

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES - 22 OCTOBER 2020**

Present: Councillor McEwan (Chair);
Councillors Challenger, Grashoff, Hoskin, Jones, O'Connell,
Pearce, Robinson, Terry and White

Apologies: Councillors Ballsdon

1. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 2 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

2. NURSING DEMENTIA BLOCK CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report providing the Committee with a review of the effectiveness and value for money of the current contract and made recommendations to ensure best use of public funds going forward and opportunities to maximise the utilisation of new contracts. The Procurement Timetable was appended to the report.

Resolved: That the additional financial information be noted and taken into account when considering the report on Nursing Dementia Block Contract Procurement in open session (Minute 6 below refers).

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 3).

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct.

4. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meeting were submitted:

- Health and Wellbeing Board - 17 January and 13 March 2020

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

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Questioner	Subject	Reply
Councillor White	Setting up Covid positive Care Homes	Councillor Jones
Councillor White	Impact of Covid on Looked After Children	Councillor Terry

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

6. DECISION BOOK REFERENCES

7. NURSING DEMENTIA BLOCK CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report providing the Committee with a review of the effectiveness and value for money of the current Nursing and Nursing Dementia contracts and making recommendations to ensure best use of public funds going forward and opportunities to maximise the utilisation of new contracts. Details of Local Nursing Home Provision was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a Procurement Timetable was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that the Council currently commissioned 68 Block Beds under two contracts for Nursing and Nursing Dementia provision. Both contracts were due to expire, or had the option to be terminated, in the very near future. Placement trends from the previous three financial years had evidenced that demand for these types of nursing home placements exceeded the capacity of both blocks, highlighting continued demand. In addition, financial analysis had demonstrated that even with a higher rate per bed then was currently charged, new block contracts would generate cost avoidances compared to purchasing (non-block) spot placements from the market.

In order to ensure that supply matched the continued demand for nursing dementia care home placements, and to assist with speedy hospital discharges, the report recommended that the Council ran a procurement to commission a number of block contracts securing 30 nursing dementia beds. The procurement would not be limited to care homes in the Borough.

The report stated that work had already begun on the procurement, including drafting of new services specifications and contract documents, invitations to tender would be advertised on 18 January 2021 and the procurement process would ensure that the new contracts would be in place for, and begin on, 1 October 2021 at the latest. It was recommended that the block contracts were for a period of two years with the option to extend for a further four years, in blocks of two years. Should a Care Home that already had a block contract with the Council be successful during the procurement the current placements could be subsumed into the new block contract filling it immediately. Should a Care Home that did not have a block contract be successful at procurement, the report recommended that the Council paid for the full block contract from the start of the new contracts.

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The Committee discussed the report and Councillor Jones proposed that an additional recommendation be added asking officers to carry out a feasibility study to establish the business case, or otherwise, for the direct provision of nursing dementia residential care in Reading.

Resolved -

- (1) That procurement of new block contracts of up to 15 beds each to total 30 beds (for 01/10/2021), each contract to be for the term of 2 years with the option to extend for up to a further 4 years, be agreed;**
- (2) That the Executive Director Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, be granted delegated authority to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer(s) for the support/care services to be provided through the above framework agreement, at the stage of contract award (close of Q4 2020/2021);**
- (3) That a feasibility study be undertaken by the Council to establish the business case, or otherwise, for the direct provision of nursing dementia residential care in Reading.**

8. CONTINUING HEALTHCARE FUNDING (APRIL 2018 - DECEMBER 2019)

Further to Minute 11 of the meeting held on 25 July 2018, the Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on Continuing Healthcare applications (CHC), steps taken and progress with regard to the application of the CHC Framework and eligibility criteria for residents of Reading Borough Council (RBC).

The report explained that targeted measures that had been taken by the Council to support staff with CHC applications since October 2018 were as follows:

- Workshops had been commissioned and delivered by a national expert in Legal and Continuing Healthcare training;
- The Locality Manager for Reading was the strategic lead for CHC and reviewed and authorised the submission of CHC checklists that had been completed by staff. They advised on areas to highlight within the decision support tool to evidence the needs of people in the 11 domains of the Framework;
- A CHC workflow had been created within the Directorate's Client Record System which output CHC activity in relation to the Council;
- Meetings at a senior level had taken place with colleagues from the CHC to discuss CHC performance and in particular any issues with regard to the application of protocols and guidance.

The report included a number of tables that illustrated performance in the Borough from April 2018 to December 2019, including the following:

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- The number of CHC checklist being completed had increased significantly in 2019/20 due to increased awareness and understanding of CHC and when an individual could be deemed as having eligible healthcare needs. There was still work to do to increase this number and make sure that they were being recorded accurately;
- The cumulative number of CHC applications that were accepted for assessment had remained at a steady number in comparison to previous years. This reflected that cases did not progress to the Multi-Disciplinary Team due to them not meeting the CHC threshold;
- There was an improved picture for the number of CHC checklists that had resulted in dispute for 2019/20 compared to 2108/19, reflecting the better joint working and understanding of the CHC framework between Health and Social Care;
- The total number of cases that had been agreed across an 18 month period between the Council and CCG was 19 since August 2018. With increased awareness and higher numbers of checklist it was expected that this would rise further through the year but, there was no definitive way of measuring this as the eligibility threshold would ultimately determine the overall numbers;
- Since Quarter 3 in 2018/19 there had been a slow increase in the number of referrals per 50,000 people in West Berkshire, although this number was still significantly below the national average and managers and practitioners were working to increase this number. There had also been a significant drop in CHC referrals for both national and regional referrals, this reflected the work that had been done nationally to ensure appropriate checklisting of individuals for CHC assessments;
- The of people per 50.000 of population across Berkshire West who were eligible for CHC was significantly lower than those across the south east, which in turn were below the average number for England. This reflected the lower number of checklist that were received by the CHC service for Reading which had continued historically to be low across West of Berkshire.

The report stated that there continued to be a collective drive between the Council and CCG to ensure that greater awareness of CHC and application of eligibility was sustained and the following were areas of practice that had been agreed in partnership and had commenced:

- Reviews of residents in Nursing Homes had continued, ensuring individuals who had a high level of need would be considered for a checklist at the point of their review if necessary;
- The CCG had offered CHC training to all nursing home staff across the Borough and West Berkshire and Council officers had ensured that this was taken up through their frequent 'Care Quality' and 'provider liaison' visits;
- The Council's Operations Manager held quarterly sessions with managers and officers to ensure that they were confident in following process and completing checklists;

These practice enhancements would now be reinstated following the continuation of CHC following the pause in assessments during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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The Committee discussed the report and a number of points were raised including the following:

- The only way to change the historic figures was to work in partnership with colleagues in Health;
- The provision of CHC should be fair and equitable;
- The Council could not provide Healthcare Services and those that were entitled to free Social Care Service would be entitled to free Healthcare Services;
- Officers were very clear about what Health Care was and what Social Care was and in protecting the rights to residents in the Borough;
- Those residents who had healthcare needs would continue to be identified and if it was thought that colleagues in Health were not making the right assessments it was the Council's responsibility to take this up with Health colleagues and use the appeals process, if necessary;
- Training had taken place and there were officers in place who felt confident about completing the checklist.

Resolved -

- (1) That the performance in relation to Continuing Healthcare between CCG and RBC staff be noted;**
- (2) That the proposed actions to further improve the pathway with regard to ensuring a fair and transparent process for CHC applicants across the Borough be noted.**

9. PROPOSALS FOR BERKSHIRE WEST PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report which set out the rationale for altering the current arrangements for public health across Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire.

The report explained that the proposal was to dissolve the current arrangement between the six local authorities and move to an arrangement between West Berkshire Council, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council. A shared Director of Public Health role for Berkshire West would lead the public health system and would work closely with the local authorities and partners in the Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership. There would also be a Hub Team that would provide health intelligence, health protection and commissioning support to support public health teams in each local authority. The report proposed that the Director of Public Health and Hub were hosted by Reading Borough Council for practical transport reasons. The opportunities of working in partnership across the Berkshire West footprint was to:

- Improve the health of the population and reduce inequalities to improve outcomes for residents and reduce demand for services;
- Retain the local nature of public health, enabling local needs to be prioritised;

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- Improve the value from investment in public health capacity, to make it more visible, engaged, integrated and, most importantly, effective across the local authorities;
- Effectively aligning Public Health with the Integrated Care Partnership with more strategic leadership capacity from the Director of Public Health;
- Improving the information and intelligence the Council had to improve the health of the population, integrating it with the Integrated Care Partnership;
- Improving value for money from Public Health contracts.

The three local authority Chief Executives would take collective responsibility for recruiting and supporting the role and they would all sign-off an annual work programme and carry out their Director's appraisal together. The role would have director level influence in each local authority and would be a 'top table' position, have access to the Chief Executive and Lead Councillors and be party to resource and priority decisions. The Director of Public Health would have leadership of the delivery of a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which would be the guiding Strategy for the Integrated Care Partnership as well as the Health and Wellbeing Boards. The Director would be the Senior Responsible Officer for public health Integrated Care Partnership programmes and would be able to influence any collective Strategy for procurement and although they would not line manage all the local Public Health Consultants, they would provide professional supervision, influence their work programmes and participate in their appraisal.

Resolved -

- (1) That the current set up be dissolved upon a date to be agreed and for Reading Borough Council to host a new shared service on behalf of the Berkshire West System;
- (2) That the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing & Sport and the Chief Executive, be delegated authority to agree the proposed model of devolved Public Health to the Berkshire West footprint.

10. SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ATTAINMENT 2018/19

Further to Minute 22 of the meeting held on 21 October 2019, the Director of Education, Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC), submitted a report providing the Committee with updates on the 2018/19 school standards/attainment figures in order for the Committee to determine progress for children and young people in Reading Schools. The information on standards had been based on validated data for academic year 2018/19 as no data was available for 2019/20.

The report stated that the contract key performance indicators, and outcomes, for BFfC (Education) included the following:

- KPI 18: Reduction in Secondary School Fixed Term Exclusions;

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- KPI 19: Key Stage 2 results (Reading, Writing and Maths expected level+) Gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils;
- KPI 20: Key Stage 4 results (Attainment 8) Gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils;
- KPI 21: Increased percentage of schools rated good or outstanding (locally maintained only).

Overall, schools in Reading had been just below the national average for standards. In all Key Stages Reading had continued to mirror the national position in terms of the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children. The work by BFfC in Key Stages 1 and 2 had continued to decrease the gap compared with England averages and at Key Stages 3 and 4, in some of the Borough's secondary schools, there had been some of the best performance in the country. There was also a substantial proportion of young people leaving schools without the requisite skills for the world of further education and work. The majority of primary schools were good or outstanding, whilst the picture for secondary schools was more mixed. However, despite this mixed picture there had been some notable success in the following:

- School engagement on curriculum projects, particularly curriculum change, oracy and writing and the Therapeutic Thinking approach and school to school support;
- Developing an anti-racist curriculum;
- Active participation programme.

In the case of the latter two bullet points above, for 2020/2021, as there had been a greater focus on 'Black Lives Matter' and the Government's Covid Strategy to improve children's health, these two new projects would be added to work with schools on. Work on climate change would also be added. The report went on to analyse the performance of the Borough's schools against the education performance indicators for BFfC.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress that has been made in raising standards across Reading Schools be noted and teachers, support staff, governors, children and their families thanked for all their hard work;
- (2) That all schools who have achieved a good or outstanding Ofsted rating be congratulated;
- (3) That the work of BFfC in raising attainment and supporting Reading schools continue to be supported.

11. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

The Director of Education, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on School Admissions for 2020.

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The report explained that on 26 June 2020 the DfE had issued a consultation on a revised version of the School Admissions Code which had run for 16 weeks until 16 October 2020. The Code imposed mandatory requirements and included guidelines that set out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to admissions. Ministers were not proposing a wholesale review of the admission system and had said it was clear from feedback that the main round of admissions largely worked well but, that there were problems with the in-year admissions processes and Fair Access Protocols. The proposed changes therefore sought to clarify these responsibilities and introduce a more robust process for their management.

The report stated that the number of applications for places at the Borough's primary schools had increased in the current year and slightly fewer parents (83.44%) had been allocated their first choice for their children compared to previous years. The current year also saw a new Primary School, Green Park Village Academy, opening in Green Park. The report included a table that detailed the number of applications for the previous three years and stated that 96.24% of children had been offered one of their four preferences.

With regard to Secondary Schools, 2020 saw 72.67% of children had been allocated their first preference, which was higher than the previous two years, and overall, 92.13% of children had been offered one of their four preferences.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That the 2022/23 School Admissions policies and coordinated schemes be considered in February 2021.**

12. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY 2020-2021

The Director of Education, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report providing the Committee with details of Reading's Home to School Transport Policy as it applied from September 2020.

The report explained that there had been only one significant change proposed for the Policy for September 2020 and was at paragraph 3.7 of the Policy where an additional paragraph had been added to confirm the entitlement to transport for Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge pupils living within the RG4 postcode.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Home to School Transport Policy, attached to the report in Appendix 1, be approved;**
- (2) That a further amended policy is submitted to the Committee in Spring 2021 covering the academic year 2021/2022.**

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13. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION: UPDATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MARCH 2020

The Director of Education, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report asking the Committee to approve the Brighter Futures for Children draft Children Missing Education Policy and Children Missing Education Practice Guidance. A copy of the Children Missing Education Policy and Practice Guidance was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Policy was intended for the public, schools, professionals and practitioners and had been written to assist BFfC in its implementation of effective systems for identifying, maintaining contact and supporting children resident in the Borough whom were missing education. BFfC would routinely monitor how much educational provision children and young people were receiving, including the quality and appropriateness of this provision.

Resolved - That the draft Policy and Practice Guidance as attached in Appendix 1 be approved.

14. POST 16 UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Education, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the work undertaken by the Education Service at BFfC to address the high number of young people 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET), or whose destination status is 'Unknown'. A report providing details of the progress in this area and outlining the action plan, which had been put in place to continue the improved performance, was attached at Appendix 1.

The report explained that in summer 2019 the previously 'out sourced' organisation, Adviza, which provided careers advice, had been brought in-house under the remit of BFfC and was rebranded as Elevate. In 2018 and 2019 a Ministerial letter had been sent to Reading raising concerns about performance post 16 and in particular the lack of robustness in data and the high level of students who had been categorised as 'not known' at post 16. As a result of the 2019 letter an action plan had been put in place to address these weaknesses and new leadership had been put on place.

Resolved -

- (1) That the significant progress that has been made in the post-16 sector be noted;**
- (2) That a progress report on the action plan be submitted to the Committee in Autumn 2021.**

15. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITIES - STRATEGIC UPDATE

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Further to Minute 43 of the meeting held on 4 April 2019, the Director of Education, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on progress on implementing the Special Education Needs (SEND) Strategy and the timetable for the development of the next Strategy. A table showing performance against Key Performance Indicators (up to September 2021) was attached to the report at Appendix 1, the SEND Strategy 2017-2022 was attached at Appendix 2 and an Action Plan for development of the SEND Strategy 2022-2027 was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report explained that a SEND Data Report had been co-developed to support identification of priorities and actions. The data was provided annually and was used by all key partners to support the refresh of priorities and actions required to deliver improvements. The full Data Report had been updated in autumn 2019 and was in the process of being updated for 2020. The SEND Strategy had been refreshed in the light of feedback that had received and the co-produced SEND self-evaluation. A graduated approach to meeting needs across the local area was being developed, providing support and guidance of what was expected to be delivered by universal services and at what point more specialist services might be required to provide further assessment, advice and support and/or more specialist provision. The Strategy set out six key strands of work that would provide focus for delivery, the sixth strand, Preparing for Inspection, had been agreed in June 2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That all the work completed to date on implementing the SEND strategy be noted;**
- (2) That the action plan for the development of the SEND strategy 2022-2027, attached to the report at Appendix 3, be agreed and a report on progress submitted to the Committee in Autumn 2021.**

(The meeting closed at 8.14 pm)