

# Summons and Agenda 18 October 2016

Managing Director  
Reading Borough Council  
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,  
Reading, RG1 2LU





Simon Warren  
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10 October 2016

To: All Members of the Council

Your contact is:

Michael Popham - Democratic Services Manager

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Reading Borough Council to be held at the Civic Offices, Reading, on **Tuesday 18 October 2016 at 6.30pm**, when it is proposed to transact the business specified in the Agenda enclosed herewith.

Yours faithfully

*Simon Warren*

MANAGING DIRECTOR



## A G E N D A

### Mayor's Announcements

1. To receive Mayor's Announcements.

### Declarations of Interest

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

### Minutes

3. The Mayor to sign the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on 28 June 2016 (Pages A1-A3)

### Petitions

4. To receive petitions in accordance with Standing Order 8.

### Questions from Members of the Public

5. Questions in accordance with Standing Order 9.

### Questions from Councillors

6. Questions in accordance with Standing Order 10.

### Reports and Recommendations from Committees

7. Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan

Report by Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services  
(Pages B1-B36)

8. Finance Sustainability Plan Submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government

Report by Managing Director (Pages C1-C11)

9. Budget Savings Proposal: Arthur Hill Pool

Report by Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services and a debate in accordance with Standing Order 8(5)(e) (Pages D1-D16)

10. Standards Committee

Report by Monitoring Officer (Pages E1-E6)

## Motions

### 11. City of Sanctuary

Councillor Lovelock to move:

Reading has a proud history of welcoming diversity, challenging discrimination and supporting refugees, asylum seekers and other newcomers. We value the contribution that those seeking sanctuary can make to Reading and we are committed to taking practical steps to welcome and integrate all people into Reading's community.

In January the Council expressed its commitment, in real terms, to being a place of sanctuary by committing to take three families per year for five years through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme.

This Council notes that the first three families are now settled in Reading, supported by a range of organisations to help them adjust to their new lives.

This Council wishes to continue to promote the inclusion and welfare of those coming to Reading to seek sanctuary and resolves to support the Reading City of Sanctuary movement and to spread the sanctuary message of welcome across all sections of the local community.

### 12. Sustainability and Transformation Plans

Councillor Hoskin to move:

This Council notes that:

- On almost all performance measures the NHS in England is getting worse with waiting times for cancer care, accident and emergency, ambulances and routine operations all rising
- Spending on the NHS as a proportion of our national income in GDP was 8.8% in 2009, fell to 7.3% by 2015 and is projected (on current plans) to fall to 6.6% in by 2021 (source: The King's Fund)
- The NHS in England is currently developing local Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) in order to deliver the NHS Five Year Forward View with the aim of delivering financial sustainability, improved outcomes and better integration with local authority services
- On 22 March 2016 this council passed a motion condemning the creation, without consultation, of the STP area of Berkshire West, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOB) planning NHS cuts without public or democratic scrutiny and resolved to write to the Chief Executive of NHS England and the Secretary of State for Health outlining our objections
- No response was received from either the Chief Executive of NHS England or the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt

- That, following orders from Whitehall, STPs have been developed, will be finalised and submitted to NHS England, in secret and with the general public banned from having any sight of the plans
- That the BOB STP area is on course for a £587 million shortfall in funding by 2021 and that the primary aim of the secret STP is to cut spending to stay in budget

Council believes that:

- It is a disgrace that the government is directing the planning of massive cuts to the NHS across England behind closed doors, shutting out public or democratic involvement
- That cuts of £587 million to NHS spending across Bucks, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West are unacceptable and are likely to damage essential health services in Reading
- These drastic NHS cuts are a direct result of underfunding of health services by the UK government and that our country should return to the last Labour government's policy seeking to fund health services at a similar level to the EU average which stood at 10.1% of GDP in 2013 (source: the King's Fund)

This Council agrees to:

- request that the Managing Director write to the chief executive of NHS England and the Secretary of State for Health requesting that draft STPs are published and that full public involvement and consultation takes place before they are finalised
- request that the leader of the council writes to the MPs for Reading East and Reading West expressing this council's objection to both the secretive nature of the STP planning process and the scale of NHS cuts being considered and to ask for their support in opposing cuts to NHS services in Reading.

### 13. No Confidence in Councillor Jan Gavin

Councillor Duveen to move:

This Council accepts the recent OFSTED report on Children's Services in Reading and undertakes to follow its recommendations fully.

This Council recognises that prior to this report Children's Services in Reading have been in disarray and children being cared for by the Council have been let down.

This Council also notes that the recovery from the dire state that the service was in has been led by new officers and is currently tackling the shortcomings and improving the service to supported children to good effect.

The OFSTED report criticised, in particular, the Managing Director of RBC, the senior officers who worked in Children's Services and the 'Political Leadership'.

The Council notes that:

- the Managing Director has resigned.
- that the officers who were directly involved in the governance of Children's Services over the last few years have all resigned and have been replaced.
- that the third party involved in the governance of Children's Services and specifically criticised in the report, the Political Leadership, has yet to accept its responsibilities in running a failed service.

This Council believes that it is not right that senior officers accepted their responsibilities for past failures but Lead Councillors carry on as though nothing has happened. The Lead Councillor for Children's Services should also shoulder the blame for several years of neglect that has provided poor quality care for some of the young people that this Council was looking after.

Given the findings of the OFSTED report this Council calls on Cllr Jan Gavin to accept responsibility for past failures and to resign her post as Lead Councillor.

#### 14. Schools That Work For Everyone

Councillor Jones to move:

This council notes the launch of the government consultation "Schools that work for everyone" on 12 September 2016, which invites responses to the Department for Education by 12 December 2016.

This council also notes that the ambition of the green paper is to promote a discussion on how to ensure that "every child should have access to a good school place."

The council resolves:

1. to make a submission to the DfE as part of the consultation exercise within the specified deadline.
2. that in response to the four key areas of the consultation, this council disagrees that the way forward is to:
  - Use public money to induce Independent fee-paying schools to create more school places, or else lose their charitable status;
  - Bully Universities in to opening schools, or else risk capping their tuition fees;



- Use public money to assist in the expansion of selective schools;
  - Allow faith schools to become mono-cultural institutions.
3. that the best way to ensure that every child in Reading can have access to a good school place is for there to be:
- A fairer funding arrangement for all schools in Reading;
  - Public money to be made available for the recruitment and retention of school staff in Reading;
  - An end to the needless distraction of the forced academisation of schools in Reading;
  - Public money to be made available to support the council's raising attainment strategy (known as the Reading First Partnership).

15. Power to the People, Collective Energy Switching

Councillor White to move:

This Council notes:

- the number of households in fuel poverty in Reading has increased from 5,600 to 7,264 - worse than the national and south east average
- millions of people in the UK have never switched energy provider and could save around £200 per year by switching
- the good work already being done by The Big London Energy Switch, West Berkshire Council, Cornwall Together and many more which are encouraging their residents to sign up to collective energy switching
- the Cornwall Together collective energy switching campaign managed to engage the disengaged (17% of members had never switched before) and reach the hard to reach (28% of switchers were in fuel poverty)

This Council believes:

- no one should be living in fuel poverty and have to choose between heating and eating
- if we are to be a truly caring town we need to do more on tackling fuel poverty

This Council resolves:

- to investigate the feasibility of a collective switching initiative and to bring a report on this back to the relevant committee before the end of this year.

## WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that this meeting may be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Mayor will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during a webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.**

Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 28 JUNE 2016

**Present:** Councillor Ayub (Mayor);

Councillors David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Ballsdon, Chrisp, Davies, Dennis, Duveen, Eden, K Edwards, Ennis, Gavin, Gittings, Grashoff, Hacker, Hopper, Hoskin, James, Jones, Khan, Livingston, Lovelock, Maskell, McElligott, McGonigle, McKenna, O'Connell, Page, Pearce, Robinson, Singh, Skeats, Stanford-Beale, Steele, Terry, Tickner, Vickers, White, J Williams, R Williams and Woodward.

**Apologies:** Councillors D Edwards, McDonald, Rodda and Stevens.

### 15. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Mayor referred to Jo Cox, the MP for Batley and Spen, who had been tragically murdered in a horrendous crime outside her constituency surgery in Birstall, West Yorkshire on 16 June 2016. The Council stood in silence in her memory.
- The Mayor also mentioned the result of the referendum about whether the United Kingdom and Northern Island should remain a member of the European Union, which had been held on 23 June 2016. He said that Reading had voted to remain a member of the EU, which was of course different from the national result overall and feelings were running high on both sides about the outcome in Reading and across the country. The Mayor urged the people of Reading to work together to ensure Reading's proud tradition as a thriving multi-cultural town was celebrated and we continued to welcome people from elsewhere, whether it be from the rest of the UK, from Europe or from the rest of the world. He emphasised that there was no place for division, hatred or intolerance in Reading.
- The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lovelock, to pay tribute to Ian Wardle, the Council's Managing Director, who would be leaving Reading at the beginning of July to take up the appointment of Chief Executive of Thirteen Group, a major housing landlord based in the north-east of England. Councillor Lovelock thanked Mr Wardle for his contribution to Reading over the past three and half years as Managing Director and wished him every success in his new role.

### 16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### 17. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Answer</u>
1.	Tanja Rebel	LED Street Lighting	Cllr Page

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 28 JUNE 2016

### 18. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO 10

Questions on the following matters were submitted:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Answer</u>
1.		WITHDRAWN	
2.	Cllr Steele	Potholes in the Borough's Roads	Cllr Page
3.	Cllr White	Cuts to Council Walking Programme	Cllr Hoskin
4.	Cllr J Williams	Benefits of Sport	Cllr Gittings
5.	Cllr Ballsdon	Idling Taxi Engines	Cllr Page

### 19. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - RENT SETTING 2016/17

Further to Minute 10 of the Policy Committee meeting held on 13 June 2016, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report recommending changing Council housing rents and service charges for 2016/17. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix A - PFI Area Rent Setting Options;
- Appendix B - Housing Revenue Account: 2015/16 Outturn and 2016/17 Budget Summary;
- Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment.

The report set out the recommendation of the Policy Committee to change Council housing rents and service charges for 2016/17, in the context of recently passed legislation mandating a 1% rent reduction each year for four years for most social housing tenants. A 1.98% rent decrease on 3 October 2016 was proposed, which would equate to a full year effect in 2016/17 of the required decrease of 1%.

The report explained that there were exemptions from the 1% reduction: for property that was subject to a PFI scheme (for all years), and for supported housing (which included sheltered housing and extra care housing) and temporary housing for homeless households (for one year). Rents for the exempt types of accommodation could be increased in line with the Council's adopted rent policy of CPI + 1%, which for 2016/17 would equate to a rise of 0.9%. Changes to service charges could also be implemented applying existing policies.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor James and CARRIED:

**Resolved -**

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Policy Committee held on 13 June 2016 (Minute 10 refers), the following be approved:

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - 28 JUNE 2016

- (a) That all rents for general needs accommodation be reduced by 1.98% from Monday 3 October 2016 (thus equating to a full year effect of a decrease of 1% in 2016/17) and that a full year effect increase in service charge be implemented from 3 October 2016;
- (b) That rents for supported and temporary accommodation be increased by 0.9% (CPI in September 2015 of -0.1% +1%) from 3 October 2016, in line with the Council's adopted rent policy, and that service charges also be adjusted from 3 October 2016 in line with agreed policy;
- (c) That officers be asked to report further to an appropriate Committee on the impact of Government legislation on the viability of the Housing Revenue Account to inform decisions for future rent setting policy.

(The meeting closed at 7.22 pm).



**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP  
SERVICES**

<b>TO:</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>18 OCTOBER 2016</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>CLLR J. GAVIN</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>Children Services and Families</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>DIRECTORATE OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION &amp; EARLY HELP SERVICES</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>HELEN MCMULLEN</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>01189 374479</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP SERVICES</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>helen.mcmullen@reading.gov.uk</b>

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to note the findings of Ofsted's Inspection of Reading Borough Council services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, to recognise the progress already made against Ofsted's recommendations, and to inform Council of the proposed plan for further improvement across children's services.

1.2 The Ofsted inspection report was published on Friday 5 August 2016 and the inspection took place from 23 May to 15 June 2016. The overall judgement by Ofsted was that Children's Services in Reading are 'Inadequate'. In the executive summary, Ofsted identified serious, persistent and systemic failures in the services provided to children who are in need of help and protection. They were of the view that the instability of the senior leadership over that period had impeded progress. They also concluded that children's social care services had deteriorated since 2012.

1.3 The report did identify that since early 2016 there are signs of positive progress involving the establishment of performance management systems helping managers to tackle the weaknesses more swiftly, that the reduction of and heavy reliance on short term agency social workers was progressing, that the services feature some strengths, including the MASH, targeted early help, the

disabilities service, the stability of looked after children. The report did identify that concerns referred during the inspection were acted upon swiftly and appropriately. They noted that permanent appointments had now been made to senior posts in the local authority, that rigorous plans are in place to recruit and retain social workers and frontline managers. The inspectors noted the realistic understanding which senior managers have of the scale of practice weaknesses and that recent action to address these failings was having an impact on timeliness and quality of practice.

- 1.4 As a result of the overall judgement of the inspection of the services, Edward Timpson MP, Minister of State for Children and Families wrote to the Leader of the Council of his intention to issue Reading Borough Council with a Direction under sections 497A(4) and (4B) of the Education Act 1996. The Direction was issued on 16 September 2016 and it requires the Council to co-operate with, and comply with instructions from and provide assistance to the Commissioner for Children's Services (Mr. Nick Whitfield) and the Secretary of State for Education.
- 1.5 The Ofsted framework 'Monitoring local authority children's services judged inadequate' published in May 2016 (ref: 160035), sets out the main activities and timetable that Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) undertake when carrying out monitoring visits to local authorities where children's services have been judged inadequate.
- 1.6 The monitoring framework requires local authorities judged to be inadequate to provide a written statement of action (Children's Services Learning & Improvement Plan) to the Secretary of State and HMCI within 70 working days from the local authority receiving their inspection report, for Reading Borough Council this date is 11 November 2016. Ofsted is not responsible for 'signing off' or endorsing the statement of action, this is the responsibility of the Director of Children Services (DCEEHS).
- 1.7 The first activity to take place on 22 September was an Ofsted 'Action Planning Meeting' led by the Senior HMI and the Lead Inspector for South West Region. The purpose of the meeting was for Ofsted to ensure that the local authority has a sufficient understanding of the recommendations to plan appropriately following the inspection judgement. The early working draft of RBC's action (improvement) plan was shared with the Lead Inspector prior to the visit, to assist planning, as required under the framework.
- 1.8 The Reading Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan is attached in Appendix 1. The plan is structured around three key priorities and 18 outcomes. This responds to the 18 recommendations set out by Ofsted in their inspection report dated 5 August 2016.
- 1.9 Ofsted's Regional Director will write to the Director of Children's, Education & Early Help Services confirming whether the action plan reflects and addresses the 18 recommendations as set out in the inspection report. The Lead Inspector will inform the DfE of the outcomes of this process.



- 1.10 Ofsted will make quarterly monitoring visits to Reading Borough Council, the first of these visits will take place during the week of the 31<sup>st</sup> October and will last two days. At the end of the visit the Lead Inspector will summarise and feed back findings to the DCS, Interim Managing Director and the Commissioner. The HMI will write a brief report about their findings and although Ofsted will not publish the report relating to the first visit they will publish the reports on each subsequent visit.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Council approves RBC Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan, (statement of action) and endorses the strategic approach being taken by the Director of Children, Education and Early Help.
- 2.2 That Council accepts the RAG status, acknowledging the impact that the current resource position is having on the timeliness and sequencing of progress on key actions.
- 2.3 Notes that the Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan (statement of action) by the Director of Children, Education and Early Help services will be submitted to Ofsted no later than 11 November 2016.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Ofsted's Inspection findings identified that safeguarding needs of children were not addressed through consistent and prompt enquiry. The impact on children being that they are left in situations of unknown risk. Inspectors found children in situations where they had not been seen by social workers and those in situations where their risks were not understood and acted upon with sufficient urgency
- 3.2 Ofsted's recommendations for improvement have been matched against DfE's three pillars of reform (People and leadership; Practice and Systems; Governance and Accountability) in order to demonstrate how Reading's vision and drive for improvement will deliver fundamental reform across the children's social care system in order to safeguard the needs of children. The Pillars are as follows:
- **People and Leadership** - bringing the best into the profession and giving them the right knowledge and skills for the challenging but hugely rewarding work ahead, and developing leaders equipped to nurture practice excellence
  - **Practice and Systems** - creating the right environment for excellent practice and innovation to flourish, learning from the very best practice, and learning from when things go wrong

- **Governance and Accountability** - making sure that what we are doing is working, and developing innovative new organisational models with the potential to radically improve services

#### **4 THE PROPOSAL**

Council is asked to approve the Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan.

##### **Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 There are no other options being considered at this stage. The Council is required to undertake these actions under central government direction.

#### **5 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 This report is in line with the overall direction of the Council by meeting the following Corporate Plan priorities:
- 5.2 Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
- 5.3 Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living.

#### **6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 The Ofsted Inspection Report is a public document and is widely available to provide the community with the judgement of Reading's Children's Services.
- 6.2 The community have not been engaged in the preparation of the immediate improvement response to the Ofsted report publication. However, the improvement plan will be implemented in conjunction with partners, particularly Thames Valley Police, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Berkshire Health Care Foundation Trust, Royal Berkshire Hospital and Public Health, Schools and The Foster Care network.
- 6.3 Particular attention will be paid to the voice of the child which will be represented through the improvement journey outlined in the improvement plan. Work has already been started to strengthen the role of the independent Reviewing Officers, and to strengthen the Children in Care Council.

#### **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Impact Assessment is not relevant to the preparation of this report.

## 8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Whilst there are no legal implications in relation to this report, it is important to note that under Children's Services Legislation, we are required under a general duty of the Children's Act 2004 to address the quality of services and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## 9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Most of the resources associated with the actions identified in the plan are identified at least in outline in the plan. The Council is currently working under significant financial constraints (as have been outlined to Policy Committee), so as far as practical the action plan will need to be resourced within already approved resources during 2016/17.

9.2 Formally the Council's budget for 2017/18 is set in February 2017, and at that stage the council will need to prioritise the resources necessary to deliver this plan in that year within the context of its budget as a whole. It is anticipated that the budget proposal for DCEEH will include the resources indicated in this plan.

9.3 Work is underway to cost actions, for agreement at the appropriate stage as necessary, where this is not already clear.

## 10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding board.  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/reading>

Monitoring local authority children's services judged inadequate.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-local-authority-childrens-services-judged-inadequate-guidance-for-inspectors>

Putting Children First: Delivering Our Vision for Excellent Children's Social Care  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/putting-children-first-our-vision-for-childrens-social-care>

# Children's Services

## Learning and Improvement Plan

August 2016 to July 2017

V9 - 10 October 2016 - Pending Approval



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

## INTRODUCTION

### Context

The Ofsted inspection of Reading services for children in need of help and protection, children looked-after and care leavers was carried out between 23 May 2016 and 15 June 2016. The report was published on 5 August 2016. The inspection team found Reading children's services to be inadequate. They reported that there were widespread and serious failures that leave children unsafe and mean that the welfare of children looked-after is not adequately safeguarded or promoted.

This Learning and Improvement Plan has been developed in response to the Ofsted inspection report. The report requires the local authority to respond to 18 recommendations for improvement. A number of other improvement actions have been identified by the local authority based on the narrative within the report and these are included within the improvement plan.

The Learning and Improvement Plan has been developed around three key priorities:

1. **People and Leadership:** To provide effective and ambitious leadership and management across children's services, with a permanent and competent workforce to provide responsive and safe services to children and young people in Reading.
2. **Practice and systems:** To create an environment where excellent practice and innovation will flourish, within a framework of continuous learning and improvement.
3. **Governance and Accountability:** To ensure appropriate lines of accountability and governance, with a clear distinction between political, strategic and operational roles; to embed a culture of appropriate challenge and scrutiny at all levels of the organisation and across the partnership, to radically improve outcomes for children and young people in Reading.

Specific actions to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people in Reading are set out under each of the priorities. Each action includes the timescales by which the improvement should be delivered alongside a clear indication of how success will be measured and evidenced. Progress will be RAG-rated and reported monthly to the Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB).

A specific priority is to implement a revised Early Intervention and Preventative strategy working with partners which will work through a single front door, have clear pathways of support and be underpinned by restorative practice. Once in place, the initial focus will be to have a joint approach to intervening early and preventing significant cases of domestic abuse and cases of neglect. This work will be informed by the Demand Management Review, which was undertaken by Impower.

### Governance

The Learning and Improvement plan will be overseen by an independently chaired Improvement Board who will monitor the performance and delivery of the actions in the plan, in order to demonstrate improvement to the Department for Education, the Council and the wider community.

## PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS TRACKER

Initial RAG-rating September 2016		Previous Month September 2016		Current Month October 2016		Direction of travel since the previous quarter
<b>RED</b>	5	<b>RED</b>	5	<b>RED</b>		
<b>AMBER</b>	15	<b>AMBER</b>	15	<b>AMBER</b>		
<b>LIGHT GREEN</b>	40	<b>LIGHT GREEN</b>	40	<b>LIGHT GREEN</b>		
<b>DARK GREEN</b>	0	<b>DARK GREEN</b>	0	<b>DARK GREEN</b>		
<b>COMPLETED</b>	0	<b>COMPLETED</b>	0	<b>COMPLETED</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		

## RAG RATING

<b>RED</b>	Action not yet started/significant delay in implementation/delay due to resource availability. The action must be prioritised to bring it back on track to deliver improvement.
<b>AMBER</b>	Action started but there is some delay in implementation. The action must be monitored to ensure the required improvement is delivered.
<b>LIGHT GREEN</b>	Action is on track to be completed by the agreed date. Evidence is required to show that the improvement has been sustained.
<b>DARK GREEN</b>	Action completed and there is evidence that the improvement required has been made. The action remains in the plan for monitoring.
<b>COMPLETED</b>	Action completed and there is evidence that the improvement has been sustained. Approved by CSIB Chair to be removed from the plan.

**PRIORITY ONE - People and Leadership:**

To provide effective and ambitious leadership and management across children's services, with a permanent and competent workforce to provide responsive and safe services to children and young people in Reading.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
<p><b>Reading Borough Council will secure a permanent and competent children's services workforce to deliver responsive and safe services.</b></p> <p><b>(Recommendation 1)</b></p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Create an effective and affordable children's services structure for Reading that will enable the delivery of safe and effective services that meet local need.</p>	<p>Clear model for delivery established for Children's Services in Reading, with a secure financial delivery plan, that will ensure the Council is able to meet identified need.</p>	<p><b>HM</b></p>	<p>30/09/16</p>	<p><b>Red</b></p>		<p>The new model is underfunded by £750k. This has been accepted by the Council as a pressure in year (2016/17). The base budget for 2017/18 is currently being considered and has yet to be finalised.</p> <p>Following a further increase in referrals the new model does not now provide the level of SW staffing to achieve manageable caseloads equivalent to statistical neighbours (18 to 22) based on the current demand. The cost of an additional 15 social workers would be approx. £680k.</p>
	<p><b>1.2</b> Implement a workforce strategy to improve the recruitment, induction, and retention of social workers.</p>	<p>There are attractive career pathways enabling the organisation to retain social workers and support them into advanced practitioner and management roles.</p> <p><b>85% of social work posts are filled with permanent employees;</b></p> <p><b>90% of social work management posts (team manager and above) are filled with permanent</b></p>	<p><b>SG</b></p>	<p>31/01/17</p>	<p><b>Amber</b></p>		<p>This action is being progressed, however the timeliness and overall success is being impacted by the delay in the appointment of permanent social workers to RBC.</p> <p>In June 2016 there were 71.4fte social work (inc. managers) vacancies to populate the new RBC social care structure (implemented on 22 August 2016).</p> <p>Following the 'bulk recruitment' process in June 2016 43fte social workers were offered posts at RBC (of these 34fte were overseas workers and 9fte were UK workers). In addition an interim worker went to permanent contract.</p>

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
		<p><b>employees.</b> There is a reduced reliance and spend on agency social work staff in Reading.</p> <p><b>No. of working days lost due to sickness.</b></p>					<p>Of the 43fte offered posts 17fte have now started at RBC (8 fte are overseas workers and 9 are UK workers); 10fte have not been able to take up post due to validation issues, or deciding not to take up post. 16 remaining candidates (all overseas workers) are currently being progressed through HR validation processes.</p> <p>The permanent recruitment process continues with 49fte social work posts (inc. managers) still vacant (which assumes the full 16fte being processed pass validation and start at RBC) as at 10-10-2016.</p>
	<p><b>1.3</b> Embed Readings chosen social work delivery model (Signs of Safety) that will support the delivery of best practice across the partnership, and establish clear practice standards.</p>	<p><b>The average SW caseload is no greater than 22 (18 LAC); there are no unallocated child protection cases, or cases where a child is looked after longer than 24 hours.</b></p> <p>The 'front door' (MASH) arrangements are safe and effective.</p> <p><b>100% of contacts are responded to within 24 hours.</b></p> <p><b>100% of referral decisions made within 24 hours</b></p>	SG	31/12/16	LG		<p>Work is in progress and phase one with all existing workers is on track to be delivered by the end of December 2016.</p> <p>A second phase will need to be delivered for all new starters from January 2017 onwards.</p>



Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
		<b>% of re-referrals within 12 months is equal to or less than the national average.</b>					
	<b>1.4</b> Complete a skills audit across the workforce to determine the current levels of professional competence, and inform the design of the learning and development offer.	Themes from audit identified and used to inform the annual training programme.  A reduction in the number of routine casework audits undertaken judged to be 'Inadequate'.	AMD	31/12/16	LG		On track.
	<b>1.5</b> Develop structured learning and development pathways for social workers and early help practitioners that set out the core learning expected of all professionals.  <i>The social work pathway to be based on the employer standards and the Professional Competencies Framework for social workers.</i>	<b>100% of staff have received an annual performance appraisal;</b> which includes a personal development plan that meets their identified needs, within the last 12 months.  <b>The number of staff across the directorate subject to performance improvement plans has reduced.</b>	AMD	31/03/17	LG		On track.
	<b>1.6</b> To deliver a leadership and development programme for all managers (team managers and above) through the Virtual Staff College.	All permanent managers have successfully completed the VC Leadership programme.	AMD	31/03/17	Amber		The first phase for existing managers is fully funded. However the majority of team managers and above in CSC are currently covered by interim staff and there will therefore need to be a second phase of training provided to our permanent cohort as and when appointed that is not yet funded. Cost will be dependent on numbers.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
<b>Staff will be supported and challenged through regular high quality supervision and effective management oversight.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 4)</b>	<b>4.1</b> Improve the quality, frequency and recording of professional supervision to ensure that it is reflective, improves the quality of practice through case discussion, and focuses on professional and personal development.	<p>A revised Supervision Policy is in place, which is used consistently across the workforce.</p> <p>The workforce is qualified and well-motivated, with access to high quality professional development and supervision focused on delivering excellent outcomes for children, young people and their families.</p> <p><b>100% of all case holding workers receive professional supervision every 4 weeks.</b></p>	SG	31/10/16	LG		On track.
	<b>4.2</b> All managers of case holding staff to receive mandatory supervision training.	<p>Audit activity confirms that there is highly effective management oversight focusing on the quality of practice including impact, risk, and outcomes for children/YP.</p> <p>Managers are able to effectively lead on practice improvements, and are held to account by the Head of Service.</p> <p>All permanent managers</p>	AMD	31/03/17	LG		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
		have completed the mandatory supervision training.					
	<b>4.3</b> Refresh the quality assurance framework to ensure that the process for evaluating the effectiveness of professional and casework supervision is in place, and areas for learning and development are captured and implemented.	<p>A refreshed QAF is in place with an annual programme of routine QA activity.</p> <p>Audits confirm that supervision is of 'good' or better quality.</p> <p>The annual staff survey confirms that staff feel well supported, and have the confidence to make difficult decisions.</p>	<b>KS</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>4.4</b> To undertake a follow-up review of all cases referred back by Ofsted (Annex H's) and those children/YP that were tracked by Ofsted during the inspection.	All of those cases identified by Ofsted have been reviewed, and management actions have been completed.	<b>SG</b>	30/09/16	<b>LG</b>		<p>All Management actions complete on Annex H cases.</p> <p>The tracked cases review of actions is due for completion by end of September.</p>

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
<b>Good quality management oversight will ensure that children and their families are not subject to delay and achieve positive outcomes.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 7)</b>	<b>7.1</b> To establish a clear set of management expectations and practice standards for practitioners and managers across children's services.	Reading's Practice Standards Framework is in place.  <b>90% of social work management posts (team managers and above) are filled with permanent employees.</b>  Case work audits confirm that management oversight is timely and effective.  Case work audits confirm that the plan for the child/yp is appropriate with a clear and timely 'management footprint' evident on the child's record; in line with Reading's Standards.	SG	30/06/17	LG		On track.
	<b>7.2</b> Determine manageable caseloads for social workers, so that they can respond appropriately and in a timely manner to the needs of children and young people.	<b>The average SW caseload is no greater than 22 (18 LAC); there are no unallocated child protection cases, or cases where a child is looked after longer than 24 hours.</b>  <b>100% of single assessments concluded within statutory timescale.</b>	SG	31/03/17	Amber		This is RAG rated Amber due to the permanent staffing establishment issues set out in action 1.2 and 1.3 above; which includes base budget funding implications for a permanent and fully funded establishment.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
		<p>100% of CIN are visited every 6 weeks (minimum).</p> <p>100% of children subject to a CP Plan seen within 10 working days (minimum).</p> <p>% of children subject to a repeat CP plan within 2 years is in line with or better than statistical neighbour performance.</p> <p>100% of LAC seen every 6 weeks (minimum).</p>					
	7.4 Implement effective performance management mechanisms to ensure that data and information is timely and used to inform practice.	<p>Managers have access to accurate and timely data and intelligence that is used to improve the timeliness and quality of practice including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly Performance Summary</li> <li>• Monthly operational Dataset</li> <li>• Monthly Performance Board</li> <li>• Programme of annual target setting</li> </ul>	KS	31/03/17	RED		<p>This action has been RAG rated red due to the reduction of performance and data analysis resources on transfer to Children's Services at the end of August 2016. Whilst some interim agency capacity has been approved from October 2016 to March 2017; the funding required to permanently establish the team at the appropriate resourcing level has not yet been approved.</p> <p>The approximate additional year on year cost is £105k.</p>
	7.5 Mosaic system to be reviewed to ensure that the recording tools to support the accurate and timely recording of	The management 'foot print' is visible; the child/young persons 'story' is accurate and accessible within the electronic case	KS	31/03/17	Amber		This action has been RAG rated amber as there is as yet no 'Business as Usual' function for Mosaic system development and maintenance in RBC. The current Mosaic Project Team is responsible for the delivery of a specific

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG Oct	Progress Update
	management oversight and supervision are fit for purpose, and are used consistently across the service.	record, which is used to inform decision making and planning.					plan/brief by June 2017, which does not reflect the full day to day requirements for Children's Services. A Mosaic Champion has been appointed due to start on 3/10/2016, their work programme is yet to be confirmed by the corporate centre. Funding has yet to be finalised.
	<b>7.6</b> Develop and implement a workload management tool.	<b>The average SW caseload is no greater than 22 (18 LAC); there are no unallocated child in need, child protection cases, or cases where a child is looked after longer than 24 hours.</b>	<b>SG</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track (delivery of the tool).

**PRIORITY TWO - Practice and systems:** To create an environment where excellent practice and innovation will flourish, within a framework of continuous learning and improvement.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
<b>All children and young referred to Reading Children services will receive a timely, appropriate, and consistent response that meets their individual needs.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 2)</b>	<b>2.1</b> Review the workflow on Mosaic to ensure that the casework system meets the recording needs of assessment, strategy discussion, and section 47 investigations (including a structured recording template for minutes).	Strategy discussions and management decisions to initiate S47 investigations are clearly recorded on Mosaic, in a timely manner.	KS	31/03/17	Amber		This action has been RAG rated amber as there is as yet no 'Business as Usual' function for Mosaic system development and maintenance in RBC. The current Mosaic Project Team is responsible for the delivery of a specific plan/brief by June 2017, which does not reflect the full day to day requirements for Children's Services.  A Mosaic Champion has been appointed due to start on 3/10/2016, their work programme is yet to be confirmed by the corporate centre. This post is not funded.
	<b>2.2</b> To ensure that all strategy meetings are chaired by a qualified SW Team Manager; with a structured format/agenda, within statutory timescale.	<b>No. of strategy meetings held.</b>  <b>100% ICPCs held within statutory timescale.</b>  <b>No. of S47 Investigations completed.</b>	SG	30/09/16	LG		On track.
	<b>2.3</b> To ensure that all assessments and investigations are commensurate with the signs of safety model in identifying and managing risk.	100% of casework audits conclude that the investigation had effectively evaluated the risks to the child, with management oversight on the decision reached.	SG	31/03/17	LG		On track.
<b>Thresholds will be consistently applied</b>	<b>2.4</b> Develop a single point of access, and strengthen	The single point of access provides timely decision-	SG	30/06/17	LG		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
<p>across the children's workforce; to ensure that case management is timely and effective, and held at the appropriate level.</p> <p><b>(Recommendation 5)</b></p>	<p>the function and role of MASH, to create a single and effective front-door into early help and children's social care services; with appropriate and timely decision-making and the prompt allocation of cases for assessment or S47 investigation.</p>	<p>making on contacts into children's services.</p> <p><b>100% of contacts have decisions made on their outcome (universal, EH, SC, NFA etc.) within 24 hours;</b> with clear destinations and management decision making for all contacts.</p> <p><b>100% referrals with a decision in 24 hours</b></p> <p><b>100% single assessments concluded within statutory timescale.</b></p>					
	<p><b>5.1</b> Review the 'Continuum of Help and Support' (thresholds) framework; and re-launch through the LSCB to ensure that all partner agencies across the children's workforce understand their responsibilities.</p>	<p>There is a consistent understanding and application of thresholds across the partnership.</p> <p><b>An increase in the number of Early Help Assessments completed.</b></p> <p><b>% of referrals lead to NFA will be equivalent to or less than the national average.</b></p> <p><b>% of re-referrals within 12 months will be equivalent to or less than the national</b></p>	<p><b>AF</b></p>	<p>31/12/16</p>	<p><b>LG</b></p>		<p>On track.</p>



Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		<b>average.</b>					
	<p><b>5.2</b> Revise the case transfer protocol to set out the pathways, minimum expectations and decision-making for transferring cases between teams and services, including step up/down processes.</p>	<p>There is clear transfer protocol in place which facilitates the smooth step-up/step-down of cases between teams and services.</p> <p>Children and young people receive a service appropriate to their level of need; with a reducing number (overtime) of children requiring a statutory intervention.</p> <p><b>No. of open cases to Children's Social Care.</b></p> <p><b>No. of looked after children.</b></p> <p><b>No. of children subject to a CP Plan.</b></p>	<b>AF</b>	31/12/16	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<p><b>5.3.</b> Engage with partner agencies to implement a revised early intervention and preventative strategy and operational framework which clearly sets out the early help offer and referral pathways</p>	<p>Early Help Strategy and operational framework in place and services have been aligned to meet the requirements.</p> <p>There is a coherent and coordinated early help offer available to children and families in Reading</p>	<b>AF</b>	31/05/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		<p>which meets their needs. Targeted early help interventions are effective at preventing the escalation of children's needs.</p> <p><b>100% of EH assessments completed within timescale</b></p> <p><b>100% of children open to EH services with an up to date (within 6 months) plan.</b></p>					
	<b>5.4</b> Implement restorative practice into the pathways plans and family group conferencing.	Staff have been fully trained in restorative practice and are using with children, young people and families.	<b>AF</b>	30/05/17	<b>Red</b>		To implement a restorative practice approach throughout the Directorate and its partner agencies will have a significant cost implication, including training which will need to be factored into the service budget for 17/18 and beyond.
	<b>5.5</b> Develop the family group conference offer to ensure that an increasing number of families benefit from an effective intervention at an early stage.	<p>Contract review complete.</p> <p>Family-based solutions are fully considered for those children subject to a child protection plan or who are likely to enter care proceedings.</p> <p>An increase in the number of FGC's taking place.</p>	<b>SG</b>	31/01/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		<b>A reduction (over time) in the number of children becoming looked after.</b>					
<b>All children will have effective plans that meet their assessed need, through which issues of risk and resilience will be evaluated dynamically.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 3)</b>	<b>3.1</b> Develop the Mosaic system and transfer all EH case records to the electronic recording system to support the timely and effective assessment (CAF) and planning of children and young people receiving an EH service.	<p>All EH case records held electronically on the Mosaic system; which includes the EH assessment, plan, and review tools.</p> <p><b>100% of early help assessments concluded within timescale.</b></p> <p><b>100% of open EH cases with an up to date (6 months) plan.</b></p>	KS	30/06/17	LG		On track.
	<b>3.2</b> Embed the single assessment framework and develop a supporting CIN protocol to ensure the levels of risk and needs of the child/young person are regularly evaluated and reviewed in a structured manner (from pre-birth to age 18 years/25 years SEND).	<p>A single assessment framework and CIN protocol is in place which helps to improve the timeliness and quality of assessments and plans.</p> <p>The views, wishes and feelings of children/YP are fully explored in assessment and used to inform their plan; which is understood by the parents who are actively involved in achieving improved outcomes.</p>	SG	31/03/17	LG		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		<p><b>100% Single Assessments concluded within timescale.</b></p> <p><b>100% CIN with an up to date (within 6 months) plan.</b></p>					
<p><b>The assessment of need will account for the child's lived experience, and family history, ensuring risk is appropriately recognised and managed through an effective plan.</b></p> <p><b>(Recommendation 6)</b></p>	<p><b>6.1</b> Continue to improve the consistency and quality of case chronologies and ensure these are consistently used to inform assessment and care planning.</p>	<p>The lived experience of the child/young person is evident at each stage of their care pathway and used to inform next steps.</p> <p>Case work audits evidence that chronologies have been used effectively to inform assessment and care planning.</p> <p><b>100% of open cases have an up-to-date chronology (within the last 6 weeks).</b></p>	SG	31/03/17	LG		On track.
	<p><b>6.2</b> Ensure that children and young people are seen regularly, in line with agreed timescales, and that their views, wishes and feelings are recorded and used to inform assessments, care planning and reviews.</p>	<p><b>100% of children are seen within the first 10 working days of the SW undertaking a single assessment.</b></p> <p><b>100% of children in need are seen every 6 weeks (as a minimum).</b></p> <p><b>100% of children subject to child protection plans are</b></p>	SG	31/12/16	Amber		There has been limited progress since the inspection. This is RAG rated Amber given the current higher caseloads than the statistical neighbours. Social Workers are prioritising the visits to children who are the subject of a CP Plan, and those looked after by the local authority.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		<p>seen every 10 w/days (as a minimum).</p> <p>100% of looked-after children are seen every 6 weeks (as a minimum).</p>					
<p><b>All cases where children are exposed to domestic abuse and neglect are appropriately assessed and safeguarded.</b></p> <p><b>(Recommendation 8)</b></p>	<p><b>8.1</b> Review all cases where children are exposed to domestic abuse and neglect to ensure that their needs have been thoroughly assessed and that they are safeguarded as appropriate (with particular attention given to children living with or in proximity to adults with histories of violence and abuse of other adults and children).</p>	<p>Scope agreed and Audit Team in place.</p> <p>Review complete; all children/YP where subsequent action is required have been identified</p> <p>Immediate plans have been put in place to address the need.</p> <p>Detailed analysis completed that identifies the themes and key issues, which has been used to inform service delivery, and the directorates learning and development priorities.</p> <p>Individual performance and management oversight/supervision issues have been addressed with the relevant workers and managers.</p>	KS	30/12/16	Amber		<p>This action has been significantly delayed in start. However work is now underway following budget approval by CMT on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016. An additional spend of £65k was agreed along with a contribution from the LGA of £30k.</p> <p>The case review has now been fully scoped, the criteria for review and methodology are in place, the cohort identified. Review to commence with external specialist resource on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016.</p>

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
	<b>8.2</b> Embed the CAADA-DASH tool to identify and assess the risk of domestic abuse and determine which cases should be referred to the MARAC and what other support should be provided.	Audit confirms that there is consistent use of the CAADA-DASH tool that identifies and assesses the risk of domestic abuse on children and young people. This ensures that appropriate support is provided and appropriate cases are referred to the MARAC.	<b>SG</b>	30/06/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
<b>All children and young people who go missing from home or care are supported by an effective safety plan. Cumulated learning is used from return interviews to inform service development and prevent repeat episodes.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 9)</b>	<b>9.1</b> Review the business process and recording tools within the electronic case management system to ensure they are fit for purpose and facilitate clear recording of management oversight and decision making.	Dip-sample audits confirm that the records of return interviews are consistently recorded within the child's/young person's case record; and there is evidence of clear management oversight and timely decision making.	<b>AF</b>	31/12/16	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>9.2</b> Review the arrangements to ensure that return home or return to care interviews are routinely completed and recorded for all children/YP that go missing (in or out of Reading) in line with agreed local protocols.	There is a timely and appropriate respond to children who go missing from home or care; intelligence is used to prevent future episodes and safeguard other children/young people.  <b>No. of Children that go missing from home.</b>  <b>100% return to home</b>	<b>AF</b>	31/11/16	<b>LG</b>		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		<p>interviews offered to children that go missing from home; % (undertaken) completed within 72 hours.</p> <p>No. of children that go missing from care.</p> <p>100% of return to care interviews offered within 72 hours; % (undertaken) completed within 72 hours.</p>					
<p><b>Children and young people are at reduced risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of CSE. (Recommendation 10)</b></p>	<p><b>10.1</b> Revise the CSE screening tool and provide training to frontline staff to embed its consistent use; ensuring through SEMRAC that the CSE profile of Reading recognises the full spectrum of risk.</p>	<p>Revised tool in place.</p> <p>Audit activity confirms that children at risk of sexual exploitation are identified and risk-assessed to ensure appropriate safety planning and intervention.</p> <p><b>No. of CSE screening tools completed.</b></p> <p><b>No. of children and young people flagged at level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low risk (1)</li> <li>• Medium risk (2)</li> <li>• High risk (3)</li> </ul>	AF	31/03/17	Amber		<p>This action requires the support of the CSE co-ordinator who is a full time employee of RBC, seconded to the post. The majority of the salary in the current year is funded by RBC, with a small contribution by the LSCB. Funding for the post going forward for 17/18 will need to be agreed by the LSCB.</p> <p>Cost is £32,500.</p>
	<p><b>10.2</b> Improve the referral pathway into the multi-agency sexual exploitation</p>	<p>The number of children and young people at risk of becoming victims or</p>		AF	31/03/17	LG	

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
	group (SEMRAC) in line with agreed local protocols to ensure consistency of plans and subsequent interventions.	perpetrators is reducing.  <b>Number of children/YP presented to SEMRAC.</b>					
	<b>10.3</b> Raise the profile of CSE risk across Reading. Ensure that all managers and workers understand the indicators of CSE so that they can respond appropriately to reduce the risk to children and young people.	Increased use of the CSE screening tool across the partnership capturing all levels of risk; that ensures an appropriate response to reduce and manage the risk to children and young people.  CSE borough profile produced monthly; with hot spots identified.  No. of Police investigation; and the number of prosecutions (annual).	<b>AF</b>	31/03/17	<b>Amber</b>		Limited progress is being made, which is evidenced in recent audit activity confirming that the tools are not being used effectively. This is due to the high caseloads that remain within the social work service, and the need to embed more robust management oversight.
<b>All children and young people living in private fostering arrangements are assessed by the local authority and are in receipt of appropriate levels of support.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 11)</b>	<b>11.1</b> Implement a rolling awareness campaign with all agencies with high-time access (schools, children's centres, GPs, and language schools) to children and young people to promote private fostering requirements.	Awareness campaign delivered which is resulting in increasing numbers of private fostering notifications to the local authority.  <b>No. of children known by the LA to be living in PF arrangements.</b>	<b>SG</b>	31/12/16	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>11.2</b> Ensure that all private fostering arrangements have a current assessment	All children known to be living in private fostering arrangements have a	<b>SG</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.



Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
	and children are visited regularly (every 6 weeks in the first year and every 12 weeks in subsequent years).	current assessment and are visited regularly.  <b>100% PF assessments completed within timescale</b>  <b>100% children living within PF arrangements have been visited within timescale.</b>					
<p><b>There are sound arrangements to plan for and achieve permanency where the decision is that a child will not be able to return home.</b></p> <p><b>Looked-after children have access to high quality care planning, review and support.</b></p> <p><b>(Recommendation 12)</b></p>	<b>12.1</b> Review all children being worked with under the PLO or who are in care proceedings to ensure that robust plans are in place, and that cases are progressing at a pace that matches the child/young person's needs.	Audit activity confirms that all cases in PLO or care proceedings have effective management oversight to ensure timely actions.  <b>100% of care proceedings are concluded within agreed timescales (26 weeks).</b>	<b>SG</b>	31/03/17	<b>Amber</b>		Progress is being made against this action, as an interim SW consultant has been appointed to lead this work. However this has been RAG rated Amber as the cost of this interim member of staff is not funded within the base budget and was approved by the DCS as a budget pressure in year (2016/17) due to challenges from the legal department on safe and effective practice. The cost is approx. £60k in total.
	<b>12.2</b> Implement a case tracking system to ensure effective management oversight of cases in the PLO or in care proceedings to prevent drift and delay.	A case tracking system is in place and used proactively to monitor timely care proceedings. Audit activity confirms there is no drift or delay.	<b>SG</b>	30/10/16	<b>Amber</b>		As per 12.1. Progress is being made against this action, as an interim SW consultant has been appointed to lead this work. However this has been RAG rated Amber as the cost of this interim member of staff is not funded within the base budget and was approved by the DCS as a budget pressure in year (2016/17) due to challenges from the legal department on safe and effective practice.
	<b>12.3</b> Ensure that legal planning meetings are effective at providing	Audit activity evidenced consistent and appropriate application of legal	<b>SG</b>	31/12/16	<b>Amber</b>		As per 12.1 and 12.2. Progress is being made against this action, as an interim SW consultant has been appointed to lead this

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
	sufficient management oversight and decision-making on cases entering care proceedings.	processes.					work. However this has been RAG rated Amber as the cost of this interim member of staff is not funded within the base budget and was approved by the DCS as a budget pressure in year (2016/17) due to challenges from the family court on timeliness and safe and effective practice.
	<b>12.4</b> Review the case escalation procedure for the child protection conference service and the independent reviewing service.	The escalation process is effective at progressing cases towards improved outcomes where there is professional disagreement.  <b>No. of case escalations</b>  <b>100% of case escalations concluded within timescale.</b>  <b>No. of LAC cases escalated by IROs to CAFCASS.</b>	KS	31/12/16	LG		On track.
	<b>12.5</b> Increase the permanent establishment of the IRO service to reduce caseloads and ensure IROs are able to effectively fulfil their QA responsibilities including undertaking mid-way audits.	<b>IROs Average/Highest case load.</b>  <b>% LAC whose statutory review was held within timescale.</b>  <b>% LAC who participated in their most recent statutory review.</b>  No. of mid-way audits completed by IROs.	KS	31/12/16	RED		Progress has been made on a short term basis as approval was given in September 2016 for an Interim IRO which has reduced caseloads on a short term basis. However the request to permanently increase the IRO capacity to ensure that the caseloads are within acceptable and safe levels (that reflect the national levels and IRO handbook) has not been approved.  The cost is approximately £54k (to end of this financial year).

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
<p><b>All children and young people who are in the care of the LA are provided with high quality care and support.</b></p> <p><b>Reading Borough Council functions as an effective corporate parent.</b></p> <p><b>(Recommendation 13)</b></p>	<p><b>12.6</b> Complete 'Project 50' which will review arrangements for all children who are looked-after under voluntary care arrangements (S20) to ensure the most appropriate destination.</p>	<p>All cases where children are looked after under voluntary arrangements have been reviewed. Where voluntary arrangements are not sufficient to ensure a child's safety and emotional wellbeing appropriate action has been taken.</p>	SG	31/03/17	Amber		<p>Progress is being made against this action however this has been RAG rated Amber due to the limitations and delay in pace set out in action 14.1 and 14.2 below; which focuses on effectively stimulating and managing the LAC placement market.</p>
	<p><b>13.1</b> Ensure that looked after children are seen regularly in line with agreed timescales and that their views inform assessments, care planning and reviews.</p>	<p><b>100% of looked-after children have been visited within timescale (6 weeks minimum).</b></p> <p><b>100% looked-after children have an up to date care plan.</b></p>	SG	31/03/17	LG		On track.
	<p><b>13.2</b> Ensure that all viability assessments are completed prior to the placement of a child and ratified by panel.</p>	<p>All children and young people are placed appropriately; in a placement that is able to meet their assessed needs.</p>	SG	31/06/17	LG		On track.
	<p><b>13.3</b> Ensure that a connected person's assessment is carried out where children require immediate placement, in accordance with the care-planning regulations and timescale.</p>	<p>Children and young people are placed appropriately and in accordance with care-planning regulations.</p>	SG	31/06/17	LG		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
	<b>13.4</b> Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Group has clear terms of reference and the appropriate membership to be focused on improving the quality of services provided to looked-after children and care leavers. To include a forward plan of scrutiny areas.	The corporate parenting group is able to demonstrate its impact on improving outcomes for looked-after children. Terms of Reference and membership are reviewed and annual work plan developed.	<b>AMD</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
<b>Care leavers have the skills and emotional resilience to move to independence, and are able to successfully access education, employment, training and safe housing.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 16)</b>	<b>16.1</b> Improve arrangements to track education, employment and training opportunities for care leavers.	Arrangements to monitor the education, employment and training status of care leavers are effective. <b>% care leavers in contact with the LA.</b>	<b>RB</b>	31/07/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>16.2</b> Increase the range and take-up of apprenticeships and work-based training for care leavers in partnership with the providers contracted to Reading and the wider community.	<b>% of care leavers are in education, employment or training are in line with or better than the national average.</b>  Opportunities for apprenticeships and work-based training for care leavers are sufficient.	<b>RB</b>	31/07/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>16.3</b> Strengthen the Virtual School support mechanisms to track the progress of care leavers and ensure appropriate	Mechanisms to track the progress and achievement of care leavers is in place.  The gap between care	<b>RB</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
	action is taken where they are not meeting levels of expected progress.	leavers and other young people is reduced at all stages.  Procedure and process for escalating cases where children are not making expected progress in place and effective at bringing about change.					
<b>All care leavers understand their rights and entitlements.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 17)</b>	<b>17.1</b> Review the leaving care policy, and produce a clear and accessible statement that sets out the rights and entitlements of care leavers.	Statement and Policy developed that informs care leavers about their rights and entitlements leading to an increased take-up of services.	<b>AMD</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>17.2</b> Ensure all young people's rights and entitlements are incorporated in their pathway plan.	Care leavers are provided with appropriate levels of support and access their entitlements.	<b>SG</b>	31/06/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>17.3</b> Review the commissioning arrangements for the advocacy service.	Care leavers are supported with effective advocacy services.  <b>No. of care leavers that have accessed advocacy services.</b>	<b>AMD</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
<b>Plans for young people leaving care are effective and</b>	<b>17.4</b> Improve the business process and recording tool on Mosaic for pathway	<b>100% of eligible looked-after children have an up to date pathway plan.</b>	<b>KS</b>	31/03/17	<b>Amber</b>		This action has been RAG rated amber as there is as yet no 'Business as Usual' function for Mosaic system development and

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
<p><b>address their individual needs.</b></p> <p><b>(Recommendation 18)</b></p>	<p>plans; ensuring that they reflect the needs and aspirations of young people, which involves them in the planning process.</p>						<p>maintenance in RBC. The current Mosaic Project Team is responsible for the delivery of a specific plan/brief by June 2017, which needs to reflect more fully the needs of Children's Services.</p> <p>A Mosaic Champion has been appointed due to start on 3/10/2016, their work programme is yet to be confirmed by the corporate centre. Work is underway to try and identify funding.</p>
	<p><b>18.1</b> IROs to ensure that the young person's pathway plan is effectively reviewed as part of their statutory review process; and its implementation is a key focus of mid-way reviews; raising escalations to managers and workers where there is potential/actual drift or delay.</p>	<p>Audit activity confirms that the IRO holds partners to account for the effective delivery of pathway plans.</p>	<p><b>KS</b></p>	<p>31/03/17</p>	<p><b>LG</b></p>		<p>On track.</p>

**PRIORITY THREE - Governance and Accountability:** To ensure appropriate lines of accountability and governance, with a clear distinction between political, strategic and operational roles; to embed a culture of appropriate challenge and scrutiny at all levels of the organisation and across the partnership, to radically improve outcomes for children and young people in Reading.

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
<b>The Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy is effective in ensuring the local authority has sufficient breadth and quality of placements to meet the needs of children looked-after in Reading.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 14)</b>	<b>14.1</b> Update the Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy (based on a strategic needs assessment) to ensure the local authority has sufficient breadth and quality of placements to meet the needs of children looked-after.	Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy is in place and aligned to the JSNA.  Readings commissioning arrangements are effective at stimulating and managing the market to meet Reading's sufficiency requirements.	AMD	31/03/17	Red		<p>The Children's Services commissioning functions are currently provided from within the joint service located and managed within the adult services directorate. The allocation of resource doesn't sufficiently meet the business needs of children's services and therefore improvement and pace is significantly limited.</p> <p>The addition of two 'Placement Officers' are required in this service to enable the placement of children more locally. This would ensure that the Commissioners could stimulate and manage the market more effectively.</p> <p>This is not funded the approximate cost would be £104k. Funding for the cost of this will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for 17/18.</p>
	<b>14.2</b> Implement improved commissioning arrangements to secure a broader range of housing options for care leavers, and further embed the Staying Put Policy across Reading.	Commissioning arrangements for looked children and care leavers are effective, and local placements meet the needs of Reading's children.	AMD	31/06/17	Amber		<p>This has been RAG rated Amber due to the limitations set out in action 14.1. The resources exist within the Council's establishment (Commissioning Officers), but their day to day functions are not focused and prioritised on this task currently, due to competing priorities in placing LAC.</p>

Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		<p>Looked-after children have a greater choice about their accommodation when they leave care.</p> <p>Placement stability is good; <b>% LAC experienced 3 or more placements in the last 12 months is in line with or better than the national average.</b></p> <p><b>% LAC who have been LAC for 2.5 years or more with the same carer for 2 years or more is in line with or better than the national average.</b></p> <p><b>% LAC placed within 10 miles of their home address is in line with or better than the national average.</b></p> <p><b>% LAC placed 20 miles or more from their home address is in line with or better than the national average.</b></p> <p><b>% of care leavers live in suitable accommodation.</b></p>					



Outcome	Action(s)	Success measure(s)	Lead	Complete by	RAG Initial	RAG XX	Progress Update
		There are low levels of tenancy breakdown is in line with or better than the national average.					
<b>The Children in Care Council is fully representative of the children in care population and effective in engaging, supporting and representing the views of all children and young people who are looked-after.</b>  <b>(Recommendation 15)</b>	<b>14.3</b> Support the Children in Care Council (Your Destiny Your Choice) to develop their role so they are able to engage, support, and represent the views of all children and young people who are looked-after in line with ECM outcomes.	CICC is representative of the demographic of Reading's children in care population.  Quarterly corporate parenting panels take place with appropriate CICC representation.	<b>AMD</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>15.1</b> Deliver a development programme to support the Children in Care Council to promote its purpose; review its terms of reference; create an annual programme of activity.	The views and experiences of all looked-after children are represented through the Children in Care Council.	<b>AMD</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.
	<b>15.2</b> Revise the participation and engagement strategy for children and young people, with a focused forward plan for continuous improvement, to include a review of advocacy arrangements.	The voice of children and young people is heard, and used to influence the design and delivery of services in Reading.	<b>AMD</b>	31/03/17	<b>LG</b>		On track.

Lead	Officer
HM	Helen McMullen, Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services
SG	Satinder Gautam, Head of Safeguarding Services
AF	Andy Fitton, Head of Early Help Services
AMD	Ann Marie Dodds, Head of Governance and Business
KS	Kelly Swaffield, Head of Transformation and Improvement
RB	Richard Blackmore, Head of Education

DRAFT

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTOR

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	18 OCTOBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	FINANCE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT		
LEAD MEMBER:	COUNCILLOR LOVELOCK	JO PORTFOLIO:	CORPORATE
SERVICE:	ALL	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
AUTHOR:	SIMON WARREN	TEL:	0118 937 2067 (x72067)
JOB TITLE:	INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTOR	Email:	simon.warren@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 On 9 February 2016, the then Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark MP, announced the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17. The settlement included indicative funding allocations for the subsequent three financial years up to and including 2019/20 and confirmed that the Government would offer any council wishing to take it up, a Four-year Funding Settlement running from 2016/17 up to 2019/20.
- 1.2 This was followed by a letter to chief executives and leaders of local authorities inviting them to submit a four year financial sustainability plan by 14 October 2016 as a condition of the Four Year Settlement offer.
- 1.3 This offer was described at Policy Committee on 26 September 2016 in an update report on the Council's financial position. It was explained that the Government had offered a multi-year financial settlement to local authorities on the condition that they submitted a web link to their financial sustainability plan by 14 October 2016. Councils that did not accept the offer would be subject to the existing annual process for determining the level of central funding that they would receive and may be subject to additional grant reductions.
- 1.4 It is therefore proposed that the Four Year Settlement offer is accepted, which will mean that Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will not be less than the figures published by the Government and that the financial sustainability plan is submitted.

- 1.5 Policy Committee agreed that the draft sustainability plan should be considered at the meeting of Council on 18 October 2016, notwithstanding that this was a few days after the government's deadline and the plan is attached at Annex one to this report.
- 1.6 It has been agreed with DCLG that the plan should be submitted on 14 October subject to approval at Council on 18 October. This is in line with a number of other authorities who are similarly reporting to Council on 18 October.

## **2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Council's Four Year Settlement Offer, which would run from 2016/17 to 2019/20 be accepted.
- 2.2 That the Financial Sustainability Plan, as submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government by the deadline of 14 October 2016 and appended to the report, be accepted.

## **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Council receives an annual Settlement Funding Assessment from the Government, which is made up of Revenue Support Grant (RSG), and the Government's estimate of the Council's share of the Business Rates income raised. On 9 February 2016, the then Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark MP, announced the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17.
- 3.2 The settlement included indicative funding allocations for the subsequent three financial years up to and including 2019/20 and confirmed that the Government would offer any council wishing to take it up, a Four-year Funding Settlement running from 2016/17 up to 2019/20. The final settlement also included transitional grant in 2016/17 and 2017/18 and these sums are part of the guarantee.
- 3.3 This was followed by a letter from the Secretary of State to chief executives and leaders of local authorities on 10 March 2016 explaining that authorities wishing to accept the offer had until 14th October 2016 to respond via the submission of a Four Year Financial Sustainability Plan. Although the format and content of the plan were not prescribed, best practice suggests that a short 2-4 page narrative based on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan would be appropriate. The DCLG will consider each Plan on its own merits.

## **4. THE PROPOSAL - FINANCE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

- 4.1 The key element of the indicative funding allocations is the RSG projections for the next 3 financial years. As part of the annual budget setting process

the Council prepares a medium term financial plan which is refreshed every year. The Council's current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) published at Policy Committee on 15 February 2016 and at Council on 23 February 2016 assumed significant cuts in RSG (which is planned to be phased out in 2020 with the introduction of 100% Business Rates Retention).

- 4.2 The indicative allocations suggest that accepting the Four Year Offer could provide some £18.6m RSG over the period 2017/18 to 2019/20, £10.4m next year falling just below £2m in 2019/20. These resources have been assumed in the draft medium term financial plan.
- 4.3 The Secretary of State's letter and annex made clear that councils which choose not to accept the offer, or which do not qualify, will be subject to the existing annual process for determining the local government finance settlement with the associated uncertainty.
- 4.4 Future levels of funding will not be guaranteed and "could be subject to additional reductions dependant on the fiscal climate".
- 4.5 It is proposed that Reading Borough Council accept the Four Year Settlement Offer and the attached Financial Sustainability Plan set out in Annex one has been submitted to DCLG in order to meet the deadline of 14 October noting that it is subject to approval of Council.

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 There are no community engagement implications from this report.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Four Year Settlement offer is recommended as this provides the Council with some certainty in regard to RSG over the period of the medium term financial plan and will offer some protection from a further reduction in resources.
- 6.2 The table below sets out the impact of the four year settlement on Revenue Support grant over the medium term period.

Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k	2019/20 £k
RSG Estimates	10,368	6,209	1,998
Transitional Relief Grant	387		

- 6.3 The indicative settlement has already been incorporated into the medium term financial plan.

6.4 The Secretary of State has also issued guidance on the flexible use of capital receipts. This will enable councils submitting a Financial Sustainability Plan to finance revenue expenditure from capital receipts where such expenditure is forecast to generate ongoing savings. This will provide the Council with additional flexibility in deciding how best to fund the changes needed to deliver the Financial Sustainability Plan. Any decision to use this flexibility will be taken based upon the Council's best financial interests at the time.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 None directly from this report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None directly from this report.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 Agenda and Minutes of the Policy Committee - 26 September 2016

9.2 Final Local Government Finance Settlement - 9 February 2016

9.3 Letter and Annex from Secretary of State - 10 March 2016

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2017-2020

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council is facing a severe and financial challenge over the coming years, despite making significant savings over several years. As a result of continuing reductions in funding and increasing pressures, it is currently forecast that the Council needs to make revenue savings of £41.9m by 2019/20.
- 1.2. Savings of £23.4m have already been agreed by Councillors, and the Council is now working to deliver these.
- 1.3. This leaves a budget gap of £18.5m which will be closed through the adoption of the strategic approach to budget review and planning the Council's future service offer and delivery model.

### 2. Financial Context

#### Setting the Budget

- 2.1. The Council's annual Budget is set at Council each February and incorporates the Medium Term Financial Plan, which presents the budget forecast on a three year rolling basis. The report also updates the Council's Corporate Plan which sets out key priorities and service activities.
- 2.2. Council Budget reports are accessible at the link <http://www.reading.gov.uk/budget-reports> and the 2016/17 budget report is available here:

[http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4929/Corporate-Plan-and-Budget-2016-2019/pdf/Corporate\\_Plan\\_and\\_Budget\\_2016-2019.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4929/Corporate-Plan-and-Budget-2016-2019/pdf/Corporate_Plan_and_Budget_2016-2019.pdf)

#### Managing the Budget Gap

- 2.3. Between 2011/12 and 2019/20 the Council's grant will have been cut by £57.5m. The most significant change was the cut this year because of changes to the distribution methodology. The Medium Term Financial Plan for 2016 to 2020 took account of the unexpected additional loss of £5m grant which was announced on 17 December 2015. The short notice of this reduction meant there was insufficient time to safely recommend further savings to bridge the funding gap for 2016/17 as it did not allow enough time for the Council to adequately consult on the additional proposals required to make the savings.

- 2.4. The financial table in the budget report (page (B)16) shows how the 2016/17 budget balanced, along with the position for the following years. The table incorporates Council Tax at 2016/17 levels, and it is anticipated that the 2017/18 savings gap of £1.45m could be covered by a future Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept increase.
- 2.5. Based on the four year settlement forecast to 2019/20 we estimate that in addition to the savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan, we require further savings of around £15m spread across 2018/19 and 2019/20 to ensure a sustainable financial plan.
- 2.6. The Medium Term Financial Plan also incorporates £7.5m (including £0.7m use of the Prudential Reserve to smooth increases in borrowing costs) of one off resources to bridge the budget gap as well as high level, indicative savings of £21m which required detailed work immediately after the budget was set.

Increasing pressures on the budget

- 2.7. There have been increasing pressures and service demand on the current budget, so to ensure a prudent approach £6.4m additional and ongoing revenue demands have been built into the budget for the purposes of planning. This does not mean that the current overspend position is accepted or that any additional funding will be included in service specific budgets until the Council budget process has concluded.
- 2.8. The current year pressures include £3m for Children's Social Care due to the escalating demands on the service which continue to severely impact on the Council's overall budget position. Work is underway to implement a revised model of Children's Social Care, which has required increased staffing levels to reduce high caseloads and increased the structural cost above that budgeted by £0.7m. Additional costs arising from the level of agency staff required during the recruitment and transition period have meant that in 2016/17 actual costs are £1.4m above budget.
- 2.9. Work began immediately after the 2016/17 budget was set to work up the detail of the £21m high level savings indicated in the report. Further savings proposals were also identified and put forward to Councillors and a package of budget savings of £19.8m was approved at Policy Committee on 18 July. The link for this can be found at: [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5708/item09-2/pdf/item09\\_\(2\).pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5708/item09-2/pdf/item09_(2).pdf)
- 2.10. Work is underway to implement these along with progressing all earlier agreed savings, including appropriate consultation with staff and the public.



- 2.11. This July report also updated the financial position and identified a £36.7m remaining budget gap for the period 2016-20 prior to delivery of savings which were then agreed at that committee. This gap reflected the further significant emerging pressures of £4m on the 2016/17 budget, which had then been identified and particularly relate to Children's Services.

*Interim review of the budget*

- 2.12. Since the July report the underlying budget assumptions have been reviewed, and the in-year overspend had increased to £6.9m based on the end of July budget, with continuing overspending in the Children's Social Care service. There was some offset due to an improved forward Council Tax receipts position due to a sharper rise this year than in recent years in new properties.
- 2.13. A report presented to September's Policy Committee set out in outline the changed Financial Position found at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5974/Item09/pdf/Item09.pdf>

This identified that for the 2017-20 period, we had a budget gap of £41.9m before allowing for the agreed savings of £23.4m, which leaves the £18.5m gap.

- 2.14. To ensure prudent budget planning, these calculations assume that the current overspending will need to be allowed for within the budget to meet rising demand in Children's Social Care. However, before any changes to baseline budgets could be made, this must be considered within the context of the overall 2017/18 budget process and the review of in-year overspend mitigation.
- 2.15. The following table identifies the current position:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
<b>Budget Requirement (previous year):</b>	120,197	119,957	120,474	
Impact of Agreed Funding measures and Budget Overspend in 2016/17	13,634	-	-	
Estimated Impact of Budget build in accordance with agreed guidelines	10,527	10,866	7,543	
Budget before savings	144,358	130,823	128,017	
Resources Available to Fund Budget	-119,957	-120,474	-120,842	
Budget Gap	24,401	10,349	7,175	41,925
Agreed Savings to date (from	-14,851	-6,002	-2,587	-23,440

February Council, July 2015, July 2016 & September 2016 Policy Committees){note INCLUDES A HILL}				
<b>Remaining Gap</b>	<b>9,550</b>	<b>4,347</b>	<b>4,588</b>	<b>18,485</b>

- 2.16. The key changes from the £36.7m gap presented in July to the £41.9m above are an additional 2016/17 overspend of £2.8m and the impact of revised budget build assumptions of £1.7m as above.
- 2.17. It should also be noted that there are some potential additional pressures that have not yet been costed or incorporated, such as the Apprenticeship Levy, impact of the Pension Fund Revaluation.

### 3. **Developing the Medium Term Financial Plan**

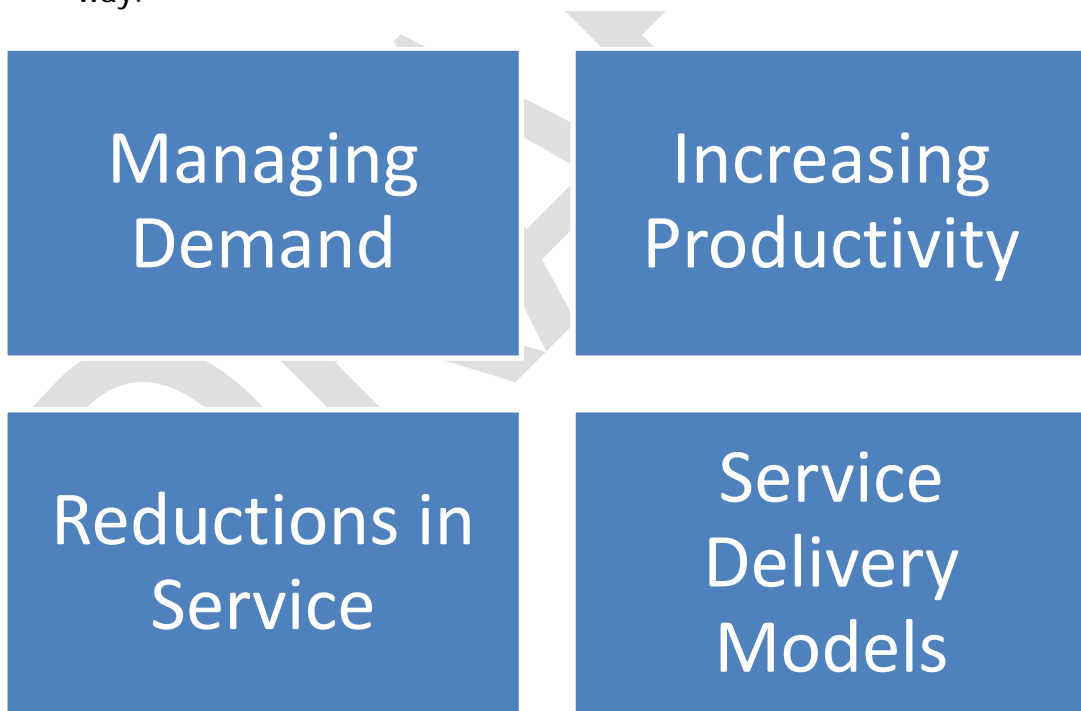
- 3.1. In the context of our interim budget review, we have now begun to identify further savings to balance the budget over the next three years using the approach set out below to take into account the changing operational landscape. The planned timetable brings identified savings before members in early December for approval to allow for consultation with a view to setting the 2017/18 budget and having a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan with agreed savings to 2019/20.

#### Our approach

- 3.2. Since 2010/11 the Council has successfully managed the reduction in resources available to fund services, which has required a combination of innovative solutions and difficult choices made by the Council. To put this in context, by the end of the financial year 2015/2016, the Council had agreed savings of almost £65m from its budget since 2011 and difficult decisions have already been made.
- 3.3. A variety of methods have been taken to the budget setting process to enable the Council to set and maintain a balanced budget including assessments of services' relative contributions to Council priorities, assessments of statutory and non-statutory services, as well as more rudimentary approaches such as equalised budget reductions.
- 3.4. The Council has made service cuts and reductions, as well as adopting more efficient models of service delivery such as developing shared services with partners and outsourcing.
- 3.5. We are working through a Council wide programme of digitisation and increasing self-service by both customers and employees, with services redesigned to deliver efficiencies. A major programme of transformation is underway in Adults Services where expectations

about service provision among our communities and partners will change with initiatives underway to help people to look to their own resources and communities to meet their social care needs. In Children's Services while we work to manage the current structural pressure, it is expected to move to a steady state in the medium term with a focus on early help and prevention to manage demand.

- 3.6. For discretionary services we have a strategy to maximise income by developing successful Council businesses which have an identified market. We have also embarked on a programme to make best use of Council assets through rationalisation.
- 3.7. In the context of the financial situation outlined above, and the certainty of a minimum four year grant settlement proposed by Central Government, the Council is now developing its latest Medium Term Financial Plan based on the approach set out below. This builds on the work we have done historically to manage budgets and which we are drawing on to stabilise our financial position within the current financial year and to develop further proposals for the Council to consider to bridge the medium term gap in a sustainable way.



Managing Demand

- 3.8. Around 70% of the Council's existing revenue budget supports the delivery of Adults and Children's Social Care. Additionally the Council operates a vibrant leisure and cultural offer for citizens, which is largely self-sustaining. Going forward, a key strategic aim of all transformation plans will be to reduce and manage demand more effectively, working with service users to deliver greater

independence, sustainability, and more cost effective support from the authority as well as focussing on business development to increase income where possible.

- 3.9. We will work more effectively with other public sector partners and the voluntary/community sector to ensure we are joining up service delivery to meet the needs of local communities.

#### Increasing Productivity

- 3.10. The Council has driven efficiency in the services it delivers over many years. However, it is recognised that there are further efficiencies/productivity gains that can be made. The Council is continuing its digitisation plan, and this will begin to allow productivity to increase over the four year period to 2020.

#### Service Delivery Models

- 3.11. We have taken a pragmatic approach about models of service delivery and we already have a variety of shared service relationships with partners across Berkshire, for example in the areas of legal services, waste disposal, cultural services, procurement, etc. and we are exploring other opportunities to consolidate across the region. We have also externalised some services, for example ICT provision and much of Adult Social Care provision is commissioned from the private sector.
- 3.12. However, we recognise there are further opportunities that need to be considered where other councils have been very successful in generating substantial savings. The Council is currently considering the potential for other models for additional back office services such as Revenues & Benefits, as well as front line services such as Leisure Services.

#### Reductions in services

- 3.13. The Council's financial situation is such that now it needs to consider the extent to which additional services should be reduced or stopped using the approach detailed above.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. Whilst the Council has had a long history of adapting to change and robust decision making to ensure it has delivered required savings to live within its means, it is now facing unprecedented times and challenges.
- 4.2. However, the additional certainty provided by the four year settlement and additional flexibility to use capital receipts strengthens our ability to plan for the future and decide what local

services we will provide, how they are delivered and how we fund the changes that will be required.

- 4.3. Over the coming months we will work to set a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017-2020 to bridge the budget gap and set the future direction of the Council.

DRAFT



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	18 OCTOBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSAL: ARTHUR HILL POOL		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	PAUL GITTINGS	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, SPORT & CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	READING SPORT AND LEISURE (RSL)	WARDS:	ABBEY, PARK, REDLANDS
LEAD OFFICER:	GRANT THORNTON	TEL:	0118 937 2416
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	E-MAIL:	grant.thornton@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan and budget for 2016-2019 were set at Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. The report to Council made it clear that further options to reduce the Council's overall budget envelope to bridge the budget gap in all years to 2019/20 would need to be considered. Policy Committee on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016 approved a first tranche of additional savings proposals totalling £19.84m with over £19m still to be identified to bridge the currently forecast budget gap between 2016 and 2020. The report made clear that further proposals would need to be brought forward in the Autumn to address this budget shortfall.
- 1.2 This report outlines a budget savings proposal to close Arthur Hill Pool to enable full-year revenue savings in 2017/18 and future years of £120k per annum, remove significant liabilities regarding the short-term investment of approximately £700k needed to upgrade the facility and also to reduce ongoing property maintenance costs. The report sets this in the context of the Council's approach to modernising its leisure facilities and in principle approval for the development of a new 25m 6 lane pool at Palmer Park Stadium linked to the existing leisure facilities. The report makes clear that the value of any capital receipt to the Council from disposing of the current Arthur Hill Pool site would be used to contribute to the cost of this new pool at Palmer Park Stadium.
- 1.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for this proposal is attached at Appendix 1.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Council approves the permanent closure of Arthur Hill Pool from 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016 as set out in in paragraph 4.2 of the report to deliver the savings identified in section 9 of the report, having full regard to the Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That, following closure, the Arthur Hill Pool site is declared surplus to requirements and be disposed of.
- 2.3 That the property be advertised in line with the Council's approved policy, to both third sector organisations and on the open market and that a further report be considered by Policy Committee once bids have been received.
- 2.4 That a sum equivalent to the capital receipt arising from the disposal of the site is invested in new replacement swimming facilities.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council has undertaken a review of its leisure facilities with a view to considering options for the modernisation of the leisure estate into the future. Policy Committee at its meeting on the 30 November 2015 approved in principle the development of a new 25m 6 lane pool at Palmer Park Stadium linked to the existing leisure facilities. The Council is in the early stages of a procurement exercise for a new leisure operator to run the Council's facilities, including the design, build and operation of new pools to replace both Central and Arthur Hill pools. It is estimated that it will take between 3 and 4 years to deliver these new facilities.
- 3.2 This review of leisure facilities sits within the wider financial context of the Council, and specifically the need to make further substantial savings in order to remain financially viable and able to deliver priority services. The Council has no option but to continue to make significant savings as a direct result of changes in how local authorities are funded by national government and the continued austerity measures that have been put in place to reduce public spending. The Council has already made savings of £65m over the last 5 years however, the scale of further savings of circa £40m over the next three years represents a greater challenge than anything previously faced by the Council.
- 3.3 The Council has also approved a Corporate Asset Management Strategy, which seeks to reduce the running costs and future maintenance liabilities of its buildings and property through a programme of rationalisation and targeted re-investment.

## 4. THE PROPOSAL

### 4.1 Current Position:

Arthur Hill Pool is an old facility on a constrained site that has very little scope for significantly improving its offer to local people. The building was



constructed circa 1911 as a purpose built swimming pool and, other than a later addition at the rear that now houses a small gym, remains largely configured as originally built with changing cubicles directly off poolside. The capacity of the pool is limited and relative to the levels of use it has inherently high staffing and operating costs compared to more modern multi-use leisure and swimming facilities.

A condition survey carried out by Faithful & Gould in April 2015 concluded that:

'The overall structural condition of this building is considered to be poor. There is significant evidence of structural defects affecting primarily the basement concrete structures including the pool 'tank', pool surround, and suspended ground floor and support structures'.

Faithful & Gould estimated the then costs of necessary works to repair the pool and building to be over £650k, these costs will have increased subsequently in line with general trends in the construction industry.

As explained in 3.1 above the Council is in the process of procuring replacement swimming facilities, including the provision of a replacement pool linked to existing Palmer Park facilities.

#### **4.2 Options Proposed:**

The proposal is to close Arthur Hill Pool as soon as practicably possible. Emergency works were carried out in the summer of 2014 to enable Arthur Hill pool to remain operational. These works were intended to extend the short-term operational life of the pool and did not negate the need for the additional investment outlined above and there is an increasing risk of major building or plant failure with the passage of time.

In the context of the Council's difficult financial position and budget cuts required as a result of the Government's austerity measures, it is not considered appropriate to spend large amounts of money to keep Arthur Hill Pool open for a relatively short period pending its replacement and nor would this represent good value for money for Council Tax payers. A planned closure as soon as possible is therefore proposed to better manage the impact on user groups through alternative provision and to avoid the risk of an unplanned, forced closure that is becoming increasingly likely.

In order to enable alternative arrangements to be put in place with current users, including the four schools who currently use the pool for swimming lessons, it is proposed that the pool closes from the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

Alternative swimming facilities within the borough are available at Central Pool, Academy Sport and Meadway Sports Centre. The Council is also progressing the provision of a demountable pool at Rivermead. Aligned to this provision, enhanced bus services to Rivermead will be in place from this autumn. This will include a new hourly bus service between Rivermead and the Town Centre from October this year (effectively an extension to the new route serving the new housing development at Kenavon Drive) comprising 11 buses per day Mon-Fri, 8 buses per day Sat, Sun & Bank Hols.

The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for this proposal (attached at Appendix 1) more fully describes how the impact of closure for current user groups will be mitigated pending the availability of new facilities at Palmer Park Stadium.

With regard to staff impact, RSL experiences a relatively high turnover of staff and is currently facing recruitment difficulties in adequately staffing all its sites and has a number of vacancies. Staff currently largely employed at the Arthur Hill site will be redeployed to other RSL facilities thereby assisting the service with capacity and resilience.

In addition to the review of leisure facilities, and the conclusion that more modern facilities are required, the Council has also been conducting a wider review of its land and property assets with a view to rationalising to reduce spend on maintenance and to realise capital receipts through disposing of any surplus assets. These measures will assist the Council's financial position and help protect other front-line services, especially those to the most vulnerable. Ceasing the operation of Arthur Hill Pool will also contribute to the savings and receipts linked to the objectives of this wider asset review. The value of any capital receipt secured through the disposal of the Arthur Hill site following closure would be utilised to help fund the provision of new replacement swimming facilities.

#### **4.3 Other Options Considered:**

As outlined above it is not considered a tenable option to spend significant sums on Arthur Hill Pool to keep it open for a relatively short period pending the development of replacement facilities at Palmer Park Stadium.

The other option considered is to try and keep the pool open without carrying out the significant investment needed to address its poor condition. Not only does this present a significant risk of an unplanned closure, which will increase over time, due to a building or plant failure, it also means that the ongoing staffing and maintenance costs would continue to be incurred. In the context of the Council's budget position and the imperative need to make further savings and the greater potential disruption caused to users by an unplanned closure, this option is not recommended.

### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 The budget saving proposal to close Arthur Hill Pool is a response to the serious financial challenges facing the Council and the requirement to make significant further savings in order to be able to meet legal obligations to set a balanced budget. It therefore directly contributes to the strategic aim:

'Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.'

- 5.2 As implied by the above, delivering further savings is essential for the Council to be able to continue deliver a range of services and meet wider strategic needs and priorities, particularly as regards protecting and improving outcomes for those who are most vulnerable.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 The proposed closure of Arthur Hill Pool in mid-December 2016 will enable proactive engagement with all current user groups in relation to accessing alternative provision whilst not disrupting existing bookings for the intervening period.
- 6.2 The Council is in the early stages of a procurement exercise for a new leisure operator to run the Council's facilities, including the design, build and operation of new pools to replace both Central and Arthur Hill pools. The development of proposals for a new pool at Palmer Park Stadium will include appropriate engagement with local communities and will also be subject to statutory consultation as part of the planning process.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is considered relevant to the decision on the recommendations of this report and the EIA is attached at Appendix 1. In summary, the EIA acknowledges that the closure of Arthur Hill Pool will mean that existing users will not have access to swimming in the immediate East Reading area pending the delivery of replacement new facilities at Palmer Park Stadium. This impact can be mitigated for key user groups by offering alternative provision at other facilities in Reading (Academy Sport, Meadway and Central). General access to public swimming is also available at Bulmershe and Loddon Valley leisure sites to the south and east of the Borough. Those currently using the small gym will be able to access facilities at Palmer Park Stadium that is close by and has longer opening hours.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The provision of Leisure facilities and services is not a statutory duty. The Council is subject to a legal requirement to set a balanced budget.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Closure of Arthur Hill Pool will result in a revenue saving on RSL's current direct delivery costs of £120,000 per year from April 2017 and avoid the imminent need for capital investment of approximately £700,000 to address the building's poor condition. Closure and disposal will also result in a reduction in property maintenance costs and generation of a capital receipt.

- 9.2 Estimated financial implications over the next 3 years are set-out in the table below (these reflect the overall financial impacts compared to the costs of keeping the pool open, not just the recurrent full-year revenue saving of £120k p.a.):

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Saving to RSL Revenue Budget	-30,000	-120,000	-120,000
Saving to Corporate Property Maintenance Budget	-10,000	-30,000	-30,000
Costs of securing vacated building	+10,000	+5,000	
Saving on capital expenditure required to address current condition		-650,000	-50,000
Capital receipt secured through disposal of the site			To be determined

- 9.3 In summary, over the period the proposal will result in the Council spending £325,000 less revenue and a net improvement on potential capital expenditure / income of £700,000 plus the capital receipt from site disposal that is yet to be determined. The value of this receipt will be invested in new replacement facilities.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Agenda and Minutes Policy Committee / Council 15<sup>th</sup> / 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016.

'Budget proposals 2016-20 to Narrow the Budget Gap' - Report to Policy Committee 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

'Review of leisure Facilities and Future Provision' - Report to Policy Committee 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Reading Borough Council, Arthur Hill Baths Condition Survey 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 - Faithful + Gould.

Local Government Financial settlement 2016/17.

## Equality Impact Assessment

### Provide basic details

**Name of proposal**

Closure of Arthur Hill Pool & Fitness Studio

Directorate: DENS

Service: Leisure & Recreation

**Name and job title of person doing the assessment**

Name: Ben Stanesby

Job Title: Leisure & Recreation Manager

Date of assessment: 27/06/2016

### Scope your proposal

**What is the aim of your Proposal?**

The proposal is to close Arthur Hill Pool as soon as practicably possible. Arthur Hill Pool is an old facility on a constrained site that has very little scope for significantly improving its offer to local people. The building was constructed circa 1911 as a purpose built swimming pool and, other than a later addition at the rear that now houses a small gym, remains largely configured as originally built with changing cubicles directly off poolside. The capacity of the pool is limited and relative to the levels of use it has high staffing and operating costs compared to more modern multi-use leisure and swimming facilities.

In the context of the Council's difficult financial position and budget cuts required as a result of the Government's austerity measures, it is not considered appropriate to spend large amounts of money to keep Arthur Hill Pool open for a relatively short period pending its replacement and nor would this represent good value for money for Council tax payers. A planned closure as soon as possible is therefore proposed to better manage the impact on user groups and to avoid the risk of an unplanned, forced closure.

In the medium term, it is proposed to build a new 25m community pool along with a teaching pool at Palmer Park. This will provide enhanced facilities in the area.

In the interim, changes will be made to the programmes at other pools within Reading to specifically accommodate more disadvantaged or vulnerable groups currently using Arthur Hill Pool.

The general swimming programmes in Reading's pools, including lessons, are able to accommodate people who currently use the Arthur Hill should the facility close.

## Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

The proposal is outlined in more detail in the accompanying proposal document.

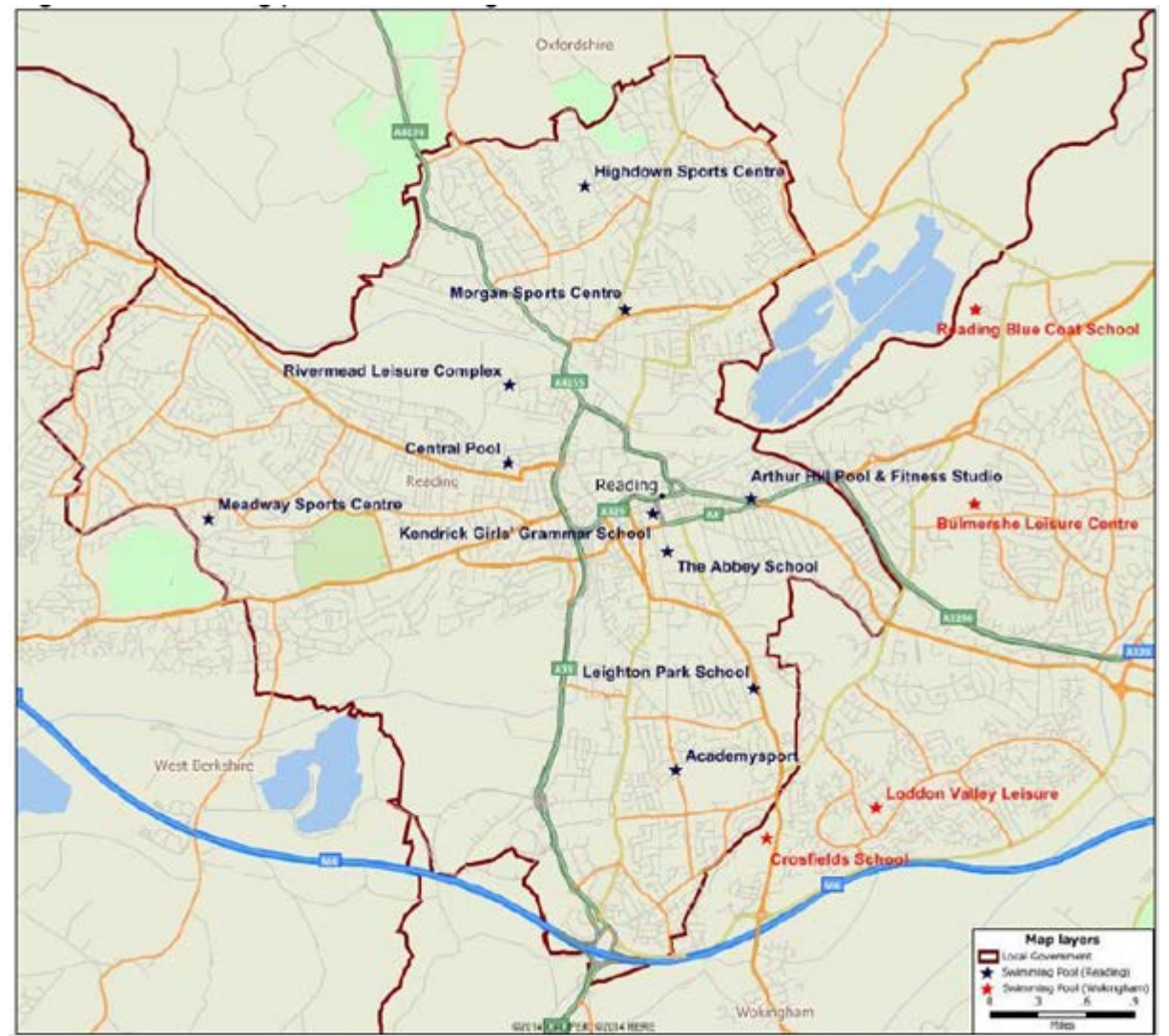
### Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

The replacement facility with greater flexibility of use and greater capacity would produce a significant improvement in service and many benefits. This EIA specifically addresses the impacts of the proposed closure of Arthur Hill before the new facility is developed and open.

A closure of Arthur Hill and its subsequent replacement would reduce the cost of providing facilities contributing to the savings the Council needs to make. This would help safeguard services that are provided to people across Reading.

### What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?

Reading currently provides a number of swimming pools and there is also provision at Loddon Valley and Bulmershe pools to the south and east of the Council boundaries in Wokingham.



## Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

While travel to use other centres may be a barrier, the programming of Reading's swimming pools will enable people to continue to access services at other facilities should Arthur Hill close.

These pools already offer a broad range of swimming sessions able to accommodate the general activity provided at Arthur Hill Pool. Where specialist activity is provided, alternative provision will be organised in consultation with users.

### Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

Arthur Hill has very limited car parking available with a total of 6 spaces, there is also very limited on street car parking in the locality. The vast majority of general public use is local residents who do not drive to use the facilities.

#### Local residents

Local residents use the pool for a variety of sessions including adult lane swimming, general swimming, swimming lessons and there is also a small gym to the back of the pool.

#### Other stakeholders

Reading Naturists: Thursday 8 - 9.30pm

Ghurkas Association: Monday 10 - 11am

Private Hire: 1 lane fitness swim Sunday 9-10am

Dolphin Club: A disabled swimming session Sunday 9.30 -10.30

Reading Royals Synchronised Swimming Club: Thursday 5.30 - 6.45am

#### Primary Schools:

The following schools use the pool throughout the year term-time at the following times:

- St Johns Thurs 9.30 - 10.30am
- Alfred Sutton Tuesdays 9.30 - 11.30am and Thursday 1.45 - 2.45pm
- Christ the King Tuesdays 1.45 - 2.45pm
- Redlands Wednesday 9.30 - 11.30

These schools use the pool for the teaching of swimming as part of their curriculum. Arthur Hill pool is within walking distance for the schools above except for Christ the King.

There is alternative space available at Central Swimming Pool, Meadway Sports Centre and Academy Sport. Time slots would be offered to the schools but transport would need to be arranged.

## Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

A wider group of people use the gym and a closure is not believed likely to discriminate against any particular group. There is also a gym at nearby Palmer Park with substantially longer opening times.

### Assess whether an EIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc)

Yes  No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes  No

If the answer is Yes to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

n/a

Signed (completing officer)

Date

Signed (Lead Officer)

Date

### Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- **Consultation**
- **Collection and Assessment of Data**
- **Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive**

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might



## Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

**Example:** A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

### Consultation

There has not been public consultation.

Alternative options would be offered to organisations hiring Arthur Hill Swimming pool should a decision to close the facility be made. Similar times and facilities are available to accommodate all hirers with the exception of the Reading Naurist Club where providing the appropriate privacy is not possible. Through discussion with these organisations the best alternative provision will be identified.

Of the public sessions, the women's and women and children sessions are predominantly used by the Asian and Muslim community who live locally. Consultation with these customers would be undertaken to determine whether to relocate sessions to either Central Swimming Pool or Meadway Sports Centre.

Users of the general swimming sessions would be advised of the alternative sessions that are available at local pools where similar times and sessions are available throughout the week.

Gym users would be advised of the availability of the nearby Palmer Park Sports Stadium facilities that are within easy walking distance.

## Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

### Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group.

#### **Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups**

##### **Diversity of local Wards**

The facility lies within Park Ward with 29.2% of the population being identified as Asian/Asian British in the 2011 census. The adjacent Abbey and Redlands Wards were identified as having 24.4% and 16.9% of their population as Asian/Asian British.

The use of Arthur Hill reflects the very local population in part due to the lack of car parking and its size, meaning it predominantly attracts local people.

A large proportion of students using the centre for swimming lessons are of Asian descent. When lessons have had to be cancelled for prolonged periods of time, users have been unwilling to travel to other pools in Reading to learn to swim.

As well as the Reading pools, Bulmershe Swimming Pool also provides swimming lessons. It is unknown how many people from the Arthur Hill locality access Bulmershe.

On average 15 people attend the women's only session of which almost all attendees are Asian/Asian British. On average 35 people attend the mother and child session of which approximately 90% are estimated to be Asian/Asian British. It is unknown what proportion of customers would choose to travel to Central Swimming Pool or Meadway Sports Centre if Arthur Hill were closed. Alternative provision, however, would be offered and consulted upon.

There are 65 people on lessons at Arthur Hill of which approximately 40% are estimated to be Asian/Asian British. There is sufficient capacity to provide swimming lessons to people displaced from Arthur Hill. Should it close all customers will be offered alternative lessons. However previous experience of when lessons have had to be cancelled for prolonged periods of time, users have been unwilling to travel to other pools in Reading to learn to swim.

The ethnicity profile of the local schools reflects those of the ward generally. There are approximately 200 pupils attending Arthur Hill for school swimming lessons. There is capacity to accommodate all these schools at Central Swimming pool. Alternatively the schools programme could be extended at Academy sport to accommodate the majority of the schools and similarly there is capacity at Meadway Sports Centre. If Arthur Hill were to close a choice of site options could be offered. It is unlikely the pupils could walk to use these venues and an additional cost would need to be borne by the schools. The requirement for

## Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

transport to access lessons is not unusual and is the case with many of the schools using Reading's pools for swimming lessons.

Is there a negative impact?      Yes       No       Not sure

### Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)

There is both a women only swimming session as well as a women and child session. It is unknown what proportion of customers would choose to travel to Central Swimming Pool if these sessions were cancelled. Provision, however, will be offered and consulted upon should Arthur Hill be closed.

At Academy Sport Leisure Centre a women only session takes place every Thursday from 7.00pm to 8.00pm.

Is there a negative impact?      Yes       No       Not sure

### Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

There is one weekly hiring by a disabled people's group. An alternative location and time slot would be offered to this group to minimise the impact.

Is there a negative impact?      Yes       No       Not sure

### Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)

The proposal does not impact adversely on any one group.

Is there a negative impact?      Yes       No       Not sure

### Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

Arthur Hill is used by a broad range of people with the exception of the very old who are unlikely to use the facilities.

There are 65 children attending swimming lessons at Arthur Hill. There is sufficient capacity to provide swimming lessons to people displaced from Arthur Hill. Should it close all customers will be offered alternative lessons. However previous experience of when lessons have had to be cancelled for prolonged periods of time is that users have been unwilling to travel to other pools in Reading to learn to swim.

There are approximately 200 pupils attending Arthur Hill for school swimming lessons. There is capacity to accommodate all these schools at Central Swimming pool. Alternatively the schools programme could be extended at Academy sport to accommodate the majority of the schools and similarly there is capacity at Meadway Sports Centre. If Arthur Hill were to close a choice of sites options could be offered. It is unlikely the schools could walk to use these venues and an

## Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

additional cost would need to be borne by the schools. The requirement for transport to access lessons is not unusual and is the case with many of the schools using Reading's pools for swimming lessons.

Is there a negative impact?

Yes  No

Not sure

### Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?

The facility lies within Park Ward with 15.2% of the population being identified as Muslim in the 2011 census. The adjacent Abbey and Redlands Wards were identified as having 10.5% and 9.1% of their population as being Muslim.

The vast majority of people attending the women only sessions (15 attendees) or woman and child sessions(35 attendees) are Asian/Asian British and a large proportion are likely to be Muslim. It is likely that due to their beliefs they do not feel able to use the facilities with men.

Should these sessions be cancelled it is unknown what proportion of people would be prepared to travel to other Reading pools. Alternative sessions would however be offered and consulted upon.

At Academy Sport Leisure Centre a ladies only session takes place every Thursday from 7.00pm to 8.00pm.

The swimming lessons currently have a reasonably high proportion of Muslim students, reflecting the ethnic mix of people attending. When lessons have had to be cancelled for prolonged periods of time, users have been unwilling to travel to other pools in Reading to learn to swim. However, should this programme of lessons be cancelled, alternatives will be offered to students.

As well as the Council's pools, Bulmershe Pool also provides swimming lessons. It is unknown how many people from the Arthur Hill locality access Bulmershe.

The religion profile of the local schools reflects those of the ward generally. There are approximately 200 pupils attending Arthur Hill for school swimming lessons. There is capacity to accommodate all these schools at Central Swimming pool. Alternatively the schools programme could be extended at Academy sport to accommodate the majority of the schools and similarly there is capacity at Meadway Sports Centre. If Arthur Hill were to close a choice of sites options could be offered. It is unlikely the schools could walk to use these venues and an additional cost would need to be borne by the schools. The requirement for transport to access lessons is not unusual and is the case with many of the schools using Reading's pools for swimming lessons.

Is there a negative impact?

Yes  No

Not sure

# Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

## Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

1. **No negative impact identified**      Go to sign off     

2. **Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**      ✓  
You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

### **Reason**

The Council is unable to continue to afford to provide Arthur Hill and will be opening a larger replacement facility in 3-4 years. The Council will need to make other cuts to other services if Arthur Hill is kept open in the interim. Changes to service can be made to reduce the impact of temporary service reduction. See point 3 below.

3. **Negative impact identified or uncertain**      ✓

**What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?**

Negative impacts are mitigated by provision of sessions at other swimming pools within Reading or local to the Arthur Hill area. Where necessary, additional sessions would be run or changes to programmes made to accommodate people displaced from Arthur Hill. This would include:

- a) An additional women (encompassing women and child) only session at Central Swimming Pool or Meadway Sports Centre;
- b) Making space available for the Dolphin Club and The Ghurka Association at one of Reading's Pools;
- c) Accommodating local schools within Reading's pools;
- d) Ensuring there is capacity to accommodate everyone on Arthur Hill's swimming lesson programme.



**How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

Collection and analysis of quarterly performance monitoring data.

Monitoring of complaints.

Customer feedback.

**Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment**

Signed (completing officer)		Date 15.09.16
Signed (Lead Officer)		Date 15.09.16

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY MONITORING OFFICER

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	18 OCTOBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE		
LEAD MEMBER:	TINA BARNES	PORTFOLIO:	CHAIR OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE
SERVICE:	LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC	WARDS:	BOROUGH-WIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	CHRIS BROOKS	TEL:	0118 9372602 / 72602
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:Chris.brooks@reading.gov.uk">Chris.brooks@reading.gov.uk</a>

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The Council's annual meeting, on 25 May 2016, appointed a Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17. The Committee met on 30 June 2016 to consider a number of matters, including the following:

- a) the powers and duties of the local Standards Committee, set up by the Annual Council Meeting for the Municipal Year 2016/17;
- b) the Standing Orders and local arrangements for the Committee and principles for dealing with complaints about Councillors;
- c) the local Member Code of Conduct for the authority, as agreed by full Council on 23 October 2012, which incorporated into the Council's Standing Orders provisions for the exclusion of Members from meetings for items of business in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest;

1.2 The Minutes of the Standards Committee on 30 June 2016 are attached at **Appendix A**, for the Council to receive. These summarise the issues that were considered and decided by the Committee.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

2.1 That the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 30 June 2016 (Appendix A) be received.

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Localism Act was passed in November 2011. Chapter 7 deals with standards. The Government introduced a Commencement Order in mid-January 2012, to have effect from 31 January 2012. A further Commencement Order brought into force the remaining parts of Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 from 1 July 2012. This meant that the local elements of the former statutory regime, including statutory standards committees with the power to suspend Councillors, ended on 30 June 2012, and from 1 July 2012, all standards matters have been the responsibility of the local authority, to be handled under the new arrangements.
- 3.2 In addition, the Secretary of State issued The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 on 6 June 2012 and these also came into effect on 1 July 2012.
- 3.3 The Standards Committee, on 12 July 2012, agreed a new 'Complaints about Councillors' document, which has been published on the Council's website. The procedure for investigating allegations of breaches of the local Member Code is set out in the Committee's terms of reference, and in Article 9 of the Council's Constitution.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 4.1 One of the Council's aims is to promote the participation of Reading people in local democracy through effective consultation and communication. This is only likely to be successful if people have confidence in the integrity of the Council and its members. The local Standards Committee will assist in building and maintaining that confidence.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The standards regime applies to voting Members of Council and its Committees, including both Councillors and non-elected Members.
- 5.2 Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 (Sections 26 to 37) has ended the statutory requirement for local authorities to have a Standards Committee, revoked the Model Code of Conduct, and abolished Standards for England and the statutory facility for disqualification through the First-Tier Tribunal. It has replaced these by a duty on local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members, and a requirement to adopt a local code of conduct, and arrangements for investigating allegations that Members had not complied with the local code. Local authorities are able to continue to appoint Standards Committees, but these will not have any statutory status, and there will be no statutory basis for sanctions in cases of breach. The exception to this is where a Member intentionally fails to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest, in which case the Member may be found guilty of a criminal offence, and may be fined, and disqualified by the court from serving as a Member for up to five years.



- 5.3 Chapter 7 has been enacted by Commencement Order (Regulation). The relevant Order ending the national standards regime came into effect on 31 January 2012. The Localism Act 2011 (Commencement No. 6 and Transitional, Savings and Transitory Provisions) Order 2012, which changed the local regime, was issued on 6 June 2012 and came into effect from 1 July 2012.
- 5.4 The Secretary of State issued the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations, dealing with the definition, registration and declaration of pecuniary interests, also on 6 June 2012.
- 5.5 Under Section 28(13-14) of the Localism Act 2011, the function of adopting, revising or replacing a local code of conduct may only be discharged by full Council, and it may not be delegated to the Standards Committee or any other body or person.
- 5.6 The local Standards Committee has been set up, by full Council, as a committee under Section 101(a) of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Subject of course to the number of allegations made against Members of the authority, local investigation and determination under the former statutory procedure generated additional work for the Monitoring Officer and any other officers who undertook a formal investigation. In addition, the Standards Committee was required to set up sub-committee meetings to assess all complaints received, and to hear the individual allegations, which had associated costs of administrative support.
- 6.2 Under the non-statutory local arrangements, the authority has moved back to a more informal, local system, where the first stage focus is on complaints about individual Councillors being pursued within political groups, and any subsequent investigations taking place within a process which is appropriate to the individual complaint, not governed by restrictive external processes, and less resource intensive.
- 6.3 There is no specific budget line in the Council's estimates for standards, or the costs of investigating complaints about Councillors.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Localism Act 2011 (Commencement No. 6 and Transitional, Savings and Transitory Provisions) Order 2012 (SI 2012 - 1463)
- 7.2 The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 - 1464)

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES - 30 JUNE 2016

**Present:** Mrs T Barnes (Chair);  
Councillors Ayub, Ennis, Livingston, Robinson, Steele and Terry;

**Apologies:** Councillor D Edwards;

**In Attendance:** Mr D Comben (Independent Person).

### 1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Further to Minute 2(4), it was noted that, after due consideration, the Conservative Group had re-affirmed its decision that it would use its own disciplinary procedures for investigating any complaints about Councillors from their Group. These procedures had been shared with, and approved by, the Monitoring Officer. The other members of the Standards Committee confirmed that this arrangement was acceptable to them.

### 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ANNUAL REPORT

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report setting out the Committee's terms of reference and constitutional role for the Municipal Year 2016/2017, updating the Committee on developments and complaints during the Municipal Year 2015/2016 and looking forward to the current Municipal Year.

The report advised that Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 had ended the statutory standards regime set up by the Local Government Act 2000, and introduced in its place a duty on local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted Members, including adopting a local Member code of conduct. The Act also required local authorities to adopt arrangements to deal with allegations that Members had not complied with their local Code of Conduct, and allowed local authorities to establish a local Standards Committee, and to make Standing Orders relating to aspects of the standards process (Section 31(10)). In the light of recommendations made by the Standards Committee on 19 March 2012, the Annual Council Meeting on 23 May 2012 had agreed to establish a local Standards Committee, which had been re-appointed at the subsequent Council AGMs, most recently on 25 May 2016, with the terms of reference and Standing Orders set out in **Appendix A**.

The report had the local Member Code of Conduct attached at **Appendix B**, which was based on a good practice draft produced by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACScS). The Code retained those elements of the former statutory Model Code which had not been the subject of significant legal challenge. It also set out the statutory requirement for Members to register and declare disclosable pecuniary interests, as informed by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

The Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure for the Standards Committee, together with this Committee, would form the authority's local arrangements for investigating complaints about Councillors. The local procedure was set out in the "Complaints about Councillors" document, attached at **Appendix C** to the report and had been published on the Council's website.

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES - 30 JUNE 2016

Local authorities were required to appoint at least one Independent Person with statutory responsibilities to be consulted and to advise on complaints made about Members. The 2011 Act also prescribed the recruitment process for the Independent Person. Mr David Comben had originally been appointed by the Council as the Independent Person, following the prescribed recruitment exercise in April 2013. He had most recently been re-appointed to this role at the Council meeting on 25 May 2016.

The report also reminded the Committee about the law with regard to the registration and declaration of interests by Members. There was a legal requirement on Members to register and declare interests. The report noted that the Monitoring Officer was the Proper Officer for the receipt of requests from Members for a dispensation to take part in decisions on items of business in which they had a disclosable pecuniary interest, in specified circumstances, under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011. Under Section 33(2) of the Localism Act 2011, a dispensation may only be granted where the authority considered, having had regard to all relevant circumstances, that:

- (a) without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from taking part in the item of business would be so great a proportion of the meeting to impede the transaction of the business;
- (b) without the dispensation the representation of different political groups at the meeting would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the item of business;
- (c) granting the dispensation was in the interests of persons living in the authority's area;
- (d) each member of the authority's executive would be prohibited from participating in any particular business to be transacted by the authority's executive.

The authority to grant a dispensation to a Member with a disclosable pecuniary interest could also be delegated to an officer in accordance with the prescribed circumstances. At the Annual Council Meeting on 25 May 2016, the delegation to the Monitoring Officer to grant a general dispensation to members of the authority was re-established in the following circumstances:

- "(1) That a general dispensation be granted to all Members of the authority to take part and vote on decisions related to the functions of your authority in respect of:
  - (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
  - (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
  - (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES - 30 JUNE 2016

- (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
  - (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
  - (vi) setting Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992;
  - (vii) any other business that might reasonably be regarded as affecting the financial position of the Member and/or his/her spouse or partner to a greater extent than the majority of other Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision.
- (2) That the general dispensation apply for four years, subject to its being renewed each year at the Annual Council Meeting."

The Register of Gifts and Hospitality offered to Councillors in the financial year 2015/16 was attached to the report at **Appendix D**.

The Committee also noted that, at the Annual Council Meeting, on 25 May 2016, Mrs Tina Barnes, the co-opted Independent Member, had been re-appointed as Chair of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

### Resolved -

- (1) That the Committee's terms of reference and Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure (Appendix A) be noted;
- (2) That the local Member Code of Conduct (Appendix B) be noted;
- (3) That the Complaints about Councillors document (Appendix C) be noted;
- (4) That the re-appointment of Mrs Tina Barnes as the independent member and Chair of the Standards Committee and Mr David Comben re-appointment as the Independent Person for 2016/17 be noted;
- (5) That the Monitoring Officer's delegated authority to grant a dispensation relieving the Member from the restrictions on participating in the discussion or voting on any item of business in which they had a disclosable pecuniary interest in the prescribed circumstances described in paragraph 6.20(1) of the report be noted;
- (6) That the list of gifts and hospitality registered by Members in the financial year 2015/16 be received (Appendix D);
- (7) That the Vice-Chair be invited to present the Minutes of this meeting to the next full Council meeting (18 October 2016), and use that meeting to express to all Councillors any matters of concern identified by the Committee.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 6.41pm).

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