

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**20 MARCH 2017**

**Present:** Councillor McElligott (Chair)  
Councillors Brock, Eden, Ennis, Gavin, Hoskin, Jones, McKenna, O'Connell, Pearce, Stanford-Beale, Vickers and J Williams.

**Apologies:** Councillors Livingston and Robinson.

**53. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Further to Minute 45 of the last meeting, Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan Progress Update and in response to a question from Councillor J Williams, Councillor Gavin explained that a progress report would be submitted to the next meeting in June 2017 after the Commissioner had reported to the Department for Education.

**54. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES**

The Minutes of the following meeting were submitted:

- Children's Trust Partnership Board - 10 January 2017

**Resolved - That the Minutes be noted.**

**55. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

Questions on the following matters were submitted, and answered by the Lead Councillors:

<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Councillor Josh Williams	Looked After Children placed out of Borough
Councillor Josh Williams	Peer Support for Autistic People
Councillor Josh Williams	Focus House
Mandeep Kaur Sira, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Reading	Statutory Advocacy Services

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

**56. PRESENTATION BY THE HEADTEACHER OF CRANBURY COLLEGE**

Mandy Wilton, Headteacher of Cranbury College, and Simon Lovelock, Deputy Headteacher of Cranbury College gave a presentation on what the college did and its vision.

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The college was an alternative curriculum provider for five to sixteen year olds and currently had 132 children and young people on roll. A number of services were provided including a hospital teaching service, post 16 provision, behaviour support services and a pupil referral unit. The college faced a number of issues including a record number of exclusions, pressure on specialist provision, funding issues and shrinking services to support the most vulnerable children, young people and families. The vision for the college was to offer first class bespoke education provision, personalised learning, give children aspiration and hope, to continue to develop professional partnerships, to work collaboratively and to be the provider of Social Emotional and Mental Health support in Reading.

Work had been carried out on reframing the college and re-provisioning it within the Reading Offer with the aim of dispelling myths and pre-conceptions. Reintegration was at record levels but was always carried out with a view that if it didn't work then it would not be an issue. The question was always asked "would it be good enough for my child." It was also recognised that there was a need to prove that the college could deliver good and outstanding education.

The aspiration was for every student to graduate from the college being a lifelong learner with a range of relevant skills, skills that were relevant and personal to them with the aim of guaranteeing a future for the young person and their family.

The Committee discussed the presentation, asked questions and a number of points were raised including the following:

- The college had a close working relationship with CAMHS and measured the impact of interventions and then provided feedback to CAMHS;
- Data was collected on the progress measured of children and young people in hospital;
- Headteachers and deputies that the college worked with would liaise with the college about a child or young person that they were considering excluding;
- A lot of collaborative work took place with schools particularly with secondary Headteachers;
- There were a number of different pathways aimed at getting the best package for students and a lot of work was built on trust, trust that the college would do what it said it would do;
- Discussions were taking place around funding for post 18 students to help them with life skills, employability skills and apprenticeships and work was being carried out with New Directions on building a curriculum, work was also being carried out with Reading College;
- Early intervention was key, for example, identifying what worked in the primary setting and ultimately the college wanted to have its staff in schools working with teachers.

**Resolved - That Mandy Wilton and Simon Lovelock be thanked for their presentation.**

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**57. SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

The Acting Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with a summary update on the progress of improving pupil achievement and attainment in Reading's schools.

The report explained that there had been progress since the adoption of the Improvement Strategy which meant that Council maintained schools were on track to meet the target of 100% being good or better by 2019. However, two academies had remained as "requires improvement" and might not be visited by Ofsted until late 2018 or early 2019, this would put the achievement of the overall target of all schools being good or better by 2019 at risk. Outcomes for Early Years and Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 had shown improvements when compared to the national rankings compared to previous years. All Primary Schools in the Borough were above the national floor target and Reading was above national rankings for combined reading, writing and mathematics (RWM) for the first time in over ten years.

Outcomes had shown a year on year improvement in Early Years with a Good Level of Development being 1.7% above national rankings. At Key Stage 2 the authority had been ranked 50 for RWM at the expected standard and seventh at the higher standard. No schools had been identified as 'coasting' schools within the primary phase. The key measure of combined RWM had moved from 103<sup>rd</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> which placed Reading in the top third nationally. At Key Stage 4 there had been good outcomes in relation to attainment which was "significantly above the national average" for Attainment 8 and "above national average" for the English Baccalaureate. The percentage achieving both English and Mathematics had been described as "in line with national" (62%), being slightly above the national figures at 64%. Areas for improvement within Key Stage 4 were those children with Education, Health and Care Plans, those who had been identified by schools as requiring Special Educational Needs Support and children who were eligible for Free School Meals.

The report explained that the Improvement Strategy comprised of three 'strands' of work, Leadership and Management, Recruitment and Retention and Improving the Outcomes for the most vulnerable learners. Within strand 1 a 'Her Majesty's Inspector' had been working with school leadership teams and to date six schools had carried out this coaching, a further six were carrying out the programme and a further six would take part in the strategic coaching of leaders and Headteachers in the summer term 2017. Schools that had been categorised as Raising Achievement Schools and those with the lowest performance had regular progress reviews, which brought the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, School Partnership Adviser and the Strategic Lead for School Improvement together to review progress against an agreed plan. This process had led to improvements in 2016 and had continued in the current academic year. For strand 2 a discounted package with a provider had been negotiated for primary schools and academies to purchase and this had ensured that high quality advertisements could be promoted nationally. Within strand 3 the School Improvement Team was providing support to those maintained schools that had been identified through the School Monitoring Group as requiring specific support. There was a planned agenda throughout the year for visits and

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issues were being challenged and addressed in partnership with the schools. In addition, specific work for governors and leadership teams within schools was being provided by the School Improvement Team.

The report stated that planned work included Ofsted preparation for strand 1 for 20 Headteachers and Leaders, a course on 'Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants' for strand 3 and a Pan Berkshire 'Breaking Through Barriers' Conference that was being organised by Bracknell Forest Council and would take place on 16 June 2017.

Councillor Jones informed that Committee that he had visited Christ the King Catholic Primary School and John Madejski Academy that day and thanked the Headteachers at the schools for their hard work and passion under the current very challenging circumstances.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed that the update report to be submitted to the next meeting should include reference to the Future Funding Formula and the financial stability of schools.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the progress of improving pupil achievement and attainment in Reading's schools be noted;**
- (2) That an update report be submitted to the next meeting outlining on a "school by school" basis their current respective status, and, as a matter of scrutiny, their prospects of improvement including reference to the Future Funding Formula and the financial stability of schools.**

**58. PROGRESS OF THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY**

The Acting Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the status of the new Adopt Thames Valley Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and identifying the current status of the project and the current implications for the Council.

The report stated that in joining the RAA, Adoption Services would be delivered on a greater scale and with more innovative approaches to practice, an approach that had real potential to improve outcomes for Reading's children. The 'go live' date for the RAA was October 2017 and to date all funding proposals against formulae would deliver budget savings on adoption for the Council. However, until the final formula was agreed by the Adopt Thames Valley Board and Local Authority contributions fixed, the delay to the 'go live' date was at risk.

The staffing structure of the new organisation had not been agreed and was complicated by the fact that the participating local authorities had existing management structures that varied. The recommendation for a three site property for the RAA had been agreed and would be supplemented by the availability in local authority social work offices for social workers to hot desk. Agreement had been reached at the February 2017 Board meeting that the governance arrangements for

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the RAA would be via a single Board that would meet on a monthly basis through the initial stage of delivery. Attendance at the Board would be at officer level and a second tier of Lead Councillor/Director meetings would take place, possibly on a six monthly basis, to ensure councillor involvement in the joint delivery of the service. The quarterly performance framework for the RAA had also been considered and agreement had been reached that the proposed framework would allow appropriate management oversight.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Council continue to participate in the Adopt Thames Valley Regional Adoption Agency;**
- (2) That once the financial arrangements had been agreed at the Adopt Thames Valley Board they be considered for approval at Policy Committee in order not to delay further the launch of the 'go live' of the Regional Adoption Agency;**
- (3) That the governance arrangements for the onward delivery of the project in allowing both officer and member oversight and engagement be approved.**

**59. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT BOARD - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR**

The Interim Managing Director submitted a report from the Independent Chair of the Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB) that covered the period from the publication of the Ofsted report in August 2016 to the end of February 2017; the report was presented by the Chair of the CSIB. A copy of the objectives for the CSIB was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that during the period the Board had overseen the development of the Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan that had been developed in response to the 18 recommendations for improvement that had been identified in the Ofsted report. The Plan also included a number of other improvement actions that had been identified by the authority based on the narrative in the Ofsted report. Since the development of the Plan and its submission to Ofsted the Board had focused on monitoring the performance and delivery of actions in the plan in order to demonstrate improvement to Ofsted, the Department for Education, the Council and the wider community.

The role of the Board in supporting improvements had been acknowledged by the Commissioner who had been appointed in September 2016 by the Secretary of State for Education to carry out a three month review of the Council's children's services and its capacity to improve. The review period had been extended for the Commissioner to assess the best way to ensure sustainable improvements in the service, and he had requested an increase focus by the Board on ensuring that quality assurance was applied systematically during this period.

In addition to monitoring the Learning and Improvement Plan, the Board had also focused on impact and quality assurance activity to ensure that all improvements

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that had been identified were well evidenced and secure. This had been particularly important in relation to improving the quality of social work practice.

The Board had focused on the three key priorities of People and Leadership, Practice and Systems and Governance and Accountability. The Board recognised the enormous amount of work that had been carried out to develop and begin implementation of the Learning and Improvement Plan. Officers had provided detailed and timely reports to the Board with clear RAG rating on the plan and a comprehensive data set which had become increasingly reliable. Management actions relating to areas of slower progress were becoming more clearly focused on resolution rather than commentary and there was evidence of a more rigorous approach to improvement. Nevertheless, there was still a long way to go to secure the scale of improvement required and this was recognised by the senior leadership team and the Board.

Di Smith, Chair of the CSIB, informed the Committee that work was currently being carried out to ascertain how the 'single front door' could help the service and one of the priorities had been to listen to the voice of the child with social workers being asked what visits to children had told them about the child's life.

**Resolved - That the report be noted.**

**60. ADULT CARE AND SUPPORT CHARGING AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT  
FRAMEWORK 2017/18**

The Interim Director of Adult Care and Health Services submitted a report detailing the proposed changes to the Adult Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework in light of the associated Consultation and Equalities Impact Assessment. A copy of the consultation report was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was attached to the report at Appendix 3. Appendix 2, the Draft Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework 2017/18, had been circulated electronically and published on the Council's website.

The report explained that the Council had consulted on and implemented a Charging and Financial Assessment Framework as part of implementing the Care Act 2014. The Act and associated Regulations and Guidance set out the principles and rules on Charging and Financial Assessment which all Councils needed to follow and set out the discretionary elements which Councils could decide on locally. The Council's Adult Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework that had been implemented in April 2015 and had been subsequently revised in April 2016 had incorporated some of the local decisions in the Council's previous charging policies, such as the Fairer Charging Policy for Adult Care and Support. The Adult Care Service had been undergoing a Transformation Programme to ensure it was financially sustainable in the coming years and as part of this programme a review of the Adult Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework was taking place. Four proposed changes had gone out for public consultation on 13 December 2016 for 90 days. The report and appendices detailed the proposed changes to the Framework in light of the consultation and EIA and if agreed and fully realised would result in estimated additional income of £605,336.

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The report detailed the publicly consulted proposed amendments to the Adult Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework, as follows, and included an estimate of the additional income that would be generated for the Council:

- Removing allowances and disregards from the Financial Assessment;
- Assistive Technologies and Telecare;
- Respite breaks/short stays in registered care homes;
- Meals and refreshments provided at Council day centres;
- Consultation outcome.

Other proposed amendments to the Framework were as follows:

- Backdating charging to when the care service had began;
- Amendment to the administration fee for Deferred Payments and Interim Funding;
- Amendment to the administration fee for Self Funders;
- Clarity on how charges for support would be calculated and reconciled;
- Charge for service from the Community Reablement Team (CRT) after the service users goals had been met;
- Review of the provision of Independent Financial Information and Advice.

The Committee discussed the report and requested that an update report be submitted in 12 months' time or earlier if there was a significant drop in take-up of the services as a result of the changes.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the revised Adult Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework be approved including each of the following proposed changes:**
  - (a) Removing allowances and disregards from the Financial Assessment;**
  - (b) Charging for Assistive Technologies and Telecare;**
  - (c) Changing the charging policy on respite breaks/short stays in registered care homes;**
  - (d) Charging for meals and refreshments provided at council day centres;**
  - (e) Backdating charging to when the care service began;**
  - (f) Amendment to the administration fee for Deferred Payments and Interim Funding;**
  - (g) Amendment to the administration fee for Self Funders;**
  - (h) Clarity on how charges for support will be calculated and reconciled;**
  - (i) Charge for service from the Community Reablement Team (CRT) after the service users goals have been met;**
  - (j) Review of the provision of Independent Financial Information and Advice;**

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- (2) That an update report be submitted to the Committee in 12 months' time or earlier if there was a significant drop in take-up of the services as a result of the changes.

**61. STATUTORY ADVOCACY SERVICES FOR ADULTS**

The Interim Director of Adult Care and Health Services submitted a report proposing the re-commissioning of three types of statutory advocacy provision under a single contract, setting out the rationale for this approach from a customer perspective and as an efficiency measure.

The report explained that it was obliged to make available advocacy support under prescribed circumstances in order to support adults' engagement in health or social care processes. These statutory advocacy services were distinct from self-advocacy services and were also distinct from ongoing advocacy support which might be purchased with a Personal Budget when an Adult Social Care service user was assessed as needing this support in order to meet Care Act outcomes.

The report stated that each of the four statutory advocacy services for adults was commissioned currently under a separate arrangement for the Council and six separate organisations provided the advocates. A further separate provider was commissioned to provide advocacy support to children. The Independent Mental Capacity Act (IMCA) service was commissioned jointly with the other Berkshire local authorities, under Wokingham's lead, under a contract which would run through into 2018/19. The provider had consistently met its target and had delivered the service to the standard specified. Client engagement had risen after a recent court ruling had expanded service eligibility to a much wider group of clients. As such, no efficiency savings had been identified as realisable at this stage. The Independent Mental Health Act (IMHA), NHS Complaints and Care Act advocacy services were all commissioned under arrangements which had been extended into 2017/18 only and there was an overlap between services and providers.

**Resolved - That the Director of Adult Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Lead Councillor for Adult Care and the Lead Councillor for Health, be authorised to enter into a legally binding agreement with the provider or providers who are successful in a commissioning exercise to deliver a combined statutory advocacy service for adults in accordance with the requirements of the Mental Health Act (2007), the Health and Social Care Act (2012) and the Care Act (2014).**

**62. COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING (ADULTS) 2017-18**

The Interim Director of Adult Care and Health Services submitted a report presenting the Committee with a series of proposals for providing community support for adult mental health and wellbeing in 2017-18. The report also included a summary of feedback that had been received during a public consultation on discontinuing funding for the preventative peer-led support service delivered by Reading Your Way, and an assessment of the anticipated equalities impacts of reducing Council funding for this service in line with previously agreed savings plans. A copy of the



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Reading Your Way Consultation Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the EIA was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report stated that the Council's approach to commissioning for all mental health support was based on recovery principles, driven by a commitment to delivering high quality support in line with best practice and the need to keep services cost effective and sustainable.

**Reading Samaritans** - The report proposed that funding support for the Reading Samaritans into 2017/18 should be maintained in the form of a contract to the value of £2,025 to support their role in building community capacity to promote good mental health. The contracted service would be the recruitment and training of volunteers to act as emphatic listeners to support emotional wellbeing in the community. These volunteers would work with members of the community in crisis to avert suicide and promote good mental health. The training programme to learn the skills and procedures needed to be a listening volunteer included thirty hours of classroom based training. Further to satisfactory completion of the classroom based training further training and support would be provided via mentoring whilst performing the service.

**Mothertongue** - The Council had provided funding and support to Mothertongue for a number of years and as part of the Council's voluntary sector savings programme funding for Mothertongue was due to reduce from £30,000 per annum to £21,000 per annum in 2017/18. Mothertongue was in the final stages of delivering a project to develop best practice in supporting people from black and minority ethnic communities and this would be shared with mainstream counselling services so as to improve those services' accessibility to people from different cultural backgrounds and whose first language was not English. The organisation had a clear exit plan, including the managed transition of its social inclusion support, the organisation would cease to exist on completion of this plan and would not be seeking funding support from the Council after 2017/18. There had been direct negotiation with Mothertongue over the previous year to find ways to support a managed exit whilst still achieving savings for the Council. Mothertongue had therefore put together a proposal to deliver in their final year with a 30% reduction in Council funding. It was proposed to provide Mothertongue with a final contract to the value of £21,000 for 2017/18 to promote the wellbeing of Reading residents from black and minority ethnic communities who were at risk of social isolation. By supporting individuals and families to develop personal resilience and to strengthen their community connections, the service would prevent the escalation of care and support needs. The service in 2017/18 would consist of a basic English as a Second or Other Language course, a women's craft group to provide opportunities for social interaction and language support to voluntary and community groups based in the Borough so as to facilitate access to services by residents from black and minority ethnic cultures.

**Reading Your Way (RYW)** - Feedback from a recent consultation about proposed cuts to RYW funding was that there would be a gap if the current service provided by RYW ceased; the service had been described as a bridge between statutory/acute services and other community support. RYW had been actively involved in the development of the Reading Recovery College and was evolving naturally to include support for Recovery College students to complement the College's offer. RYW was also involved

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in discussions with the CCGs to support the re-modelling of mental health crisis support in the Borough. This opened up opportunities for the Council and the CCGs to work together and with RYW and its service users in 2017/18 to plan for further changes and manage any necessary transition safely. The report recommended that the Council continued to commission a preventative support service from RYW in 2017/18, at a funding level set previously for the service from 2017/18 in line with agreed savings plans. The report was also asking for the continued occupation of 1A Rupert Square by RYW to be endorsed under the Tenancy at Will (a Tenancy at Will was usually granted to facilitate occupation pending completion of a Lease and could be terminated at any time by either party on short notice). The property was owned by the Council and RYW was allowed to occupy the property at nil rent but with the responsibility for maintaining the property.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That a payment of £2,025 to the Reading Samaritans to recruit and train volunteer listeners to their service throughout 2017-18 be authorised;**
- (2) That a payment of £21,000 to Mothertongue Multi-ethnic Counselling and Listening Service in 2017-18 to support Reading residents from black and minority ethnic communities to develop personal resilience and strengthen their community connections be authorised;**
- (3) That the feedback received during a public consultation on reducing Council funding for the preventative support provided by Reading Your Way, as detailed in Appendix 1, be noted;**
- (4) That the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups have committed to contributing revenue funding of £85k into the Reading Your Way organisation for 2017-18 be noted;**
- (5) That the expected equalities impacts of reducing the level of funding provided by the Council for Reading Your Way's preventative peer support service, as detailed in Appendix 2, be considered;**
- (6) That the Interim Director of Adult Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care and the Lead Councillor for Health, be authorised to negotiate and enter into a legally binding contract with Reading Your Way for the provision of a peer support service which complements and facilitates access to the Compass Recovery College and is to be delivered in 2017-18 at a cost of £76,300;**
- (7) That the continued occupation by Reading Your Way of 1A Rupert Square RG1 3HE under a tenancy at will be endorsed.**

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**63. NEW DIRECTIONS SERVICE UPDATE**

Further to Minute 52 of the meeting held on 2 March 2016, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report highlighting the sustained improvement in outcomes and value for money that New Directions, the Council's adult learning and employment service, had delivered over recent years, including increased sustained positive destinations for learners. A table setting out success data was attached to the report at Appendix A and a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) summary was attached to the report at Appendix B.

The report set out the plans that were in place for the service to further reduce costs over the next three years whilst maintaining the quality of service and positive outcomes for residents. It also outlined how the service was helping the Council to narrow the gap for more disadvantaged residents and communities.

The report highlighted the significant added value provided by the service, its partners and sub-contractors, including high quality volunteering opportunities, niche provision to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and helping to meet the skills needs of other Council services.

The Committee discussed the report and acknowledged the impact that improving the employability of adults had on improving the lives of their children.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the significant contribution New Directions is making to help narrow the gap for residents be noted;**
- (2) That the strategies in place to reduce costs whilst safeguarding the delivery and quality of services to Reading's more deprived and vulnerable communities, as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report, be endorsed;**
- (3) That the staff at New Directions be thanked for their work.**

(Councillor Stanford-Beale declared an interest in the above item, stayed in the meeting and took part in the discussion. Nature of interest: Councillor Stanford-Beale was Chief Executive of Autism Berkshire a supplier to New Directions).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.44 pm).