

READING HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD MINUTES – 18 MARCH 2026

Present:

Councillor Rachel Eden (Chair)	Lead Councillor for Education and Public Health, Reading Borough Council (RBC)
Andy Ciecierski	Clinical Director for Caversham Primary Care Network
Helen Clark	Associate Director of Place (Berkshire West), Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB)
Councillor Paul Gittings	Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, RBC
Brian Grady	Director of Education, RBC
Councillor Wendy Griffith	Lead Councillor for Children, RBC
Alice Kunjappy-Clifton	Lead Officer, Healthwatch Reading
Gail Muirhead	Prevention Manager, RBFRS
Matt Pearce	Director of Public Health for Reading and West Berkshire
Arran Rogers	Chief Nursing Informatics Officer & Workforce Lead, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBFT)
Rachel Spencer	Chief Executive, Reading Voluntary Action
Melissa Wise	Executive Director – Community & Adult Social Care Services, RBC
Theresa Wyles	Interim Chief Operating Officer, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BHFT)

Also in attendance:

Nina Crispin	Public Health Practitioner, Place, RBC
Jamie Evans	Area Director, Healthwatch in Berkshire West
Lara Fromings	Assistant Director for Transformation, Commissioning and Performance, RBC
Bev Nicholson	Integration Programme Manager, RBC
Amanda Nyeké	Public Health & Wellbeing Manager, RBC

Apologies:

Colin Hudson	Reading LPA Commander, Thames Valley Police (TVP)
Councillor Micky Leng	Deputy Leader, RBC
Steve Leonard	West Hub Group Manager, RBFRS
Lara Patel	Executive Director of Children's Services, RBC
Katie Prichard-Thomas	Chief Nursing Officer, RBFT
Ben Riley	Chief Medical Officer, BOB ICB
Councillor Liz Terry	Leader of the Council, RBC

14. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD PRIORITIES 2026-2028

Matt Pearce submitted a report setting out the proposed three priorities to be the focus for the Health and Wellbeing Board over the next two years, a proposed governance model and proposed sponsors for the priorities.

The report explained that the Local Government Association Review of the Board's governance and working practices had recommended that the Board should focus on two or three priorities at a time, informed by local need and evidence, in order to deliver meaningful change in population health.

READING HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD MINUTES – 18 MARCH 2026

A high level “state of the Borough” Joint Strategic Needs Assessment had been presented to Board Members and other stakeholders at a workshop on 7 October 2025, and the workshop had generated a long list of potential priorities, and had identified the following three areas as important priorities for the medium term:

- Healthy Neighbourhoods
- Best Start in Life
- Children and Young People and Adult Mental Health

A second workshop had been held on 4 December 2025 to review current activity, possible future options and next steps for the development of delivery plans for each of the priorities. The report set out key outcomes for each priority.

In order to have effective oversight of the priorities, the following three partnership groups had been identified to oversee each priority, with sub-groups tasked with developing delivery plans and outcomes frameworks for the priorities. The report also proposed the following three sponsors from partner members of the Board, to be responsible for overseeing development and delivery of plans and accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board:

Priority	Partnership Group	Sponsor
Healthy Neighbourhoods	Reading Integration Board	Helen Clark, Associate Director of Place, ICB
Best Start in Life	One Reading Partnership	Lara Patel, Director of Children’s Services, RBC
Children and Young People and Adult Mental Health	All Age Mental Health & Wellbeing Board	Kathryn MacDermott, Director of Strategic Planning, BHFT

The Reading Integration Board and One Reading Partnership were existing partnership arrangements, but work was being done to establish a Mental Health & Wellbeing Board.

It was reported at the meeting that the awaited government guidance on the Neighbourhood Health Framework had been issued on 17 March 2026, which had confirmed that Health and Wellbeing Boards would have oversight of signing off the Neighbourhood Health Plans.

Resolved –

- (1) That the priorities for the Health and Wellbeing Board for the medium term be agreed as:
 - Healthy Neighbourhoods
 - Best Start in Life
 - Children and Young People and Adult Mental Health
- (2) That the proposed governance model for the priorities be implemented through the partnership arrangements set out above, with sub-groups tasked with developing delivery plans and outcomes frameworks;

READING HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD MINUTES – 18 MARCH 2026

- (3) That the Board sponsors for each priority area be agreed as set out above, to have responsibility for overseeing development and delivery of plans.

16. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD COMPACT

Matt Pearce submitted a report presenting a draft Reading Health and Wellbeing Board Compact for approval and adoption, attached at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Local Government Association Review of the Board's governance and working practices had recommended that the Board should develop a compact, setting out how members would work collectively as a strategic partnership to drive meaningful action and achieve the vision in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Board had agreed this recommendation at its meeting on 11 July 2025, and the Director of Public Health had developed a draft Compact with reference to other best practice examples across the country, in consultation with Board members.

The Compact sought to establish a mutual understanding of how the Board would operate and to define members' roles and responsibilities in delivering its function, to deliver meaningful change and improve outcomes for people in Reading. It set out a number of core principles and how those should practically be supported.

Resolved –

That the Reading Health and Wellbeing Board Compact be approved and adopted, and Board members agree to adhere to the principles and ways of working set out within it.

17. BERKSHIRE WEST SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (BWSCP) ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Brian Grady submitted a report presenting the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) Annual Report for 2024/25, a copy of which was appended to the report. The BWSCP was a multi-agency partnership to promote the safeguarding and wellbeing of children in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham, whose role was to co-ordinate the partners' safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

The report explained that the BWSCP had entered 2024/25 with the following main priority areas and provided information on the work and progress made on them:

- Creation of a Berkshire West-Wide Neglect Strategy
- Extra-familial Harm: Contextual Safeguarding, Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence
- Establishing a Berkshire West-wide Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) & Front Door Arrangements Leadership Group
- Development of the Partnership Learning and Development Group Training offer
- Continuing Development of the BWSCP Partnership

The report stated that five new priority areas had been established for 2025-28:

- Safeguarding & Support for Children and Young People from Intra Familial Harm
- Safeguarding & Support for Children and Young People from Extra Familial Harm

READING HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD MINUTES – 18 MARCH 2026

- Safeguarding & Support for Children and Young People from Domestic Abuse
- Safeguarding & Support for Children Not in School
- Safeguarding & Support for Pre-School Children and Reducing Neglect

The report stated that a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) had taken place in Reading from February-March 2025 focussing on the multi-agency response to children aged 7 and under who were victims of domestic abuse and gave details of the findings, which had found significant weaknesses in the multi-agency approach to prevention, help and support for children and their families who were victims of domestic abuse in Reading. The inspection had also found that the safeguarding partnership priorities had not been sufficiently focused on outcomes for children, which had been addressed by the development of the five new child-focused priorities set out above.

The report stated that an options appraisal of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in response to the findings of the JTAI was under way and it was reported at the meeting that, following consideration by lead safeguarding partners, a decision had been made to move to single local authority safeguarding arrangements and a Reading Safeguarding Children's Partnership would be established to replace the Berkshire West Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

18. BETTER CARE FUND INTEGRATION UPDATE

Bev Nicholson submitted a report giving an update on the Integration Programme and the performance of Reading against the Better Care Fund (BCF) targets 2025/26, an update on the Community Wellness Outreach programme of health checks and wellbeing support, and an update on the South East Neighbourhood Accelerator programme in Whitley and Church Wards.

The report stated that the BCF programme was compliant with the BCF National Conditions, and the metrics had been agreed with system partners during the BCF Planning process for 2025/26. Confirmation of acceptance of the BCF plan had been received from the National Better Care Fund team on 30 May 2025. The programme was on track to meet two of the three metrics, in relation to emergency hospital admissions and the number of people admitted into care homes to meet their long-term care needs. It was not on track to meet the new hospital discharge targets but had improved performance compared to 2024/25 as a result of process changes to triage, introduction of a hospital to home service, and continued support through the dedicated hospital discharge team.

The report stated that the final BCF 2025/26 Quarterly Returns for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 had been submitted by their due dates, using the delegated authority of the Executive Director for Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education & Public Health, and that the Reading BCF 2025/26 arrangements remained compliant with the four National Conditions and the Section 75 Deed of Variation for 2025/26 had been signed and sealed on 8 October 2025.

The Community Wellness Outreach programme had delivered over 4,400 health checks and wellbeing reviews, identifying risks early to prevent progression to cardiovascular disease. Of those seen, 78% had been from priority cohorts. There had been a 43% response rate to questions about awareness of risks, and 95% of those responding had reported improved understanding of health risks and how to make healthier choices.

READING HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD MINUTES – 18 MARCH 2026

The South East Accelerator programme for Neighbourhood Working was progressing well, focused on a cohort of people who lived alone in Whitley and Church Wards, who had an enhanced care plan. The team was multi-disciplinary and had mapped out the initial approach to segmentation of the cohort to identify a core group who would benefit from a concentrated holistic review of their needs. Learning from the accelerator programme was being shared with the Neighbourhood Steering Group to inform the development of Neighbourhood Teams across Reading.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Quarter 3 performance against BCF Metrics for 2025/26 be noted;
- (2) That it be noted that the final BCF 2025/26 Quarterly Returns for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 had been submitted by their due dates, using the delegated authority of the Executive Director for Communities and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Education & Public Health;
- (3) That it be noted that the Reading BCF 2025/26 arrangements remained compliant with the four National Conditions and the Section 75 Deed of Variation for 2025/26 had been signed and sealed on 8 October 2025;
- (4) That the progress updates on the Community Wellness Outreach project and the South East Neighbourhood Accelerator Programme be noted.

19. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved – That the meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board for the Municipal Year 2026/27 provisionally be held at 2.00pm on the following dates, subject to any comments on the draft dates:

Formal public meetings	Informal private meetings
15 July 2026	23 September 2026
21 October 2026	9 December 2026
10 February 2027	24 March 2027

20. BOB ICB UPDATE BRIEFING

The Board received a briefing note from the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, as at March 2026.

The report covered the following areas:

- Thames Valley ICB operating model and staff consultation
- Planning 2026/27
- Thames Valley Innovation Fund
- Dr Nick Broughton

Resolved - That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 2.05 pm and closed at 2.39 pm)

CHAIR:.....**DATE:** 16/7/26