

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
12 JULY 2017

Present: Councillor McElligott (Chair)
Councillors Eden, Gavin, Hoskin, Jones, Khan, Maskell, McKenna, Pearce, Robinson, Stanford-Beale, Vickers and J Williams.

Apologies: Councillor O'Connell.

10. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Following his statement at the last meeting Councillor Jones reported that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) had released a statement about Chiltern Edge School stating that following the consultation a plan to allow the school more time to raise standards had been put forward by OCC and a review would then take place in October 2017.

Further to Minute 9 of the last meeting, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) - Update, Councillor Hoskin informed the Committee that a meeting with the CCG had been arranged on 26 July 2017 to discuss the situation as it affected Berkshire West and confirmed that a report on the next steps would be submitted to the next meeting on 5 October 2017. Councillor Hoskin also reported that a list of savings as part of the STP Plan was still awaited.

11. FOCUS HOUSE: OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Director of Adult Care and Health Services submitted a report setting out the options for the future of the Focus House Service which currently provided accommodation with support for adults with mental health needs. A copy of the consultation report was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that 14 Castle Crescent provided Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered Residential Care for up to seven residents in single bedrooms. All support staff were employed to support the residents and to provide support to mental health service users who had been residents and had moved to step-down accommodation at either 16 Castle Crescent or one of two Shared Group Homes. In addition, the service promoted itself on an informal basis as a crisis/crisis prevention 'care hub' for previous service users. Focus House was the one remaining Council owned facility and provided Working Age Mental Health Care accommodation provision in the Borough.

The report stated that the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme was aimed at delivering Adult Social Care in the most cost efficient way. The Transformation Programme included a review of the Focus House service, which was currently providing mental health support on a residential care model that combined accommodation with 24/7 care. This model did not offer flexibility to vary levels of care as people progressed along the road to recovery, which was recognised as an important way of empowering service users to achieve and maximise their independence. Four alternative options had been considered as follows:

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- Option 1** Close the Residential Care Home at 14 Castle Crescent.
- Option 2** Outsource (sell/lease) the properties/service at 14 and 16 Castle Crescent as a going concern to a Mental Health Provider.
- Option 3** Further develop and remodel the Focus House Service in line with a Recovery Model.
- Option 4** Continue to run the service as it was with 14 Castle Crescent retaining the Residential Care home status.

The report also set out the financial implications of each of the options.

The report stated that the recommended option, option 3, was to develop the service as a Supported Living model in line with best practice (the 'recovery approach') to retain a service in local authority control and maximise opportunities to retain the expertise of staff currently employed within the service. If accepted current service users, in line with their Care Plan needs, would be offered the opportunity to remain living in their current accommodation with individual tenancy agreements. Care would be provided through a high needs Supported Living Recovery Model, in most cases, if not all, by familiar staff.

Rebecca Norris, Healthwatch Reading, attended the meeting and showed a film of the residents of Focus House sharing their views about Focus House and the consultation on its future.

Claire Dodsworth, resident of Focus House, also addressed the Committee and spoke about an on-line petition that had been set up which had attracted 335 signatures to date.

Resolved -

- (1) That Option 3, as set out in the report, 'further develop the Focus House service and change the CQC status from 'Residential' to 'Supported Living', be approved;**
- (2) That officers be thanked for their work on the consultation and Rebecca Norris and Claire Dodsworth be thanked for attending the meeting and addressing the Committee.**

12. SCRUTINY REVIEW - CONTINUING HEALTHCARE FUNDING

Further to Minute 7 of the last meeting, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report presenting the final report by the Task and Finish group that had been set up at the 3 February 2016 meeting (minute 43 refers) to carry out a review of Continuing Healthcare Funding.

The report explained that to carry out the review a series of four evidence gather sessions had been held as follows:

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- 27 July 2016 - meeting to consider a report by Wokingham Borough Council detailing concerns about CHC;
- 13 September and 15 December 2016 - meetings with Cathy Winfield, Chief Officer North West Reading, South Reading, Newbury and District and Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs);
- 23 March 2017 - meeting with Paula Johnston, Acting Service Manager, Older and Physically Disabled People, Reading Borough Council.

The group had drawn up a number of conclusions that had been based on their evidence gathering sessions and had made a number of recommendations which had been grouped together under the following headings:

- Benchmarking;
- Joint Action Plan;
- Future Reporting;
- Provision of CHC for children and young people.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed the recommendations set out in the report by the Task and Finish Group.

Resolved -

- (1) That benchmarking data be obtained on a three monthly basis from the CCG as agreed;
- (2) That the joint Action Plan be implemented as agreed and reviewed by the CCG and local authority on a monthly basis;
- (3) That a report be submitted to the 12 December 2017 meeting detailing progress in delivering the Action Plan with an explanation if any actions had not been achieved or only partially achieved;
- (4) That as part of the report to the 12 December 2017 meeting the most recent data on the provision of CHC be included to allow comparison with the data in section 2 of the report;
- (5) That a review of the provision of CHC for children and young people be commissioned in consultation with the Lead Councillors for Children's Services and Families and Health and a report be submitted to a future meeting.

13. OFSTED UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the most recent Ofsted Monitoring visit that had been carried out on 31 May and 1 June 2017 with the resultant monitoring letter published on the Ofsted website on 29 June 2017.

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The report explained that, in addition to work being carried out in the Directorate and at Panels and Committees service, improvement activity was overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB). Existing service improvement and development plans had been integrated into a single learning and improvement plan which incorporated the 18 recommendations for improvement that had been set out in the Ofsted report as well as corporate saving delivery targets. The original learning and improvement plan was in the process of being refreshed to ensure an outcome focus on all improvement activity. This would move away from the process orientated approach that had been identified by Ofsted. The revised plan would be presented to the July 2017 meeting of the CSIB.

Ofsted had recognised the 'slow' progress that had been made by Children's Services, which had occurred due to a lack of focused and targeted improvement activity in the period immediately post inspection and the delay in securing financial resource to deliver improvement until the commencement of the financial year 2017/18. Work to stabilise the workforce had been judged as ineffective and had been based on high vacancy rates and 'churn' within the workforce. A revised national recruitment campaign had commenced in June 2017 which was showing early signs of progress in the recruitment of permanent staff. Senior management positions were scheduled for recruitment through the late summer and autumn of 2017.

The report stated that there were a number of cases across the whole Children's Services caseload that had a legacy of historic, weak practice, resulting in drift and delay. These cases were being addressed with improved current practice, though historic and some current weaknesses continued to be visible in case files. However, social work with children in some permanent teams was stronger and social workers were working hard to build relationships.

The audit function of the authority had seen an increase in capacity with a new focus on coaching and mentoring in order to develop a learning culture and further expedite pace to the social work practice improvements required. Caseloads had been stabilised, transition arrangements had improved, accommodation was mostly suitable and there were examples of regular management supervision.

Finally, the report set out the following proposals:

- That the role of the CSIB was continued and strengthened in order to provide ongoing challenge and scrutiny to the service improvement work of the Council in collaboration with its partners;
- That improvement activity was reported to the Board on a quarterly basis through update reports from the independent Chair of CSIB;
- That Ofsted update reports be submitted to future Committee meetings following all subsequent Ofsted monitoring visits.

Ann Marie Dodds, Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services, reported that the recruitment campaign that had commenced in June 2017 had resulted in six offers being made to social workers and two offers to Team Managers.

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With regard to out of Borough placements Councillor Gavin explained that Ofsted had stated that longer term stability and relationships/trust had to be built with children and young people which was why social workers from the authority travelled, often some distance, to visit the authority's children who had been placed out of Borough rather than delegate this function to social workers from the authority where the children had been placed. One of the aims of reducing the number of out of Borough placements was to reduce the travel time of social workers who visited the children. However, some children would always need to be placed in specialist placements which could only be found out of Borough.

Resolved -

- (1) That the improvements made, as documented by Ofsted, be noted, and the considerable improvement activity still to be undertaken be acknowledged;**
- (2) That the proposal for management oversight of a single improvement plan through the Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB) be accepted;**
- (3) That updates on Ofsted's findings post publication of subsequent monitoring letters be received.**

14. EDUCATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME, EXPANSION OF MOORLANDS SCHOOL

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report on the expansion of Moorlands Primary School.

The report stated that as part of the capital programme, Moorlands Primary School had been identified for expansion from 420 to 630 pupils and in order to do this the Council was required to carry out a formal statutory consultation in accordance with the process laid out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and Education Act 2011.

The report included a table that set out the forecast demand for pupil places compared to existing School capacity. The table indicated that the planning areas with the greatest shortfall of available places were in the centre of the Borough followed by the south east. It also showed that across the Borough there was an ongoing rise in demand for pupil places in 2017/18 and 2018/19 with estimated shortfalls of 81 places in September 2017 and 32 places in September 2018.

The report explained that there was planned development in the south and north planning zones to develop additional primary capacity. In the south, discussions were underway with the Education Funding Agency (EFA), a housing developer and an academy sponsor to develop additional primary capacity. In the north, the EFA was committed to developing a two form entry Primary Free School. However, uncertainty around the site had presented a risk to the 150 primary pupil places from September 2018 and contingency planning was in place to provide capacity at community schools in the north of the Borough.

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The report stated that having looked at existing provision across the planning area the proposal was to expand Moorlands Primary School. At an early stage in 2016 the Headteacher and Chair of school governors had been approached to gauge their reaction to the school being expanded and the response had been very positive and client team meetings had been held with the school to develop a detailed proposal.

Chris Kiernan, Head of Education, also provided the Committee with an explanation as to how the school places forecast figures across the Borough were calculated.

Resolved -

- (1) That the proposal, as detailed in the report, to hold a formal expansion consultation of Moorlands Primary School be approved;**
- (2) That the Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education, be authorised to publicise the statutory proposals to expand Moorlands Primary School following consideration of the outcome of the consultation.**

15. QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN READING SCHOOLS

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with a summary update on the progress and attainment of pupils in Reading's schools, with an outline of their current Ofsted status and their prospects of improvement. The report summarised attainment at the Early Years Foundation Stage and for Key Stages 1 to 5. It also set out the Ofsted outcomes by phase, pre-school, primary, secondary and special, comparing the percentage of settings and schools rated good or better in April 2017 compared with the end of the school year 2015.

The report detailed the performance of schools in the Borough for the academic year 2015/16 at the following Key Stages:

Early Years and Foundation Stage - Pupils had improved their 'school readiness' between 2015 and 2016 and had performed well compared to pupils in statistical neighbours and all English local authorities; they were second best of the 11 statistical neighbours and in the top half when benchmarked against other local authorities.

Key Stage 1 - Pupil performance had improved relative to statistical neighbours and all English local authorities and was now at the average level against both comparator groups.

Key Stage 2 - The authority was in the second quartile, 5th out of 11 statistical neighbours, and 49th out of 152 English areas. Given the index of multiple deprivation these positions were to be expected, but this was a remarkable improvement and in particular a good adaptation by primary schools to the tougher tests.

Key Stage 4 - Performance had improved significantly when measured against all English local authorities and was above average for statistical neighbours. For the

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Baccalaureate performance was good and much better than that of pupils in all English local authorities and was improving at a faster rate.

Key Stage 5 - As measured by level 3 points, scores performance at Key Stage 5 was outstanding by students attending Reading post-16 education institutions. However, because there was significant movement between local authority areas the results might reflect high attainment in previous key stages in other local authority areas.

The report stated that while in the Borough it was true that gaps in attainment had not been closed they were low in all the areas that had been measured. The report also detailed progress between the key stages and explained that for Key Stages 2 to 4 in 2016 a new measure, progress 8, had been introduced which measured the progress that had been made by pupils across eight subjects. Reading pupils had made less progress than the national average and were ranked 10th out of 152 local authorities.

The report also set out the Ofsted outcomes by phase and stated that the performance of schools in their latest Ofsted inspections had improved strongly between 2015 and 2017. However, the percentage of schools that had been rated good or better was still only third quartile compared with all south east local authorities and still in the bottom quartile nationally but there needed to be an assessment of the performance of primary schools for which the authority was accountable and this was set out in the report. With regard to academy schools the authority had no powers of intervention as this rested with the Department for Education and its regional schools commissioner.

Secondary schools overall were 143th nationally when measured by the percentage of schools that were good or better, fourth quartile performance. However, the performance of three of the four schools that were 'requires improvement' or worse was a matter for the regional commissioner and the fourth school was planned to become a sponsored academy in the new school year 2017/18.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That a further report be submitted to the Committee meeting in the autumn 2017 term, setting out the provisional outcomes and progress of pupils at the end of their 2017 Key Stage assessments and examinations, and any changes in Ofsted gradings of schools.

16. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report setting out the context for change in relation to provision and support for Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) in Reading. The following appendices were attached to the draft report:

Appendix 1	SEND Strategy 2017-2022
Appendix 2	Data

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Appendix 3a and 3b	High Needs Block
Appendix 4	Progress to date
Appendix 5	Duties set out in legislation and guidance

The report stated that a Strategy was proposed for addressing key areas of improvement and development that would support universal and specialist provision across a range of agencies in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families into the future. A Strategy was also required to provide an agreed framework that would enable provision and support to be planned across key agencies that would deliver the SEND Code of Practice (2014) in a coordinated way, ensuring that children and young people's needs were met at the right time, making best use of available resources.

Currently there was no SEND Strategy which had resulted in a position whereby the historical range of provision and services in the Borough did not meet the changed profile of needs of children and young people with SEND locally. The involvement of parents/carers from the start in developing and then implementing plans and strategies that might impact on children and young people with additional needs was essential and at the heart of SEND reforms. The impact of working with Reading's Parent Carer Forum had been very positive and they would be involved in the delivery of all elements of the Strategy. The involvement of young people in the development and implementation of the Strategy was key to its success. However, this engagement was currently less developed than that with parents/carers but would be further developed as part of the Strategy.

Resolved - That the SEND Strategy 2017 - 2022 be approved.

17. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Further to Minute 43 of the meeting held on 13 December 2016, the Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report presenting the Home to School Transport Policy and Appeals process for children and young people aged 5 to 16. A copy of the School Transport Policy was attached to the report at Appendix A, a copy of the School Transport Appeals Process was attached at Appendix B and a copy of the Code of Practice for School Transport Operation was attached to the report at Appendix C.

The report explained that the Home to School Transport Policy had not been refreshed for a number of years and that the Policy took into account the following:

- New national guidance in arrangements for home to school transport in relation to denominational schools,
- The changing landscape of schools and resultant changes in catchment areas that had necessitated the need to change terminology from the nearest designated appropriate school to the nearest suitable school;
- Member direction on a new appeals process.

A new School Transport Policy had been written to take into account the above changes and changes to the Policy and Appeals process that had been approved at the meeting on 13 December 2016.

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Resolved - That the new School Transport Policy, Appeals Process and Code of Practice be approved.

18. CONSULTATION REPORT ON CHANGES TO TERM DATES

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report on a consultation on whether to change published school term and holiday dates for the academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 which were not in alignment with those of the Council's neighbouring local authorities at certain points in the year. The proposed term dates for 2017-18 were attached to the report at Appendix 1 and the 2018-19 proposed term dates and calendar were attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that the anomaly in the Easter 2018 holiday dates had first been raised by Headteachers who had been concerned about the impact on the attendance of their pupils and their staff for the holiday that did not match those of Reading's neighbouring authorities. Headteachers had also reported that both staff and parents were concerned about the practicalities and cost of organising childcare when children attended different schools or where their staff lived in a different area from that in which they worked. Direct enquiries had also been received from parents and two councillors on behalf of their constituents. However, the driver for the consultation had been the Headteachers and the authority's joint wish to be proactive and seek a solution.

There was a similar anomaly in the academic year 2018-19 in the October 2018 and Easter 2019 holidays and therefore the consultation included changes to term dates for this following year to address these issues.

The consultation had been sent to Headteachers, governors, parents and the Lead Councillor for Education on 7 June 2017. Proposal 1 had been that all schools considered adopting term four ending on 29 March 2018 and starting term five on 16 April 2018. This new term pattern would give a total of 194 days so an extra day would need to be found. Proposal 2 was that Reading schools adopted the October 2018 and Easter 2019 holidays in line with other local authorities and that the term dates were re-published. 39 schools had been in favour of proposal 1, with 14 schools against, and 51 schools had been in favour of Proposal 2 with one school against and one school partially in favour of the proposal.

Resolved -

- (1) That although the majority of those consulted supported the change to new term dates suggested in Proposal 1 Council officers consider that on balance it was too late to practically do so and therefore the recommendation that the term dates and holiday dates remain as previously published for 2017-18 be approved;**
- (2) That the Council adopt the new term dates suggested in Proposal 2 for the academic year 2018-19 giving schools and parents time to plan for the changes.**

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19. UPDATE ON SHORT BREAKS - OUTCOME-BASED CONTRACTS

Further to Minute 44 of the meeting held on 13 December 2016, the Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update of the Council's current position on Short Breaks. The latest message to the voluntary sector requesting their input was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a timeline of the project plan for Short Breaks and outcome based contracts was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report stated that the provision of Short Breaks was to be secured and delivered through outcome-based contracts with a range of providers to ensure that varied services achieved appropriate results for the Borough's children in need of support. The Access to Resource Team (ART) was currently in the co-production stage with key stakeholders. This would help to develop appropriate bidding lots for Short Break provision to be advertised before awarding outcome-based contracts with successful providers starting on 1 April 2018.

The Council currently accessed their provision of Short Breaks through a range of in-house provision, Direct Payments and grants to community and Voluntary Sector providers. This arrangement addressed the Council's legislative requirements. The current grants to providers of Short Breaks had been due to expire on 31 March 2017 and this arrangement had subsequently been extended until 31 March 2018. The expectation was that outcome based contracts were in place for provisions of this nature by 1 April 2018. The ART was currently in the co-production stage and the team was working collaboratively with Reading Families' Forum, RCYVS and a number of Voluntary Sector providers to inform and construct the bidding lots to be advertised.

The Council would identify the outcomes required for children accessing Short Break intervention from providers and would then invite providers to tender for Short Break contracts. Once awarded the contracts would be robustly managed to ensure the right outcomes were achieved for the right families.

Key findings from the consultation had concluded that many families were not aware of their entitlement for Short Breaks or Direct Payments and there might be families accessing support at an inappropriate level in relation to their need. A review was being carried out of the Short Breaks Statement and amendments to include a new threshold document covering eligibility criteria would be made. Work was also being carried out to ensure the Council was compliant with legislation in offering a range of support and would ensure appropriate families were identified for support and that providers were directed to deliver appropriate results to safeguard and promote the welfare opportunities of the Borough's children.

Resolved - That the content of the report be noted and future activity to secure outcome-based contracts with a range of providers to ensure that varied services achieved appropriate results for Reading's children in need of support be approved.

(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-

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Beale was Chief Executive of Autism Berkshire a previous supplier of short break provision to the Council).

20. YOUTH JUSTICE ANNUAL PLAN

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report presenting the Committee with the Annual Youth Justice Plan relating to the authority's provision of youth justice services. A copy of the Reading Youth Justice Plan 2017-18 was attached to the report.

The report explained that local authorities continued to have a statutory duty to submit an annual Youth Justice Plan that related to their provision of youth justice services.

Resolved - That the Youth Justice Annual Plan be approved.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.16 pm).