

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Slough Borough Council

Notes of the Joint Scrutiny Panel meeting in relation to East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service

19 October 2017, Maidenhead Town Hall

PRESENT:

Elected members:

Windsor and Maidenhead: Cllr Eileen Quick (Chairman)
Cllr Marion Mills (substitute for Cllr Ed Wilson).

Slough: Cllr Preston Brooker
Cllr Paul Kelly

Shared Management Committee representatives.

Windsor and Maidenhead: Lynne Lidster (substitute for Hilary Hall).

Slough: Johnny Kyriacou,

Officers: Philip Wright, Ketan Gandhi, Saira Minhas, Safia Mohamud.

APOLOGIES: Cllr Ed Wilson and Hilary Hall

Cllr Quick opened the meeting by inviting those present to introduce themselves and asked Philip Wright (Head of Learning and Community Services) to give a brief background to the meeting. Philip gave a brief summary of the historical context including the role of the shared management committee and that this was the first opportunity for representatives from the two scrutiny panels to come together to focus on the work of the East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service

The report "East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service, progress report since June 2016 Ofsted inspection", was previously circulated to the joint scrutiny panel members. The main focus of the report was to give an update on the progress made since the June 2016 inspection.

The panel raised a number of questions relating to a number of areas contained in the report.

Cllr Quick asked why there was such a small amount of money (17.5%) allocated to "classroom learning". The panel were informed that the term "Classroom Learning" related to ESOL and programmes leading to qualifications. The service delivers a wide range of programmes across both boroughs in a number of community venues. Responding to how much is delivered through the local colleges, it was explained that the service also sub contracts some of its delivery to East Berkshire College, delivered through both The Langley and Windsor sites as well as to smaller specialist voluntary sector groups, enabling a more targeted approach to groups of learners who have dyslexia or autism.

The panel were informed of the steps taken to recruit additional staff, and the more robust selection process that has been put into place including micro teaching and an on line maths and English tests. The panel were also informed of the steps to support the weaker tutors and how through performance management a number have not been re contracted.

Cllr Brooker raise a number of performance related questions around the classroom learning. The panel were informed that in response to the concern over attendance and retention rates, a new attendance policy has been put in place, and also at the enrolment stage, there is a conversation relating to the importance for learners attending all the classes.

Cllr Quick invited Johnny Kyriacou (chair of the shared management committee) to give his observations on the progress made. Johnny felt that officers had been proactive in putting a number of processes in place focusing on raising and monitoring the standard of teaching. The shared management committee scrutinises, challenges and supports the managers in their work. The need to translate interventions into results would now be a focus. Johnny also suggested that separate reports for both boroughs might be useful to panel members.

In relation to the service's focus, the panel were informed that the priorities for the service are those residents below level 2 with an additional focus of supporting residents into employment. The service complements and links to each of the borough's strategic priorities; in Windsor and Maidenhead, there is a particular focus on ethnic minorities, working closely with children centres.

Lynne Lidster gave feedback from Hilary Hall (Deputy Director Strategy and Commissioning) who felt that the management committee was much stronger, with an additional external non-voting professional co-opted member being appointed which has brought specialist sector knowledge to the group. The focus on the work with sessional tutors was also highlighted. Hilary also welcomed the formation of this joint panel.

The panel discussed the future and role of the group. Philip briefly shared the key judgements inspectors make:

- Overall effectiveness
- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Outcomes for learners.

The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) also states that: Inspectors should consider whether governors or those in a similar role:

- Know the provider and understand its strengths and weaknesses.
- Support and strengthen the provider's leadership and contribute to shaping its strategic direction.
- Provide challenge and hold senior leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of learning and the effectiveness of performance management systems.

The panel felt that the meeting was valuable and enabled members to focus on the work , the point was made that at scrutiny panel meetings, the Community Learning and Skills report is one of a number being discussed, and therefore time for discussion can be limited. It was felt that it was important to maintain the links with each respective council panel.

The following was agreed:

1. That the joint panel would meet twice a year.
2. A report for information be submitted to each scrutiny panel once a year.
3. Officers agree on the time scales and report this decision to the respective scrutiny panels.

Cllr Quick thanked every for attending