

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
5 NOVEMBER 2015**

Present: Councillor McElligott (Chair)
Councillors Ballsdon, Eden, Ennis, Gavin, Hoskin, Jones,
O'Connell, Orton, Pearce, Stanford-Beale, Vickers, White and
R Williams.

Apologies: Councillor D Edwards.

15. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meeting were submitted:

- Children's Trust Partnership Board, 8 July and 14 October 2015.

Resolved - That the Minutes be noted.

17. SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY REPORT - APRIL - AUGUST 2015

Further to Minute 31 of the meeting held on 4 March 2015, Andy Fitton, Acting Head of Service - Early Help and Family Intervention, presented a report providing the Committee with an update of the key activity areas within Children's Social Care from April 2015 to August 2015 as reported through internal performance reporting which was updated on a month by month basis. This was then submitted via National Returns, which all local authorities were required to submit to the Department for Education in July and August each year. The report also considered key performance for Children in Need and Looked After Children against the previous year's performance.

The report explained that all comparative and trend data in the report was provisional pending validation locally and nationally and as a result it could not be analysed against comparative data until later in the year.

The report stated that as part of the continuing journey of improvement the following would be necessary to achieve the objectives for young people:

- That the new directions set were embedded over the next few months and provided the quality of care to young people in the Council's care;
- That the auditing culture in the department continued to be developed and the learning cascaded through training events and regular workshops;
- That the voice of the child emerged strongly throughout practice;
- That the core standards were understood fully and the key priorities were adhered to;
- That stability in staffing was achieved;
- That all staff had an understanding about budgetary pressures;
- That residential care was only considered when all options had been exhausted.

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Resolved - That the report be noted.

18. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - PROGRESS REPORT

Ian Wardle, Managing Director, presented a report by Ben Morgan, Operations and Support Manager, providing the Committee with an outline of the actions already taken and plans to improve recruitment and retention of Children's Social Care staff.

The report stated that the recruitment and retention of social workers continued to be a challenge for local authorities on a national level, fuelled by a shortfall in experienced social workers which had been predicated by the Policy Exchange to continue until 2022. As an area of high employment, relatively expensive housing and, due to its geographical location, having to compete for talent with both neighbouring authorities and London, the Borough found itself in an acutely competitive market.

From a practice and financial perspective the preference was for permanent workers rather than agency staff. However, the authority continued to be reliant on sourcing workers through the agency route to ensure that services could continue to be delivered. This was an equally competitive market.

The report outlined the actions that had been taken already and plans to improve recruitment and retention of Children's Social Care staff.

Resolved -

- (1) That progress to date be noted;**
- (2) That the planned actions, as detailed in the report, be endorsed.**

19. READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PREVENTION OF NEGLECT ACTION PLAN

Andy Fitton, Acting Head of Service - Early Help and Family Intervention, presented a report detailing the manner in which the Council would address the harm experienced by children and young people as the result of neglect. A copy of the Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Neglect Protocol 2015 was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the Prevention of Neglect Action Plan for Reading was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report stated that in 2014/15 the percentage of Reading children subject to a Child Protection Plan and classified under the category of neglect stood at 48%. This was above the performance of statistical neighbours (34.1%) and nationally (42.1%). As of 31 August 2015 the number of children with Child Protection Plans and a category of neglect had reduced to 45%.

Reading's LSCB had approved a Neglect Protocol in September 2015 and the Council's response was set out in an action plan to ensure that neglect was identified and interventions were put in place at the earliest possible stage.

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Resolved -

- (1) That the Prevention of Neglect Action Plan be endorsed;**
- (2) That all services working with Children and Young People familiarise themselves with the protocol, ensure staff are equipped to identify neglect and be aware of referral pathways;**
- (3) That an update on progress made against the Prevention of Neglect Action Plan be submitted to the June 2016 meeting.**

20. FIRST QUARTER REPORT - CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT BOARD

Further to Minute 4 of the meeting held on 29 June 2015, Ian Wardle, Managing Director, submitted a report by the Independent Chair of the Children's Services Improvement Board providing the Committee with a view of the progress made by the Board since July 2015. The report was presented by Helen McMullen, Chair of the Children's Services Improvement Board. A copy of the objectives and purpose of the Board were attached to the report at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

The report explained that the Improvement Board met monthly and had met three times since it had been established in July 2015. The Board had good representation from partners including Health and the Police, although the Council had yet to identify representatives from Education.

The report stated that it was too early for the Board to report that there was evidence of consistently high standards of practice, that there was strong learning culture and that there was evidence of an outcome focused approach to practice although there were some 'green shoots'. However, there was evidence that a strong recruitment drive underpinned by the Reading Offer was paying dividends in the recruitment of more permanent social workers and that day to day management of staff was beginning to set high expectations on social work practice but there was much to be done if the authority were to be deemed 'good' and the pace of improvement needed to be accelerated across all services and embedded into day to day practice and management.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted:**
- (2) That the Children's Services Improvement Board be thanked for their work to date.**

21. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2014 - 2015 FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Nayana George, 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 2014 to 31 March 2015. A copy of the Children's Social Care Complaints 2014/15 Summary Report was appended to the report.

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The report stated that during the period the service had received 86 statutory complaints of which:

- 23 had been resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution by the Social Care Teams;
- 48 had been investigated to an outcome;
- 13 had been withdrawn part-way through the investigation;
- 2 were on-going at the end of the reporting period.

During the same period nine complaints had progressed to a Stage 2 investigation and two Stage 3 investigations had been carried out.

The report stated that the Customer Relations Team had continued to raise awareness of the complaints process and in accordance with recommendations from the Office of Standards in Education (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.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report and intended actions to further improve the management of representations and complaints in 2015/16 for Children's Social Care be noted;
- (2) That the continuing work to raise awareness of the complaints progress and to encourage its use by children and young people be noted.

22. READING LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

Esther Blake, Business Manager for Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Children's Trust Partnership, submitted a report presenting the Committee with the Reading LSCB Annual Report. The Annual Report was presented by Fran Gosling-Thomas, Independent Chair of the LSCB, and a copy was attached to the report.

The report explained that unlike previous years the Annual Report had focused on the achievements and ongoing challenges for the LSCB and partners specifically against priorities. The achievements were set out under the following headings:

- Domestic Abuse;
- Strengthening the Child's Journey and Voice;
- Child Sexual Exploitation and other Particularly Vulnerable Groups;
- Neglect;
- Effectiveness and Impact of the LSCB.

Key ongoing challenges had been identified and captured in the risk/concern log and included the following:

- A multi-agency and community informed approach to Female Genital Mutilation was required;

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- The numbers of known privately fostered children remained extremely low;
- Children's Social Care staffing remained a concern;
- Significant progress was required to address the issue of neglect;
- Young people's involvement with the Board needed to be strengthened.

Resolved -

- (1) That the LSCB Annual Report be noted;
- (2) That Fran Gosling-Thomas be thanked for the work being done to support the social care team.

23. SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE INCREASE IN MENTALLY ILL ABSCONDERS FROM PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Further to Minute 11 of the last meeting Councillor Hoskin presented a report by Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Social Care, introducing the findings of scrutiny work carried out by a task-and-finish group set up by the Committee at its meeting on 29 June 2015, to look at the increase in mentally ill absconders from psychiatric hospitals and in particular from Prospect Park Psychiatric Hospital in Reading. A copy of the task and finish group's report was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the briefing prepared for the task and visit group prior to their visit to Prospect Park Hospital by Andrew Burgess, Head of In-Patient Services, was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that the task and finish group had initially scoped out the remit of the review and had devised a series of questions that had been posed to Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT) in advance of their visit to Prospect Park Hospital. The visit had included a question and answer session with the Inpatient Service Manager and the Reading Locality Manager for Mental Health Services and a tour of two wards. The report by the task and finish group made a number of recommendations including the following:

- For BHFT to continue to capture robust data and learn from themes;
- For BHFT to continue to source comparator data to enable local performance to be scrutinised;
- For BHFT to monitor the impact of the smoking ban on the site and take necessary mitigation to support those who were detained who were smokers;
- That the Council and BHFT look at ways of working together to avoid delayed discharge.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed that the task and finish group should meet again and come up with recommendations, both short and long term, as to how the levels of delayed discharge could be monitored and what support could be given to the Trust to get people home and support them once they were at home. The pressure mental health services were under was also acknowledged as was the fact that the way the figures on absconders had initially been presented in the press was not a true reflection of the actual position.

Resolved -

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- (1) That the findings of the scrutiny work, including the clarity of local performance, carried out by the Task and Finish Group be noted;
- (2) That the Task and Finish Group submit a report to the next meeting setting out both short and long term recommendations in respect of delayed discharge of care from Prospect Park Hospital.

24. LEARNING DISABILITY TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - UPDATE

Wendy Fabbro, Director of Adult Care and Health Services, submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the progress of the Learning Disability Transformation work, and to explain the key elements of the project. A copy of the action plan, the Council's response to 'Transforming Care for People with Learning Disabilities - Next Steps' was appended to the report.

The report explained that the Learning Disability Transformation Project was a significant piece of work sitting within the overall Adult Social Care Transformation Programme and was required to contribute £1.975m towards the overall Adult Social Care Savings target for the three years to 2017/18. The report detailed the key issues that would be addressed as part of the project and explained that the project would be delivered in alignment with the key focus areas of the National Health Service England (NHSE) Transforming Care initiative.

The project would be delivered in accordance with Care Act requirements, promotion of independence and the personalisation agenda, incorporating consultation, engagement and co-production throughout. Future provision would be firmly based on best value and best quality decisions, putting the individual at the heart of decision making and considering alternative delivery models which would most likely be achieved through mixed economy of in-house provision and external providers.

The over-arching aims of the project included the following:

- The transition to a more modernised co-produced model of day support across Older People, Physical Disability, Mental Health and Learning Disability services;
- Reviewing the current respite offer;
- Active review of individual packages of care;
- A shift in the belief that individuals were entitled to a tenancy;
- Proactive work to promote and encourage the take up of Direct Payments.

The report explained that this was a large and complex piece of work that would require a dedicated resource to co-ordinate and manage and included a table that set out the key elements of the programme. The whole project would be supported by an over-arching Learning Disability Strategy, Needs Analysis and Implementation Plan.

Resolved -

- (1) That the proposals for the Learning Disability Transformation Project and supporting Strategy be endorsed;

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- (2) That the plan, attached to the report at Appendix 1, which outlined proposals to deliver the Social Care elements of the NHSE's Transforming Care Initiative by April 2016 be approved.

25. IMPROVING DAY OPPORTUNITIES IN READING

Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Social Care, submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the day services improvement programme in Reading and seeking the Committee's approval to proceed to the next phase. A copy of the Improving Day Services: Consultation Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the Improving Day Opportunities in Reading: Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that as part of its continuing improvement programme the Council had carried out a public consultation from March to June 2015 on developing its day service offer for older people and people with physical disabilities who had more complex needs, particularly on how to modernise the service in line with best practice.

The current day opportunities offer included the following:

- Community Services;
- Externally commissioned Day Services;
- The Maples Centre;
- Extra Care Sites.

The options for future service delivery were as follows:

- (a) Do nothing;
- (b) Transfer the Older People's/Physical Disability day service to another building that would operate on lower costs;
- (c) Re-model the Council's day service for older people/people with physical disabilities to offer a Wellbeing Centre on the site of the Rivermead Leisure Complex and then close the Maples Resource Centre;
- (d) Dispense with all buildings based day services and support people to access alternative day activities.

The report stated that locating to Rivermead presented a very strong opportunity to maximise on synergies and to develop a well-being approach to the provision of day opportunities and was the recommended option.

Resolved -

- (1) That the options for future service delivery as detailed in the report be considered;
- (2) That the development of option C to re-model the Council's day service for older people/people with physical disabilities to offer a Wellbeing Centre on the site of Rivermead Leisure Complex and the closure of The Maple Resource Centre, be approved;

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- (3) That officers be authorised to proceed with:**
 - (a) scoping work for a move to Rivermead;**
 - (b) an implementation plan to migrate service users from The Maples into alternative facilities as outlined in paragraph 5.12 of the report;**
 - (c) implementing a closure plan for The Maples Resource Centre;**
- (4) That the further development of community and neighbourhood services for residents with varying levels of care need be supported;**
- (5) That authority to spend against the Council's Social Care capital grant (part of the Better Care Fund 2015/16) up to a limit of £360,000 to procure the necessary works for the development of a Wellbeing Centre as described in paragraphs 5.7 to 5.14 of the report, be agreed in conjunction with Health partners.**

26. CARE ACT IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2015

Wendy Fabbro, Director of Adult Care and Health Services, submitted a report providing the Committee with a reminder summary of the duties set out in the Care Act 2014; and Reading's Adult Social Care Service response and performance against them in relation to those parts of the Act which had come into effect from April 2015 and an update on the timings of the Funding Reform changes (Phase 2 of the Act) as these had been delayed.

The report explained that at quarterly intervals local authorities were asked to complete a 'stocktake' of their performance in relation to the Care Act. This information was shared with the Department of Health and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care. The report set out Reading's response to the latest stocktake.

The report stated that provisions in relation to a cap on care costs and the offer of care accounts to people who funded their own care had been postponed until 2020 and that to date central Government had not indicated the size and scale of the Better Care Fund for 2016/17; it was anticipated that guidance would be announced in the autumn statement.

Resolved -

- (1) That the performance of the Council thus far in relation to the changes implemented in April 2015 in order to comply with the Care Act be noted and the next phase of transformation actions be approved;**
- (2) That the ongoing risks to the budget and resources required to deliver on these increased duties be noted and the actions necessary to deliver a balanced budget be approved;**

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- (3) That the change of timing of the funding reforms (Phase 2 of the Care Act) which would be introduced from April 2020 be noted and a subsequent report on the consequences of this deferral and the actions needed to support people needing care be requested.

27. READING INTEGRATION UPDATE/BETTER CARE FUND IMPLEMENTATION

Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Social Care, submitted a report providing the Committee with a half year progress report and the opportunity to plan for the Better Care Fund 2016/17.

The report stated that integration between Health and Social Care remained an important area of work in the Council. Research had shown that when Health and Social Care worked together individuals had a better experience and a greater chance of retaining their independence. Sam's Story, produced from the Kings Fund, had been shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board and remained relevant to how the authority provided responsive Health and Social Care. It had identified some key areas of success for the individual: not having to repeat the same message more than once, professionals involved in their care were well informed and did not duplicate care and support and that individuals were supported to remain as independent as possible by receiving "the right care, at the right time, in the right place".

Over the previous 15 months the Health and Wellbeing Board had overseen the progress of the Better Care Fund. The report detailed the progress to date and set out some key imperatives for Health and Social Care to enable successful integration locally as follows:

- Ensure the efficient use of resources so that all schemes evidenced value for money;
- That the Council had a skilled available workforce;
- That services were available seven days a week;
- That Health and Social Care did not duplicate tasks;
- That Primary Care and community services were central to care and explored fully before people needed to use the acute hospital setting.

The report also set out performance indicators for the Better Care Fund and explained that the factors were monitored closely by the Reading Integration Board. To date there had been a reduction in both the number of people who were formally identified as being a delayed discharge of care and the amount of time people spent in hospital when they no longer needed to be there.

The Committee discussed the report and requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting once the Better Care Fund for 2016/17 was known so that the impact and influence of the targets for the second year of the Better Care Fund could be considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That the current status of the Reading Integration agenda be noted;

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- (2) That the imperatives for Adult Social Care and Health be agreed;**
- (3) That the blockages and challenges that needed to be remedied to enable a successful Health and Social Care system be noted;**
- (4) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee once the Better Care Fund for 2016/17 was known so that the impact and influence of the targets for the second year of the Better Care Fund could be considered.**

28. DELAYED TRANSFERS OF CARE UPDATE

Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Social Care, submitted a report aimed at ensuring the Committee were fully aware of the local performance relating to Delayed Transfers of care and describing the challenges to both Health and Social Care from the anticipated impact of winter pressures to ensure a shared understanding of the anticipated pressures.

The report explained that a delayed transfer of care was a measure of the number of people who had remained in an acute hospital bed beyond the point where they required medical treatment. The reasons would be classed as either, attributable to health or attributable to Adult Social Care. Nationally, delayed transfers of care were reported on and monitored through the Better Care Fund to NHS England and through the Adult Social Care Outcome Framework. Poor performance in this area was also scrutinised by Monitor, who were the sector regulator for the NHS. The reports were taken from a 'snapshot' day within each month, rather than aggregating the performance over a month.

The report stated that locally performance in relation to delayed transfers of care was closely monitored and scrutinised and there was a comprehensive governance structure set out to enable this.

Performance for the first four months of 2015/16 had improved, although there had been a spike in activity in June 2015 demonstrating the precarious nature of the management of hospital activity and despite plans that had been put in place through the Better Care Fund there was still an anticipated growth of the number of people who would attend A&E of 2.5%.

The report also gave details of winter pressures and stated that although they occurred every year despite significant planning they continued to present a challenge for health and social care.

Resolved -

- (1) That the work to promote the avoidance of hospital attendance and admission where community services could appropriately meet the need be approved;**
- (2) That the approach to the CCG to clarify the additional financial burden to the Council on how this might be reconciled within the Better Care Fund be approved.**

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29. CHARLES CLORE COURT SAVINGS PROPOSAL

Angela Dakin, Interim Head of Commissioning and Improvement, submitted a report outlining the proposal for savings available from Charles Clore Court from restructuring and outsourcing. A table setting out the financial impact of the proposal was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report explained that Charles Clore Court was an Extra Care Housing site in Southcote Ward run by A2 Dominion with the care provided by the Council. There were 47 flats, all of which were assured tenancies with A2 Dominion, 37 of the flats were used by clients who had some care needs. The level of care provided was mixed and weighted towards the lower end of need. However, four people received over 30 hours of care, which was a much higher level than other Council Extra Care provision.

The report stated that there had been careful consideration of all options for savings over a number of months to reduce the cost of Charles Clore Court and retain the level and quality of care. To achieve savings two phases had been explored, to outsource the care provision and to restructure the in-house service. To achieve the level of savings required both phases needed to be taken forward.

Resolved -

- (1) That the action in phase 1 of the proposal to approve the deletion of the scheme manager's position at Charles Clore Court and the redundancy of the current manager be agreed and the Head of Service for Adult Social Care be granted delegated authority to secure any further staffing efficiencies required;**
- (2) That officers be given authority to tender for an external provider to take over the running of the care service at Charles Clore Court as outlined in phase 2 of the proposal.**

30. AUDIT OF ADULT SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE

Wendy Fabbro, Director of Adult Care and Health Services, submitted a report providing the Committee with a summary of the findings of an audit of the Adult Safeguarding function commissioned in order to measure compliance with both Safeguarding Adults policies and procedures as defined in the Care Act 2014, and with local policies and procedures of the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

The report explained that the independent and objective audit had been commissioned from an experienced consultant following a case involving the death of a service user. The case had been agreed as a Safeguarding Adults Review and while there was evidence of some good practice this was not yet consistent. The consultant had been commissioned to audit in excess of 70 randomly selected safeguarding cases against Care Act requirements and local policy and procedure and the report summarised the findings as follows:

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1. It was clear that the Council custom and practice used different terms and timescales from the West Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board;
2. Local policy and procedures were insufficiently written and existed largely as guidance;
3. In 50% of cases audited the consultant felt there was insufficient evidence of risk being appropriately managed and inadequate evidence of satisfactory discharge of Duty of Care;
4. In 52% of cases audited the evidence available had identified cases where information had justified further enquiry but "no further action" or "no safeguarding" was recorded;
5. In 64% of audited cases there had been insufficient evidence of consultation with the adult concerned or appropriate advocate;
6. There was good evidence of partnership working and mostly good working in single point of access.

The report explained that the planned response would have three domains as follows:

1. The local guidance would be re-drafted to local policy and procedure aligning to the West Berkshire SAB and Care Act duties;
2. A programme of training and briefing would be arranged for compulsory completion at an acceptable standard;
3. A regime of audit across care management, line management and Safeguarding team audit, overseen by Directorate Management Team case file audit.

The report explained that once the training on new procedures had been completed and the audit regime had been established a monthly report would be available indicating Compliance with Care Act duties. It was also expected that customer satisfaction would increase as would the extent to which interventions had delivered a greater feeling of safety and wellbeing.

Resolved - That the report be noted and the proposal in section 4 of the report be approved.

31. ADULT SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Wendy Fabbro, Director of Adult Care and Health Services, submitted a report highlighting those areas where implementation of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme currently underway required officers to implement a change of current practice in relation to existing policies, and to give early indication of instances where policy change might be required.

The report explained that at the meeting of Policy Committee on 20 July 2015 savings proposals for Adult Social Care totalling £6,709,000 over three years to 2017-18 had been approved (Minute 13 refers). The proposals were embedded within the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme which totalled over 60 pieces of work. The six key savings projects related to the following:

1. Adult Social Care Spend - Older People and Physical Disabilities;

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2. Adult Social Care Staffing - Older People and Physical Disabilities;
3. Extra Care Housing/Supported Living;
4. Adult Mental Health Services;
5. Voluntary and Community Sector/Neighbourhoods (prevention) services;
6. Learning Disabilities Efficiencies in purchased services and support.

A significant proportion of the savings the projects were committed to deliver were dependent on the implementation of existing policies and decisions which were not currently applied, or were partially applied. Areas that would require a change in practice were detailed in the report and proposed areas of change were as follows:

- The transition to a more modernised model of day services across Older People, Physical Disability, Mental Health and Learning Disability Services;
- Active review of individual packages of care across Older People, Physical Disability, Mental Health and Learning Disability;
- A shift in the balance of accommodation provision from residential care to Extra Care Housing and Supported Living;
- A review of out of hours services.

Resolved - That in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, the Director of Adult Care and Health Services be granted delegated authority to implement the necessary changes in practice required to deliver the proposal detailed in section 4 of the report.

32. READING'S AUTISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Social Care, submitted a report presenting Reading's Autism Strategy, a document that had been developed by a range of local partners that set out the plans to improve support for children, young people and adults with autism in the Borough. A copy of Reading's Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2015-2018 was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the Autism Strategy Action Plan was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that a Steering Group made up of representatives from across Council services, health services, voluntary sector organisations and families of people with autism had led the work to develop an Autism Strategy for Reading. The Strategy had been informed by a needs assessment that had been completed by Berkshire Autistic Society in 2013 that included consultation with people with autism and their families, mapping of existing provision, and an examination of data to understand need.

The draft Strategy was consulted on with wider partners across the local authority, health services, the voluntary sector, and people with autism and their families. After taking this feedback into further drafts, a final version of the Strategy was presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board for sign-off in April 2015 (Minute 7 refers). The Strategy set out some high-level priorities for improving support for people with autism in Reading as follows:

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- Increasing awareness and understanding of autism;
- Improving access to diagnosis;
- Supporting better outcomes for people with autism;
- Supporting people with autism to live safely and as independently as possible;
- Supporting families and carers of people with autism.

The report explained that following sign-off of the Strategy, the Steering Group that led the production of the document changed into an Autism Partnership Board to oversee the delivery of the Strategy and develop an Action Plan for the delivery of the Strategy. The Action Plan focused on actions that were achievable and that would allow for progress against the six priorities that had been identified in the Strategy.

The Autism Strategy had been developed with the aim of strengthening partnership working and the Strategy and Action Plan aimed to align with existing local plans and strategies.

Resolved - That the Autism Strategy and Action Plan, developed by the Autism Partnership Board be endorsed.

33. RAISING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN READING - STRATEGY UPDATE

Further to Minute 3 of the last meeting Kevin McDaniel, Head of Education, submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the feedback from the Boroughwide consultation process on Raising Educational Achievement in Reading, highlighting the changes suggested and setting out the steps required to begin to implement the three year strategy and asking the Committee to approve the strategy and implementation plan. A copy of the Raising Attainment Strategy 2015-18 was attached to the report at Appendix 1, a copy of the Implementation Plan for Raising Standards was attached to the report at Appendix 2 and a copy of the Reading Educational Excellence for All Partnership Board draft Terms of Reference was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report explained that the feedback from the consultation had been grouped together and had been used to make suggested changes to the documents in the appendices that had been attached to the report. Once the Strategy and Implementation Plan had been approved the Head of Education would invite nominations to the Partnership Board and establish the first meeting that would refine the draft terms of reference. The School Improvement Team, led by the Senior Schools advisor, would work with schools to refine the Effectiveness Guide in line with the feedback in order that the Guide could be refined and reviewed by the Partnership before it was brought back to a future meeting of the Committee for agreement.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Raising Attainment Strategy 2015-2018 and the Implementation Plan as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report be approved;**

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- (2) That the actions set out in sections 4.25 to 4.29 of the report required to implement the strategy, with particular note of the draft Partnership Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 3 which would be developed to steer the day to day school improvement work, be approved.

34. SCHOOL PLACES

Kevin McDaniel, Head of Education, gave a short presentation to update the Committee on the progress of school construction across the Borough.

The purpose of the programme had been to provide 2,520 new primary school places by 2016 and when approved the programme had been valued at £64m. There were 14 individual school building projects and by September 2015 1,550 new places had been provided through a phased completion strategy. Of the 14 projects, three had been completed, nine were on site and two were in the pre-construction phase. The project had faced a number of challenges, not least 20% inflation in the construction industry. Value engineering had been applied on all sites and the programme cost had been reduced to £61m. The current projection was for a £200k overspend against budget. The same construction method had been used on many of the sites and the presentation included pictures of the building work underway or completed at a number of the schools including Southcote, Alfred Sutton, Geoffrey Field and E P Collier Primary Schools. Many of the buildings had been designed to make maximum use of natural light, the classrooms included interactive white boards and toilets had been designed with safety of the children as a priority. The projects had also been used to help children's understanding of the building industry and the contracts had also seen a number of apprentices being employed on the projects.

Resolved - That the presentation be noted.

35. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2014/15

Kevin McDaniel, Head of Education, submitted a report looking at the provisional performance of schools in the Borough for the academic year 2014-15 at the following five Key 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)

The report stated that the 2014-15 provisional results had shown a continued progress towards the goals set out in the Raising Attainment Strategy, with notable improvements against the national average in many areas. In particular the three year improvement rate for the Key Stage 2 attainment benchmark had indicated that the authority was the third most improved local authority area in England.

Schools had been working with a specific focus to reduce the performance gaps for a number of groups as relevant to the individual school. The gaps had not reduced

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in the current year, despite the absolute level of achievement growing for all groups, and more work was required to accelerate further the progress of these groups in relation to their peers.

The report stated that the authority had continued to grow the proportion of schools that had been judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted, with an increase of 6% to 77.8% at the end of July 2015. The authority had full operational responsibility for community schools and almost 85% of those schools had been judged to be Good or Outstanding.

The report explained that there had been a focused Ofsted inspection of the local authority's School Improvement Service early in the academic year 2014/15 that had identified the need for the local authority to be clearer about its approach to helping all schools achieve consistently good practice while supporting those schools where standards were not good.

The report stated that the authority was responsible for ensuring that all pupils in the Borough could and did access education. For maintained schools that included the responsibility and authority to intervene as required. For Academy schools the local authority had no power of intervention but was expected to challenge any underperformance and, if necessary, report unresolved concerns to the Secretary of State for Education via the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Resolved -

- (1) That the levels of performance at each of the five stages as set out in section 4 of the report be noted and all of the pupils who had worked hard in the last academic year, along with all of staff in Reading's schools be congratulated;**
- (2) That although there was evidence of sustained improvements over time in the early years and primary phase, the requirement for further improvement to secure the absolute level of achievement set out in the Raising Attainment Strategy be noted;**
- (3) That while Reading's absolute level of attainment in secondary phase was above national average levels, the benchmark attainment levels were declining in line with national trends and the requirement for more work to understand how Reading compared with other local authorities be noted;**
- (4) That the increasing proportion of schools that were achieving judgements of Good or Outstanding from Ofsted, especially in community schools be noted and the Regional Schools Commissioner be asked to explain how similar improvements would be secured in the town's Academy schools;**
- (5) That Kevin McDaniel be thanked for his hard work on behalf of the authority, particularly in respect of the school expansion programme, and wished good luck for the future.**

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(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 10.05 pm).