. St John's Church	f. Antz Kidz Activity Centre Ltd
g. Life Charity	h. Charity/ Slough Refugee Support
i. Turning Point Slough	j. Get Berkshire Active
k. Slough Borough Council - Children's Centres and Family Hubs	l. Giving Hope Furniture Project
m. Slough-CVS	n. Slough CVS
o. Crossroads Care Slough	p. RBFRS
q. Number 22 Community Counselling Services	r. SBC
s. AP Sports Enterprise CIC	t. Slough Town FC Community CIC
u. Cippenham Baptist Church	v. Daisy's Dream
w. Buttons & Bubbles CIC	x. Get Berkshire Active
y. Art Classes Group	z. Afro-Caribbean Heritage Society
aa. The SPORTS Collective CIC	

4: Do you think a one-day Summit is a good idea?

There were 24 responses to this question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes, this is a good idea in principle	24	100.00%
No, this is not the best way to begin to shape the way we communicate and involve children and families in shaping the services they receive.	0	0.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

5: If you do not think that the proposed summit is a good idea, please explain why and/or what you would prefer to see happen.?

There were 0 responses to this part of the question:

6: Would you be likely to attend such an event (or ensure your group, community or organisation was represented)?

There were 24 responses to this question. 23 Y, 1 N

7: Is there anything you would like to add, suggest or any additional information you would like to provide.

There were 8 responses to this question:

- a. Attending this summit would be a fantastic opportunity for [REDACTED] to deepen our understanding of the challenges and opportunities within Slough's children's services, particularly in Britwell. It aligns directly with our goal of addressing inequalities and improving health outcomes by enabling us to build cross-sector partnerships, learn best practices in community engagement, and align our work with broader local strategies. This summit positions us to be a proactive and collaborative, ensuring that our efforts to increase physical activity are rooted in a comprehensive understanding of the needs and priorities of children, younger people and families in the community.
- b. Please ensure there is feedback provided for the group. Often we have events organised that do not provide feedback after the event (or sometimes takes months before being contacted and followed up). Thanks so much.
- c. "While the idea of a one-day summit is commendable in principle, it falls short of addressing the deep-rooted, systemic issues in how children's services are planned, delivered, and monitored in Slough. Past attempts to engage with community organisations have often felt performative, with little meaningful follow-up or tangible outcomes, leaving critical concerns unresolved. To avoid this summit becoming another tick-box exercise, it must prioritise fairness, transparency, and a long-term commitment to meaningful reform. Without these elements, the summit risks repeating the pattern of ""noting"" feedback without visible action, as seen in previous consultations. One example that illustrates this lack of accountability is when SBC staff indicated that it didn't matter if they provided practical support to young carers and their families—they "just needed to identify them." This sentiment reflects the performative nature of past initiatives and undermines trust in the process.

The challenges in Slough extend beyond funding shortfalls to include disparity in rates between providers, preferential treatment of connected organisations, and poor collaboration. Transparent allocation criteria must replace the current opaque processes that exclude capable providers like [REDACTED], despite our proven capacity and commitment to supporting families. Charities, when leveraged effectively, offer valuable resources to alleviate strain on the council while ensuring families receive essential support. [REDACTED] has subsidized statutory care for years, stepping in to fill gaps, yet our efforts have been undermined rather than supported.


Additionally, strong leadership is essential to the success of Slough's children's services, setting the tone for openness, fairness, and collaboration. By fostering trust among all stakeholders—families, service providers, and community organisations—leaders can ensure that diverse perspectives are valued, and that meaningful, lasting changes are implemented. This will create clarity, drives accountability, and unites everyone around the shared goal of improving outcomes for children and families.

This is an opportunity for Slough to build a system that reflects the strength and diversity of its community. By working inclusively with voluntary groups, charities, and service providers, the council can harness collective expertise and innovation to create fairer, more effective services. Together, we can create a future where all children and families feel supported and valued."

- d. Information on the type of communities your proposal is for.
- e. At [REDACTED] we both run and host activities for children and their families. We are currently in the process of developing what we do to create a hub for families in the community. We work closely with the organisations that use our site, [REDACTED], as well as having strong links with the local schools. We have recently attended a meeting with the [REDACTED] and have previously met with others from Children's services in Slough to see how we can be a spoke of the wider network, signposting and delivering support to families within the community.
- f. Be mindful of capacity of small organisations to attend a full day event. Recently attended the Bright Futures Marketplace and hardly anyone came in past 2pm but we were required to be there until 4.30pm.
- g. In terms of support, It would be better if council would have some direct line to communicate with those organisations who are dealing with children and young people. In order to keep up to date and share knowledge and experience with each other.
- h. "I think a blog or open online forum would be good where we could share contact details and services available.


In person is a good way to start but once the event is over its unlikely to keep contacts. A directory with the opportunity to advertise and share ideas would be great."


Appendix H: Poster for event



Knowing me... Knowing You...

Working with our communities for Slough children, young people and families

 **Tuesday 25 February, 2025**
9am - 2pm

 **Chalvey Community Hub,
Ladbrooke Road, Slough,
SL1 2SR**

Refreshments will be provided

Who should attend?

This event is aimed at faith organisations, and leaders and the Community Voluntary Sector supporting children and young people.

The event will enable:

- Learning opportunities** ◀
Learn about Slough Children First and Slough Borough Council services for children and young people
- Get to know** ◀
Meet our Children's Services Teams and have an opportunity to network
- Understanding** ◀
Develop a collective understanding of the needs of our children, young people and families, and our approaches to working together
- Collaboration** ◀
Identify opportunities to collaborate on the things that matter to children, young people and communities

Book at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/knowning-me-knowing-you-tickets-1217794198229>

