

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
7 NOVEMBER 2013**

Present: Councillor T Jones (Chair)
Councillors: Anderson, Ballsdon, Eastwood, Eden, D Edwards, Ennis, Gavin, P Jones, McElligott, O'Connell, Orton, Ralph, Rynn, Vickers and Williams.

9. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 1 July 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Children's Safeguarding Panel, 10 September 2013;
- Children's Trust Partnership Board, 17 July 2013.

Resolved: That the Minutes be noted.

11. UTC READING

Joanne Harper, Principal UTC Reading, and James Weeks, Sophie Wooldridge and Anwar Whight, students at UTC, attended the meeting and gave a presentation on UTC Reading.

UTC Reading had been established with the aim of addressing the skills shortage in computer science and engineering and to address the even bigger shortage of women in this area of business as it had been predicted that there would be a requirement for half a million IT professionals by 2015. Students joining the college had to be passionate about IT or engineering and the aim was to train the next generation of technicians so that companies would be able to recruit people from the local area rather than rely on labour markets outside of Reading.

The lead sponsor of UTC was Oxford and Cherwell Valley College, now known as Activate Learning, and it also worked in partnership with other education bodies; the University of Reading was the college's academic partner. The main industry partners of the college were Microsoft, Cisco, Network Rail and Peter Brett Associates. The target for students on roll had been set at 140 from September 2013 and currently the college had 143 students on roll and was one of the very few UTC's which had met its target for students on roll in its first year.

On joining the college students had received a free lap-top and had been some of the first students in the country to pass the Microsoft Office System Technology certification exam. The students enjoyed the fact that they were all studying the same subjects and therefore were with like-minded people. The students also liked the opportunities the college offered them and the fact that the teaching style was similar to a business approach to learning.

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- (1) That the presentation be noted;
- (2) That Joanne Harper, James Weeks, Sophie Wooldridge and Anwar Whight be thanked for the presentation and for attending the meeting.

12. OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION: DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Further to Minute 2 of the last meeting the Head of Adult Social Care submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the former Arthur Clark Care Home and the Albert Road Day Centre in Caversham and detailing proposals about the future of the site and the site of the former Alice Burrows Care Home in Southcote. A copy of a feasibility study that had been commissioned for the Arthur Clark/Albert Road site was attached to the report at Appendix A and a feasibility study that had been commissioned for the site of the former Alice Burrows Care Home in Southcote was attached to the report at Appendix B.

The report stated that the feasibility study had indicated that a 40 bed Extra Care Unit could be developed on the site of Arthur Clark/Albert Road. The proposal had been prepared by architects who were market leaders in the provision of Extra Care Housing and were in the process of submitting an application to the Planning Department. A decision regarding planning for both sites would be taken at a later date once all plans had been submitted.

The Extra Care proposal included shared facilities that could also be used by other older people living locally and would increase the options for offering day activities for older people to strengthen the range on offer north of the river and would offer another base for day activities in the Caversham area.

The report explained that a feasibility study had also been commissioned in relation to the site of the former Alice Burrows Care Home in Southcote. This had indicated that a similar 30 unit Extra Care Housing scheme, together with 36 nursing care beds, could be developed in the location. If these sites were developed in this way this would be a significant improvement in provision for older people in the Borough whether they had nursing care needs or wanted the independence plus support that Extra Care Housing offered, and for those looking to take part in day activities to keep active and strengthen community ties.

The report stated that the feasibility studies gave an initial view of what was possible on the sites and if providers were invited to bring forward proposals they would bring their own ideas and have their own requirements. Notwithstanding the feasibility study any development would be subject to planning consent being obtained and the tender process for the co-partnerships with a strategic partner would be expected to take nine to twelve months, subject to Policy Committee giving its approval. The expected timeframe for building work to be completed would be within three years following the approval by Policy Committee. Either or both sites could be marketed as mixed tenure, so a percentage of the Extra Care Home units could be purchased by individuals as well as being available for social rent, subject to the successful bidder's model for extra care.

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The report proposed that a recommendation be made to Policy Committee to declare the sites surplus to operational requirements and that a partner should be sought to develop the sites as Extra Care Housing, with nursing and day activities. The exact format of the plans would be subject to the proposals brought forward by the providers and if this was approved it would represent a way of finding partners to deliver a substantial investment in the long term future of older people's services in the Borough.

Finally, the report advised the Committee of a successful community right to bid application for the Arthur Clark/Albert Road site.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed to add the following wording to the end of recommendation 2.4 'and confirms Reading Borough Council's willingness to consider community or private bids aimed at delivering services for older people'.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Committee's commitment to the development of Extra Care Housing and Day Services at the Arthur Clark/Albert Road site and the Alice Burrows site be confirmed;
- (2) That the community benefit of Extra Care Housing developments for older people, nursing accommodation and facilities for day activities be recognised and the release of the two sites for these purposes be supported;
- (3) That Policy Committee be recommended to declare the Arthur Clark/Albert Road and Alice Burrows sites surplus to operational requirements and agree that a partner be sought to develop the sites for extra care, nursing care and day activity facilities for older people, as detailed in the report;
- (4) That the successful application to list the Arthur Clark/Albert Road premises as an asset of Community Value, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, be noted and the Council's willingness to consider community or private bids aimed at delivering services for older people be confirmed.

13. MODERNISING DAY CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Further to Minute 3 of the last meeting the Head of Adult Social Care submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the modernisation of Day Care Services for older people.

The report stated that substantial work was underway to develop neighbourhood services for older people, reflecting consultation feedback that many older people wanted services that were local to them. The new approach was being piloted in Caversham and Southcote and included:

- The appointment of a co-ordinator to help develop activities and meet gaps in provision and to act as a champion for Older People's Services;

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- Plans to improve information and communication, both through an online Directory of Services for silver surfers and to help family members living out of area support their elderly relatives in Reading, and in addition Council sponsored printed newsletters;
- Local centres would host regular weekly open houses for older people offering a range of activities and a base for socialising;
- Ongoing improved Council support for the services which help older people to access community activities, including companions for getting out and visiting services, or assistance with transport;
- A commitment to increase Council funding to support Age UK's Active Living Programme to enhance local activities for older people;
- The Council had commissioned feasibility studies on the development of Extra Care Housing on sites in Caversham and Sothcote (see Minute 12 above).

The report stated that older people had settled in well at the combined day care service in Southcote, which had brought together the former Phoenix Day Service and Albert Road Day Service. The day activities in local neighbourhoods had already reached more older people than the day care service had previously and the numbers engaging in activities were expected to increase further in the future.

Resolved - That the progress to date with the day services modernisation programme be noted and the continuation of trials in the areas north of the river and in Southcote be supported.

14. CARE BILL

The Director of Education, Adult and Children's Services submitted a report describing the main impact of the White Paper, Caring for our Future, and the draft Care and Support Bill, both published in July 2012, and the policy statement on Care and Support Funding Reform, that had been presented to Parliament on 11 February 2013. A copy of the terms of reference of a new Health and Social Care Board was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report stated that the majority of changes were set to take place in April 2015 with the reform of funding to take effect from April 2016 and set the main areas of change within the Bill with an indication of the impact this would have in the Borough. The report also detailed the financial implications and risks for the Council.

The report stated that the Bill represented opportunities for significant improvement and change in Adult Social Care and the new legal rights accorded to carers and the streamlining of the legislation was particularly welcome. In Reading the Council was well placed to respond to the Bill, not least in respect of the development of partnerships with health. The greatest challenge would be associated with the implementation of the new funding reforms which would bring a large number of new people to the social care system. The reforms would require significant investment of officer time during a period of organisational reshape and although the changes would provide considerable benefits, they would not provide

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a solution to the underlying increasing demand caused by an ageing population and/or the continued requirement for financial savings.

Resolved -

- (1) That the implications of Care and Support Bill be noted;
- (2) That the establishment of a senior officer Board with a membership and terms of reference as set out in appendix A attached to the report, reporting as necessary to this Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board, be approved;
- (3) That the financial risks to the Council be noted and these be modelled as soon as possible;
- (4) That the principle of closer integrated working with health partners based on a vision of person centred care and support delivered at neighbourhood level and utilising the skills and capacity within local communities be endorsed;
- (5) That the new duties placed on local authorities in respect of carers be endorsed;
- (6) That the need to refresh the communications strategy to enable residents to understand what was on offer at local level be noted.

15. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2012-13

The Head of Education submitted a report detailing the provisional performance of schools in the Borough for the academic year 2012-13 at the five Key Stages and covering the wider view of school performance as assessed by the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) through their national programme of inspection.

The report stated that the academic year 2012-13 had been characterised by many changes, announcement of future changes and new tests and detailed the provisional performance of schools in the Borough for the academic year 2012-13 at the following five stages:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception Year Children)
- Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)
- Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6, ending with SATs)
- Key Stage 4 (end of compulsory secondary age, typically GCSE qualifications)
- Key Stage 5 (end of sixth form education, typically GCE A Level)

Schools had been working with a specific focus to reduce the performance gaps in a number of groups as relevant to individual schools.

The report explained that a new framework for inspection had been introduced in January 2012 which had seen two further revisions in September 2012 and September 2013. This had continued to 'raise the bar' and had refined further some areas of focus. Under this framework the authority had performed well with

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the percentage of schools rated as good or outstanding rising by 20% to 74% in the twelve months since August 2012. Overall, there had been a mixed picture of educational attainment, with significant progress in some areas and real pressing challenges elsewhere. In order to meet its stated ambition of realising good educational outcomes for all children the Council would have to focus its improvement activity on Key Stage 2 and 'narrowing the gap' for those children who, historically, were more likely to lag behind their peer group.

Resolved -

- (1) That the commitment to working with all schools in Reading in order to enable all children in Reading to benefit from an excellent education that met individual needs, developed great learning skills and helped children to grow in confidence and resilience be confirmed;
- (2) That the levels of performance at each of the five stages, as set out in section 4 of the report, be noted and all the pupils who had worked hard in the last academic year, along with all staff in Reading's schools be congratulated;
- (3) That the significant increase in the level of achievement at Key Stage 4 (GCSE) across the Borough, with 88% of Reading's young people achieving the benchmark of 5+ A*-C at GCSE, a figure which was now 5% ahead of the national average, be noted and all of the schools involved be congratulated;
- (4) That, although there was a year on year trend of improvement at Key Stage 2 from 2009, the continuing significant challenges to some schools be noted;
- (5) That the prioritisation of work by the Education Service with schools failing to meet the achievement aspect of the floor standard, as set out in section 4.9 of the report, be confirmed;
- (6) That the progress at Key Stage 2 in relation to narrowing the achievement gaps be noted and the continuation of this as a priority for the Education team be confirmed;
- (7) That the 'Narrowing the Gap' strategy be reviewed, the improvement plan be refreshed and a detailed report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

16. PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES - PLANNING TO MEET THE FORECAST DEMAND

The Head of Education submitted a report setting out a range of building options and informing the Committee of the estimated budgetary cost in order to secure primary school places. A summary of each option was attached to the report at Appendix 1, a copy of the provisional plan of work was attached to the report at Appendix 2, a summary of the building costs was attached to the report at

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Appendix 3 and a table showing the Statutory Consultation Process for school expansion was attached to the report at Appendix 4.

The report set out a range of building options, some of which were more suitable to specific school sites than others, taking into account the location of the school, present configuration of existing buildings, heritage assets, access and the potential development of new community based facilities. There was not a 'one size fits all' solution and it had been estimated that it would be necessary to provide 2520 places in primary schools across the Borough. The "Lets Talk Education" events in 2012 and 2013 had identified a number of schemes which could combine with some existing ideas to create a programme of 13 schemes. These schemes had been identified as the most appropriate in terms of location, school support and parental support. Eight eligible schemes from this preferred programme had been submitted to Government for financial support from the Target Basic Need Programme, and as a result of this £19.1m was expected to be received in addition to the formulaic grant allocation already confirmed to all local authorities for 2013/14 and 2014/15. The draft report set out the estimated budgetary cost for the recommended programme at £64m and would require Council investment of £34.2m which was significantly higher than the national average local authority contribution of 34% as estimated for 2012 by the National Audit Office.

The report set out options for the creation of additional classroom and ancillary space at the schools and identified and assessed the viability of the options against each school.

Julie Kempster, Director of Riverside Day Nursery, attended the Committee and read a statement asking the Committee to commit to working with the nursery to help them identify a suitable alternative site as they would be displaced by the expansion of Newtown Primary School where they were currently based. In response Councillor Ennis confirmed that the authority would continue its commitment to work with Riverside Day Nursery to seek to provide a continuation of nursery provision in east Reading.

Resolved -

- (1) That the expansion consultation process, as set out in paragraph 4.13 of the report, be noted;
- (2) That the different approaches to providing additional school places and the suggested expansion programme, set out in the table at paragraph 4.4 of the report, be noted;
- (3) That the commitment to providing an excellent learning environment for all children in Reading's schools be confirmed;
- (4) That officers be required to discuss the optimum build solution with individual schools, taking into account the commitment to deliver an excellent learning environment within tight budgetary constraints and taking into account the different site issues and requirements of schools;

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- (5) That (4) above meant that there would be a differential approach on some sites but that every child would be educated in a building that met or exceeded the criteria set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report and which would involve a combination of building option (b) and (c) as outlined in paragraph 4.15 of the report be noted;
- (6) That the approval of Policy Committee be sought for a capital allocation for the overall programme and the resulting estimated budget impact from 2015/16 onwards be noted;
- (7) That the fact that the capital contribution was significantly higher than the average local authority contribution be noted;
- (8) That the proposal to expand three schools from September 2014 and ten schools from September 2015, as set out in paragraph 4.14 of the report, be endorsed;
- (9) That regular update reports be submitted to future meetings.

17. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

Further to Minute 5 of the last meeting the Head of Children's Services, submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update following the Ofsted inspection that had taken place in March 2013 and highlighting the progress that was being made in the action plan that had been developed at the time. A copy of the action plan was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that all actions had been completed or were well underway and were on track to be completed in the timescale that had been set. However, there was one exception and that was the action required of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) in relation to Thames Valley Police improving the current Police arrangements for screening and assuring the quality of all domestic abuse referrals to children's social care which had not been provided to the LSCB. This matter was being challenged by the Chair of the LSCB and some verbal updates had recently indicated some progress might be made in the near future.

Resolved - That the progress made in implementing the Ofsted action plan be noted.

18. NEXT GENERATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES - PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Head of Children's Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the progress that had been made in developing the key themes in the implementation of the Next Generation Children's Services programme. A copy of a report highlighting the core elements/areas of activity of the programme and the progress being made in each of these areas was appended to the report.

The report explained that it had been intended that an overarching work or strategy group would not be required to co-ordinate the programme and that the children's social care management group could monitor and drive through the work in its routine management meetings. However, it had soon become clear that due

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to synergies between projects, shared benefits and impact on partner agencies, a programme board would be necessary to monitor the work. As a result a formal Board had been set up, tasked with monitoring the progress and shape of the various strands of the programme and overseeing the modernisation of services to improve outcomes for children.

Resolved - That the progress made to date with the implementation of the Next Generation Children's Services programme be noted.

19. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS

The Head of Children's Services submitted a report highlighting the new children's social care Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) that was being introduced across the service and its associated new set of practice standards that would be used to benchmark the quality of practice. A copy of the Children's Social Care QAF was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the Good Practice Standards for Children's Social Care was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report stated that the service had reviewed its pre-existing QAF and had identified areas where it needed to improve, in particular it needed to develop some practice standards for use by its front line managers and to act as a benchmark for surveys and practice audits and also improve the way the 'voice of the child' and the child's journey through the system was experienced to better enable it to make swift improvement in its journey to achieving excellence.

After learning from elsewhere and reviewing what the best authorities were doing a new quality assurance and performance management framework had been developed, as well as a corresponding set of service standards.

The report explained that the Framework could simplistically be shown as a triangle where the balance of scrutiny was around three key areas: service user (and practitioner), voice and quantitative data and qualitative data. Whilst the pre-existing QAF had many elements of all three areas it was less strong in the service user voice and the qualitative data needed further work to strengthen it. Therefore the Strategy showed these aspects in better balance and also had an associated action plan and timetable of activity that would ensure the balance was maintained.

The report stated that there had already been a difference in the way the service reported its work, with more emphasis on the experience of children and their outcomes and a greater focus on quality, whilst not minimising the importance that performance indicators had in alerting Councillors to things that needed further investigation.

The QAF was underpinned by a set of practice standards which would be continually reviewed and updated in line with new learning and understanding gained through improvement. Further standards would be applicable for particular activities and processes. A performance and quality meeting would be held on a quarterly basis, chaired by the Head of Children's Services. The meeting would look at the various strands of quality assurance activity and would agree action plans developed as a

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result of activity. This meeting would act as a challenge meeting where the Head of Children's Services could scrutinise activity, receive exception and corrective action reports and call managers to account. The outcomes from these meetings would be reported on a regular basis to the Lead Councillor for Children's Services and Families.

Resolved - That the report and the Children's Social Care Quality Assurance Framework be noted.

20. FOSTERING AGENCY INSPECTION

The Head of Children's Services submitted a report providing the Committee with information on the Ofsted Inspection Report about the Council's Fostering Agency. A copy of the Ofsted Inspection Report was appended to the report.

The report stated that an overall grading of adequate had been reported and four sub judgements had been made. Outcomes for children had been judged as good, quality of service, safeguarding and leadership and management had all been judged as adequate. The inspectors had indicated clearly that they had seen marked improvements since the last time they had carried out an inspection and had been complimentary overall about the service. The judgement also had to been seen in the context of another rise in the 'bar' and the context overall of Ofsted judgements. Ofsted had noted in particular that the service was responsive to changing needs and successful in ensuring children were placed with carers that met their needs. It had noted that the service was aspirational and there was an expectation that children would grow and develop in their placements. Children had talked positively about their placements and the support and encouragement they received from foster carers.

The inspectors had found many positives and had commented positively about the experience that children had about being fostered in the Borough. Children had talked enthusiastically about their lives within foster families and special mention had been made of the kindness of foster carers, the quality of accommodation and the fun they had. The successes of the children and young people were recognised and celebrated and the inspectors made particular mention of the fact that the service had developed an open culture in which children's views were heard and responded to. Education was given a high priority and every effort was made to limit any disruption.

The report stated that the service had made significant progress since the last inspection but it was recognised that the service had been hampered by the rise in demand, staff shortages and inconsistent leadership at team manager level. However, these had been managed well and progress had been evident. There had been recommendations for improvement and staff were not complacent in continuing to strive for service improvements. The recommendations were the subject of an action plan that would be monitored by the Head of Service.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Ofsted Inspection Report about the Council's Fostering Agency be received;

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- (2) That Karen Reeve, Head of Children's Services, and the Fostering team be thanked for all the work they had done.

21. ADOPTION PAN BERKSHIRE PROPOSAL

Further to Minute 6 of the last meeting the Head of Children's Services submitted a report about the work that was underway to establish a shared Pan Berkshire adoption service under a joint arrangement for agencies to work together in providing recruitment, preparation, training, assessment and supervision of adopters.

The report explained that it had been hoped that all six agencies in Berkshire would join the arrangement to establish a shared adoption Service but it could be established with fewer than all six. The preferred option was to provide the joint arrangement at the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service (BAAS) where it was currently hosted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Currently Windsor and Maidenhead had indicated they wished to host the shared Service.

In late July 2013 Slough had confirmed that they would be unlikely to join the shared Service, noting they had made considerable inroads to develop their own recruitment of adopters and were able to meet their own demand. This could leave the Council working with the four smaller local authorities and there was some concern that the sheer volume of demand in the Borough might not be able to be met within this limited area.

The report stated that there had been some delay in getting a project plan in place but, a costed business case had been produced and agreed. The Council had continued to work on the basis that the Service would incur no additional cost to the Council than the existing Service and in all likelihood would make savings in the longer term. Original discussions had focused on the Service being in place in September 2013 but it had soon become clear that this was unachievable and a revised date of January 2014 or possibly March 2014 had been discussed.

The report stated that given the imperative in the Borough to find placements for children it had been recognised that there was a need to explore other options with other areas as well and approaches were being made and possibilities considered. It had also been noted that the new Service would need to explore adopter recruitment from outside the area to meet demand and Basingstoke/Hampshire had been targeted in the previous municipal year. This would be done in addition to realising the potential effectively inside Berkshire and capitalising on the experience of staff that were familiar with their respective areas. In particular Reading and Slough had raised the issue of needing to match the profile of their children requiring adoption.

The report explained that the other issue to be progressed was the location of the Service. There was an option to co-locate the Service in the existing BAAS site in Windsor and Maidenhead or in a central base such as Reading with staff going out to spend time in local authority areas or to have a primary base alongside children's social work teams and then meeting regularly at a base for team meetings and developments. There were positives and negatives about both options so these would be explored further and decisions made in due course.

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Finally, the report stated that although there were some concerns about the speed with which the project was progressing and the ability of the Service to meet the Council's needs, if it was made up of only five local authorities, the benefits of the end product were still of great interest to the Council. Having a shared voice would minimise the risk of dependency on an external provider(s) and would potentially speed up the placement of children and maintaining the status quo was not an option.

Resolved - That the progress being made in the setting up of a Pan Berkshire Adoption Service be noted.

22. READING'S EARLY HELP STRATEGY

Further to Minute 7 of the last meeting the Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with details of the consultation that had been completed on the draft Early Help Strategy and presented the final version of the Strategy. A copy of the Early Help Strategy was attached to the report at Appendix 1, a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 2 and a copy of the Let's Talk Early Help Consultation Report was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report explained that work to produce an Early Help Strategy had begun in March 2013 and had been structured around five priority areas, which had reflected the Ofsted framework for the Inspection of Arrangements for the Protection of Children, which had been superseded by a new framework. Each section set out the Council's current early help offer and identified the key actions to take forward further improvements, and the outcome measures that would be used to monitor progress. The Strategy had been informed by the analysis of demographic, needs and performance data, national best practice and feedback from stakeholders, including over 200 interviews with local parents as part of the Transforming Early Years project.

A number of key stakeholders across the Council and other partners in health services and the voluntary sector had been involved in shaping the draft version of the Strategy, which had been endorsed for wider consultation at the last meeting. The Let's Talk Early Help consultation had run from 8 July to 27 September 2013 and had been aimed at a range of internal and external partners and had been carried out through a range of methods. Overall, respondents to the consultation had been happy with the vision and priorities that had been identified in the Strategy, in particular there had been support for actions that would make it easier for families to access services such as the development of Family Support Hubs at some children's centres.

Some respondents had felt that the Strategy needed greater emphasis on the work of Early Help services to identify and support those families in greatest need and the Strategy emphasised that at a time of reducing resources the effective targeting of Early Help Services was even more important. The Strategy also underlined that the introduction of a Parents Forum would be one of a wide range of methods used to hear the voice of service users and receive feedback and that listening to the child and family remained an integral element of all assessment and

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work with families. A list of services that voluntary sector organisations were contracted to deliver was also contained in the Strategy and highlighted the wide ranging engagement of children and families by the voluntary sector through community based activities. The Strategy was updated as a result of the feedback that was received.

The report explained that following publication of the Strategy a Delivery Plan would be developed to underpin the Strategy and would set out how the key actions would be implemented, identifying lead officers, resources and timescales for the delivery. The Delivery Plan would align with work to implement strategies that would run parallel to the Early Help Strategy and progress against the Plan and evidence of the impact achieved through the identified outcome measures would be monitored by Reading's Children's Trust Board/Health and Wellbeing Board. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board would also receive reports on the progress in delivering the Strategy.

Karen Reeve, Head of Children's Services, informed the Committee that a copy of the Delivery Plan would be submitted to the next meeting on 5 March 2014.

Resolved -

- (1) That the final version of Reading's Early Help Strategy be endorsed;
- (2) That annual update reports on the progress in implementing the Early Help Strategy be submitted to future meetings.

23. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2012/13 FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Customer Relations Manager submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview of complaints activity and performance for Children's Social Care for the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. A copy of the Children's Social Care Complaints 2012/13 Summary Report was appended to the report.

The report stated that during the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 the service had received 77 statutory complaints of which:

- 22 had been resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) with the Social Work Teams;
- 10 had been withdrawn;
- 42 had been investigated and completed;
- 3 were ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

During the same period one complaint had progressed to Stage 2 investigation and three requests for Stage 3 investigations had been received.

The Customer Relations Team had continued to raise awareness of the complaints process and in accordance with recommendations from Ofsted had worked with operational teams to encourage children and young people to submit complaints where they were dissatisfied with the service they had received.

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- (1) That the contents of the report and intended actions to improve further the management of representations and complaints in 2013/14 for Children's Social Care be noted;
- (2) That the continuing work to raise awareness of the complaints process and encourage its use by children and young people in 2013/14 be noted.

24. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 25 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

25. PROCUREMENTS FOR SUPPORTED LIVING AND DOMICILIARY CARE SERVICES

The Head of Commissioning and Improvement submitted a report outlining the intention to process supported living and domiciliary care services by establishing two frameworks listing providers of the highest quality and best value for money.

Resolved -

- (1) That the procurement of Supported Living Providers through a Framework, due to be completed in summer 2014, be approved;
- (2) That the re-procurement of Domiciliary Care providers through a Framework due to be completed in winter 2014, in line with Contract Procedure Rules, be approved;
- (3) That the Director of Education, Adult and Children's Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, the Managing Director, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance, to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer(s) for the support/care services to be provided through the above framework agreements.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.08 pm).