

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**4 OCTOBER 2018**

**Present:** Councillor David Absolom (Chair)  
Councillors Grashoff, Hoskin, Kaur, Khan, McEwan, McKenna, O'Connell, Pearce, R Singh, Terry, Vickers and White.

**Apologies:** Councillors Jones and Robinson.

**12. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the inclusion of Councillor Vickers apologies.

**13. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Questions on the following matters were submitted by Councillors:

<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reply</b>
Councillor White	Fair Workload Charter for Teachers	Councillor Pearce
Councillor White	Children Centre Cuts	Councillor Terry

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

**14. AN OVERVIEW OF NHS ENGLAND'S CONSULTATION ON "INTEGRATED CARE PROVIDER CONTRACTS"**

The Director of Adult Care and Health Services gave a presentation providing the Committee with an overview of the Integrated Care Provider (ICP) Contract consultation that was being run by NHS England. The presentation outlined the opportunities for feeding into the consultation, the process for doing so and that the consultation was about and answered a number of questions including how health and care was bought, how an ICP would work, what was in the ICP contract, who could be an ICP, how ICPs could work with GPs and whether or not there would be lots of ICPs. The consultation would be open from 3 August to 26 October 2018.

The Committee discussed the presentation and Councillor Hoskin proposed that the Council's response to the consultation should be based on his motion to Council on 27 March 2018 (Minute 43 refers) and should express the concern that moving to market procurement could lead to the provision of services by private providers. The Committee agreed that the Director of Adult Care and Health Services should be given delegated authority to put together the Council's response to the consultation in consultation with the Lead Councillor.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the presentation be noted;
- (2) That Director of Adult Care and Health Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing & Sport, be

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delegated authority to put together the Council's response to the consultation based on the motion to Council on 27 March 2018.

**15. CEDAR COURT AND THE MAPLES DAY CENTRE CATERING**

The Director of Adult Care and Health Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the progress made to provide catering to Cedar Court and the Maples.

The report stated that after the previous catering contract, that had been fulfilled by White Oaks (part of the Compass Group) had come to an end on 30 April 2018, the Council had entered into a contract with a micro-business, Constant Catering Services (CCS), to provide catering to Cedar Court Extra Care scheme and The Maples Day Service. This company was owned and run by the previous head chef at Cedar Court. The service provided was largely unchanged from that that had been provided by the previous contractor and therefore, as far as possible, fulfilled the wishes of the residents for there to be no change to the service that was provided. The contract with CCS represented excellent value for money compared to other options that had been explored, or to provide support in the absence of any service. An agreed sum of £10,000 had been paid to CCS for the contract, that was due to expire on 30 April 2019, to assist with start-up costs. At the expiry of the contract the service was expected to be self-sufficient requiring no further funding or input from the Council.

Catering services at Oak Tree House Extra Care scheme were now provided by another micro-business (owned by the previous head chef at this scheme) that had been arranged by Catalyst Housing as the landlord at this scheme. The Council's only involvement had been to ensure that this service would provide residents with access to food seven days a week. There was no ongoing involvement from the Council.

The report explained that the services had commenced on 1 May 2018 so that residents at Cedar Court and service users at The Maples did not receive any break in service. Residents and visitors to Cedar Court had continued to receive the option of a two course hot meal seven days a week and people living at The Maples had continued to receive a hot meal, hot boxed to the service, on each operating day (Monday to Friday). CCS provided an additional service of transporting the meals that had been cooked at Cedar Court to The Maples, a service which had been previously provided by a taxi company for an additional cost. People who accessed the service had been informed of minor changes to the service, including changes to the tariff, and no objections had been raised in respect of the changes. During the first week of the new service Commissioners had contacted colleagues from Cedar Court and The Maples for feedback on the transition and there had been no problems at either location. Commissioners had also visited Cedar Court on 3 August 2018 and had met with the Sheltered Housing Officer and Director of CCS and it had been clear that CCS were continually striving to improve the service to ensure it remained sustainable. CCS had implemented a system whereby those who ate at the restaurant regularly paid monthly upfront and by doing this they were entitled to two free Sunday meals each month. The Director of CCS had reported that everything was going smoothly, including invoicing The Maples and those who

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were supported by the Deputies Office. The Director had also discussed plans to expand the business and was in the process of considering tenders for other catering services.

**Resolved - That the report be noted.**

**16. PROGRESS ON THE DELIVERY OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY 2017 - 2022**

Further to minute 45 of the meeting held on 31 January 2018 the Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the progress being made to deliver the SEND Strategy for 2017 - 2022 and on the Short Breaks Review work, the Information, Advice and Support Service and the SEND Service performance. A proposal in relation to children with autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and social communication needs which had been developed to meet local need was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report set out the progress being made to deliver the Strategy as follows:

Strand 1 - Analysis of data and information to inform future provision and joint commissioning - This strand had continued to analyse the data report and use it to inform actions for the strand group and others.

Strand 2 - Early identification of needs and early intervention - In order to understand whether children and young people's needs were being correctly identified and provided with appropriate early interventions, an analysis of Early Years Education, Health and Care Plan Needs Assessments had been carried out.

Strand 3 - Using specialist services and identified best practice to increase local capacity - This strand had focused on the two areas of greatest need that had been identified through the data report and from feedback from parents/carers and schools: children with ASC and children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. A proposal had been developed to meet local need and the report recommended the initiation of a process for commissioning additional specialist provision for primary aged pupils with ASC and social and communication needs, including the statutory consultation process. The proposal had identified the need for a further two smaller primary specialist provision bases across the Borough to enable children's needs to be met more locally and that all three primary specialist provisions would provide capacity for at least ten places and would provide specialist outreach to schools within their area as well as being a hub for families to seek guidance and support. It had also been proposed that the secondary specialist provision at Blessed Hugh Faringdon, which was due to expand, would be commissioned to provide outreach support for schools across the Borough. Overall, the aim was to increase provision in the Borough therefore reducing the cost of out of Borough placements.

Strand 4 - Transition to adulthood - Since the strand 4 action plan had been developed in April 2018, the strand had focused on actions to deliver outcome 1, which not only provided a basis for the other four outcomes but also underpinned

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the operational work to transfer cases from the Children and Young people with Disabilities Team to Adult Social Care.

The report also detailed the outcomes as follows:

Outcome 1 - Current processes supporting young people with SEND into adulthood were being reviewed in order to identify good practice and areas for development, an Approaching Adulthood Policy had been developed and was being consulted on and the strand 4 group had identified the need for improved and earlier joint working between Children's and Adults' Services.

Outcome 2 - Reading Voluntary Action was taking the lead on work to identify and promote areas of best practice, the views of young people and their families about barriers to achieving independence and what needed to improve were being sought. The Annual Review process would be updated to ensure that it was informed by the experiences of young people and their families and the voice of the young person was heard in transition planning.

Outcome 3 - The strand 4 group was currently seeking the views of young people and their families to help improve information about transitions to adulthood. Information requirements would be embedded into the new transitions pathway so that practitioners knew what information young people and their families required and when, and an information booklet to support transitions had been developed and was being consulted on.

Outcome 4 - The action for this outcome would be informed by the actions that were currently being carried out.

Outcome 5 - This work was being aligned with the SIB developments to ensure that there was a joined-up approach across services to support vulnerable young people into adulthood.

The report stated that since 1 March 2018 all new referrals for adults over the age of 18 had been directed to the Adult Social Care Locality Teams. There were approximately 90 young people aged 18 to 25 years old whose cases were to be transferred from the Children and Young People's Disabilities Team (CYPDT) to Adult Social Care by September 2018 and resources had been identified and put in place to support the transfer of cases. A sample of cases had been reviewed to determine the quality of cases, CYPDT social workers were preparing the cases for transfer and select cases had been identified for a phased transfer so that they could receive immediate support from Adult Social Care.

The report explained that the Schools Forum had continued to receive regular reports on High Needs Block spend and the deficit had been reduced by taking the actions that had been agreed through the SEND Strategy Board. The SEND Team had been successful in meeting the March 2018 deadline for the conversion of statements of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the service had maintained good performance against the measure of completing EHCPs within 20 weeks. The DfE SEND Adviser had also continued to be positive on progress.

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A group had been set up consisting of representatives from Reading Families Forum, the Voluntary Sector and officers, led by the SEND Improvement Adviser, to carry out the review work and develop proposals that would build capacity to meet families' needs within universal services as well as ensure the short breaks offer met the needs and interests of young people. This work included mapping what was in place and benchmarking costs of different opportunities, getting feedback from families/young people, exploring models of good practice elsewhere and working with colleagues in other agencies to ensure opportunities were identified and co-developed to meet young people's interests locally.

Reading Families Forum had worked with the Information Advice and Support Services (IASS) Manager and the SEND Improvement Adviser to review service delivery. The IASS Service Manager was now reporting to the SEND Improvement Adviser until transition to the new Children's Company. The helpline was working effectively and there had been further developments on the recruitment of volunteers. On 29 May 2018 information was received on the new contract that had been commissioned to ensure that in every local authority area children and young people with SEND and their families had access to impartial information, advice and support covering SEND issues, including through a dedicated national free phone service. Local authorities had also been required to express an interest in applying for a grant of up to £32k per authority by 5 June 2018, and then submit a full application by 15 June 2018. The grant was for the period up to the end of March 2019 and the Council had been successful in being awarded the maximum amount of grant available of £32k. The report set out the criteria that had to be met in order to receive the grant.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the progress made on delivering the SEND Strategy be noted;**
- (2) That the initiation of the process for commissioning additional specialist provision for primary aged pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition and Social and Communication needs be approved;**
- (3) That the work being carried out to review Short Breaks be noted;**
- (4) That the developments within the IASS Service be noted.**

**17. OFSTED MONITORING VISIT AND DEEP DIVE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the monitoring visit that Ofsted had carried out on 31 July and 1 August 2018 on Looked After Children (LAC) over 16 years old and Care Leavers, and the Deep Dive exercise the Commissioner had carried out on 5 and 6 September 2018 which had looked at the overall Children's Social Care system with a focus on children in need who had recently been referred to the Department.

The report stated that the main finding from the monitoring visit had been that young people leaving care were in receipt of better services than they had been at the last inspection visit two years previously. Ofsted had observed that there was

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Careful preparation of young people to leave care, there were sustained efforts to help all young people in this cohort, there was determined and dedicated work and there was a strong intent to improve the lives of care leavers which had permeated the work of practitioners. Inspectors had stated that senior managers had worked methodically to improve the range and suitability and availability of accommodation for young people. The Housing Department and Children's Social Care had been found to be working in partnership and were offering 12 social housing flats for care leavers each year. The Housing Department also supported and advised young people on how to obtain suitable and decent standard accommodation in the private rented sector and importantly no young people had been placed in bed and breakfast or unsuitable houses of multiple occupation.

Young people who had arrived in the Borough as unaccompanied asylum seekers had been judged to be carefully supported and found accommodation suitable to their needs. Progress had also been made in engaging more young people leaving care in meaningful education, employment and training opportunities. Key areas for further development had been identified as follows:

- Improving participation and involvement of young people in developing and influencing provision;
- Ensuring a clear pathway for emotional health and wellbeing service with health partners;
- Continuing to improve supervision practice to eradicate variability.

The report explained that the Council was still awaiting formal written feedback from the Deep Dive visit that had taken place in September 2018 and a full report was expected in the near future. At the verbal feedback session from the Commissioner to senior managers and the Lead Councillor for Children on 7 September 2018, the key areas that were going well had been defined as follows:

- Better match between senior managers and front line narrative regarding identified need improvements being made;
- Improved partnership working and relationships;
- Greater stability with senior managers and good political drive for improvement;
- Good support for newly qualified social workers;
- Good specialist skills and response from the front door;
- Stability and good local knowledge in Early Help Services;
- Some growing evidence of 'children's voice' evidenced in work observed.

Areas that still needed more work included the following:

- Recording needed to be embedded, the electronic recording database, Mosaic, needed to be simplified and greater 'floor walking' support was required from the Mosaic Team;
- Chronologies needed to start earlier and be of good quality to help casework through the system;
- Transition points and internal thresholds for children's cases needed improving to reduce duplication of effort;

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- Numbers of social workers and managers in the safeguarding service needed to increase to further reduce caseloads and enable front line staff to manage complex work;
- Communication with staff;
- Embedding of a new supervision policy and approach.

The verbal findings of the Deep Dive event had been accepted as helpful and key improvements would be built into the refreshed Children's Services Improvement Board plan which would be presented to the Board in November 2018.

The report stated that improvement work was happening every day across key areas in Children's Services and particular focus was on reducing demand, ensuring manageable caseloads for social workers, recruitment and supporting delivery of best practice. Examples of work carried out within this included the following:

- A focus on Court work practice with expert resource brought in to mentor workers on care planning and carrying out parenting assessments;
- Practice week that had been held during the week commencing 17 September 2018 with a series of observations of practice to assess quality and identify good work and share this across the service;
- Launch of a new supervision methodology;
- Getting to good events that were delivered via the Council's improvement partner Achieving for Children;
- Continued drive to improve recruitment;
- A service transformation delivery plan focusing on improvement to appropriately reduce demand, improve practice and deliver associated savings targets.

A full self-evaluation of Children's Social Care was being carried out to evaluate progress of improvements and look at next steps and an external 'critical friend' process was being booked for mid October 2018. A refreshed Improvement Plan, based on the self-assessment, would be presented to the Children's Services Improvement Board at the end of November 2018. This would set the course and areas of focus for the next phase of the improvement journey and would feed into the Annual Conversation with Ofsted in February 2019.

Finally, the report stated that the Council could expect a further visit before a full re-inspection, as within the current inspection framework inspection dates were unannounced.

Stephen Kitchman, Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services, reported at the meeting that the written feedback had been received in respect of the Deep Dive visit on 3 October 2018 and had been in line with the verbal feedback from the Commissioner. He also informed the Committee that the average case load for social works was 18 cases and that a lot of work had been carried out in respect of social worker recruitment, including the setting up of a dedicated recruitment team and work being carried out on a comprehensive recruitment strategy. Stephen also acknowledged the need to focus on retention and recruitment.

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**Resolved - That the report and outcomes from the Ofsted monitoring visit and associated Deep Dive be noted.**

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.45 pm).