

## POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 23 JANUARY 2023

**Present:** Councillor Brock (Chair);

Councillors Page (Vice-Chair), Barnett-Ward, Emberson, Ennis, Hoskin, Leng, McElroy, McEwan, Mitchell, Robinson, Rowland, Terry, Thompson and White

### 44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ennis declared a non-prejudicial interest in Item 47 on the basis that he was employed in the Probation Service and was the Chair of the Youth Justice Board.

Councillor Mitchell declared a prejudicial interest in Item 49 on the basis that he was employed by the Department of Health and Social Care.

### 45. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 46. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters were submitted by members of the public:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Teresa Colliass	Neighbourhood Policing	Cllr Rowland
2.	Nick Haskins	Size of Neighbourhood Police Teams	Cllr Rowland
3.	Nick Haskins	Can our Neighbourhood Police Team please police our North Reading Neighbourhood?	Cllr Rowland
4.	Nick Haskins	Can we please reintroduce the Police Have Your Say Days (HYSDs) in North Reading and can you advise your support for local Speedwatch Campaign work as undertaken by volunteers?	Cllr Rowland

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

	<u>Questioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Cllr White	Supporting Local Business	Cllr Terry
2.	Cllr White	Ambulance waiting times and Adult Social Care	Cllr Ennis

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

### **47. THAMES VALLEY POLICE**

Matthew Barber, Thames Valley Police (TVP) Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), John Campbell, TVP Chief Constable and Superintendent Steve Raffield, Reading LPA Commander attended the meeting to give presentations and answer questions from members of the Committee.

The PCC summarised his areas of focus for 2023 which included police officer recruitment and improving the ease of reporting through 101 and online updates. The presentation by the Chief Constable covered subjects including an overview of TVP staffing and management team, progress with the Police Uplift Recruitment Campaign, a summary of Force activity between April and September 2022 and Operation London Bridge. The presentation by the LPA Commander outlined the priorities of the local Community Safety Partnership, examples of recent results and a summary of current statistics relating to crime reductions, crime concerns and successful outcomes.

The Committee asked questions on subjects including a shortage of officers on Neighbourhood Policing teams, community concerns around drug dealing and keeping young people out of the criminal justice system.

**Resolved -**

**That the Thames Valley Police PCC, Chief Constable and LPA Commander be thanked for their presentations.**

### **48. TACKLING INEQUALITY STRATEGY (2023 TO 2026)**

The Executive Director of Resources submitted a report presenting the Tackling Inequality Strategy which articulated how the Council would focus its activities to reduce inequality. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was the draft Tackling Inequality Strategy and at Appendix 2 an Equality Impact Assessment.

The report noted that Reading could be an unequal area in terms of wealth and life experiences, having some of the most affluent and some of the most deprived localities in the whole of the Thames Valley. The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation from 2019 showed that Reading had five areas within the Borough that were in the 10% most deprived nationally compared to two in 2015, and that a total of 24 areas had at least one indicator which was in the 10% most deprived in the country. The initial finding from the 2021 Census showed a similar picture, with areas in the south of the borough showing the greatest prevalence of household deprivation relating to education, employment, health, and housing.

The report explained that the aim of Tackling Inequality in Reading was delivering a more equitable society and improving people's standard of living and participation in economic, political, social, and cultural life. The Tackling Inequality Strategy

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Commitment stated that it would prioritise issues and areas where it was most needed by residents, drive attainment in skills, education and training and access to quality employment for people in the areas of the town where need was greatest, and be mindful of the diverse personal life experiences of residents and how these could contribute to their equal enjoyment of life and achievements. Inequalities experienced by residents were often evident within specific areas of the borough, and the Strategy focused on how the Council would support these specific communities within the borough and on how improved educational attainment, skills, and training could achieve long-term sustainable change for current and future generations.

The report explained that the new strategy had been developed using a broad range of deprivation and exclusion analysis conducted during 2022. To support this analytical review, Councillors and Officers had conducted 'walkabouts' with the purpose of understanding the issues that residents were experiencing in the most deprived areas of the borough. The development of the strategy had also been heavily supported by the input of key stakeholders and their strategic ambitions for improving the quality of life for residents, including Brighter Futures for Children, New Directions College, and the Reading Economic Destination Agency. The strategy would develop and complement existing strategies, work, and partnerships aimed at closing the gap between the life experiences of residents and achieving the vision laid out in the Corporate Plan of making Reading a more equal place to live by bringing the opportunities of growth and achievement to all Reading's communities.

**Resolved -**

**That the Tackling Inequality Strategy be approved.**

### **49. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE AND BERKSHIRE WEST INTEGRATED CARE PARTNERSHIP**

The Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health submitted a report seeking approval for the Council's involvement in the newly formed Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership (BOB ICP) and recommending the formal appointment of a representative and deputy. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 were the draft Terms of Reference for the BOB ICP.

The report noted that commissioning arrangements within the NHS had changed to enable the creation of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). The Reading and Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Groups no longer existed and had now been replaced by the BOB Integrated Care Board (ICB). Integrated Care Partnerships were intended to strengthen the alignment of the ICS and local Health and Wellbeing Boards and the BOB ICP would cover the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area including Reading Borough. ICPs were required to publish an integrated care strategy to set out how the assessed needs in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the areas covered by the partnership could be met through the exercise of the functions of the ICB, partner local authorities or NHS England. The BOB ICP had begun consultation on a draft strategy with the following themes: Start Well; Live Well; Age Well; Promoting Healthy Lives; Health Protection and Improving Access to health services.

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The report explained that the BOB ICP founding voting members were the unitary and county councils that covered the BOB area and that the membership also included wider health and social care system partners and other non-voting partners. The founding members of the BOB ICP had agreed the terms of reference for the new Partnership Board before its first meeting on 28 October 2022.

### **Resolved:**

- (1) That the involvement of the Council in the new Joint Committee of the Integrated Care Partnership that covered the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area be approved;**
- (2) That the final draft Terms of Reference for the BOB ICP Joint Committee be noted;**
- (3) That the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's representative on the ICP and Councillor Terry be appointed as Deputy.**

(Councillor Mitchell declared a prejudicial interest in this Item on the basis that he was employed by the Department for Health and Social Care. He left the meeting and took no part in the debate or decision.)

### **50. BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN LIMITED - RESERVED MATTERS: PROPOSED RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PAYMENT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE TOGETHER FOR FAMILIES SERVICE**

The Executive Director of Resources submitted a report to the Committee, in its capacity as the sole member of Brighter Futures for Children Ltd (BFfC), seeking agreement to a proposed approach to recruitment and retention payments to Qualified Social Workers in the Together for Families (TfF) service. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a report that had been submitted to BFfC setting out the proposals in detail.

The report noted that the proposal had resulted from the work of the HR Taskforce Group which had been established in July 2022 to focus on recruitment, retention, and conversion of agency workers to permanent hires. As part of the Group's work, it had been identified that it was particularly difficult to recruit and retain permanent Qualified Social Workers in the TfF service. The Group had therefore recommended a recruitment and retention payment for these roles to create a stable team of permanent staff, by recognising the market pressures that prevented the team from being able to recruit and retain staff in sufficient numbers at the normal graded salary for the role. Attached at Appendix 1 was a report setting out the proposal in more detail, which had been submitted to BFfC and approved. Approval was now required from the Committee, acting as sole member of BFfC, and trade unions and colleagues and employees in the children's social care team would then be consulted on the proposal.

**Resolved -**

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That the Committee, in its capacity as sole member for BFfC, agree the recommended approach of implementing a recruitment and retention (R&R) payment for QSWs working within the Tff service to create a stable team of permanent hires, by recognising the market pressures that prevents the team from being able to recruit and retain staff in sufficient numbers at the normal graded salary for the role.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.45 pm)