

APPENDIX 2 - Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee

Extract of the Minutes – 11 September 2017

7. IMPROVING TRANSITIONS – TASK GROUP FINAL REPORT

- 7.1 Councillor Rory Vaughan, Chair of the Task Group, introduced the report. He explained that the Health, Adult Social Care & Social Inclusion Policy and Accountability Committee formed the task group to consider how the Council could improve the experience for young disabled people transitioning from social care services for children to social care services for adults. Councillor Vaughan thanked everyone involved in the group – including parents, carers, officers, headteachers, medical professionals, and councillors – for their contribution to this important piece of work.
- 7.2 Councillor Vaughan informed the Committee that the key reason for setting up the task group was that parents whose children had moved from children's services to adult social care described the transition as 'a cliff edge'. The necessary planning and support had not been there for them. The task group brought officers, parents, and professionals together to understand the issues in depth and look at how they could be improved.
- 7.3 Through a series of challenging discussions with a range of stakeholders the group formulated four recommendations designed to remove the cliff edge, bring professionals together, and ensure young people and their families get the appropriate support.
- 7.4 Councillor Ben Coleman, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, addressed the Committee - noting that this area had been a personal focus for him over a number of years. He drew attention to recommendation one – the creation of a new preparing for adulthood team that would bring together officers and funding from children's services and adult social care. Councillor Coleman hoped that this would become a model for other services across the Council – breaking down silos and focusing on the needs of the customer. He welcomed the report of the task group and said he was determined to make the recommendations a reality.
- 7.5 Councillor Sue Macmillan, Cabinet Member for Children and Education, echoed the words of Councillors Vaughan and Coleman. She said the onus was now on the Cabinet and officers to implement the much-needed improvements recommended by the task group.
- 7.6 Lisa Redfern, Director for Adult Social Care, said she was working with Steve Miley, Director for Children's Services, to make the recommendations a reality. A joint project group was already in place and the new preparing for adulthood team would be co-produced with parents and young people. While planning for the new service was going on, two new transitions workers would be appointed to help close the gaps in the short term.

- 7.7 Councillor Alan De'Ath thanked the task group for their report - noting what an important area this was to get right and how important it was to co-design services with users. He asked how the success of the new service would be measured. Steve Miley said young people's satisfaction and progress would be the key measure. Lisa Redfern added that one of the formal mechanisms that will be put in place would be a steering group, or reference group, of young people and parents. Officers would also undertake regular audits of case plans to make sure we were making a difference. Councillor De'Ath said the Committee would appreciate regular updates on progress.
- 7.8 Nandini Ganesh also welcomed the report of the task group – she said as a parent of a 20-year-old with autism the improvements recommended were badly needed. She added that 'health' was a hugely complex area and needed more attention. Employment was another issue – the current pathways were too rigid and needed to be more flexible in future.
- 7.9 Eleanor Allen noted that young people with SEND in schools would be assigned a teacher or tutor to support them – she asked if mentoring had been considered for when they left school. Mandy Lawson said there would be an individualised approach – if the new team was successful there would be a key worker who knew the child from a young age and supports them along the path to adulthood.
- 7.10 A parent in the audience addressed the committee and said there should be more employment opportunities for the cohort of young people without complex needs (supported in mainstream schools). She asked that H&F consider setting up a specialist employment agency, as other local authorities had, to facilitate this. Lisa Redfern said officers would be looking at good models and practice elsewhere. Councillor Ben Coleman noted that H&F had 'Workzone' but we needed to do more training with their staff so they understood the needs of the individuals coming through.
- 7.11 Another parent in the audience said she was encouraged by the coordinated approach being advocated by the Council. She added that building relationships with hospitals was vitally important because there were a number of issues related to transfer to specialist services.
- 7.12 Councillor Ben Coleman noted that an important element of the task group's report was improving links with health. As Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board he would take the report forward there to get buy-in from health partners.
- 7.13 The Chair asked that officers wrote to everyone who participated in the task group to thank them for their support and update them on progress made so far.

RESOLVED

That the Committee agreed the recommendations of the task group's report for endorsement by Cabinet.