

EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 17 September 2013

Present:

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Julian Benington,
Peter Fortune, Julian Grainger, David McBride,
Alexa Michael and Sarah Phillips

Dolores Bray-Ash JP, Father Owen Higgs and Joan
McConnell and Rachel Opadiran

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Janet Latinwo and Mrs Alison Regester.

The Chairman noted that Dr Tessa Moore would shortly be leaving the Local Authority and thanked her on behalf of the Members of the Education PDS Committee for the excellent contribution she had made to the London Borough of Bromley during her time with the Local Authority.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Declarations of Interest made at the meeting on 2nd July 2013 were taken as read.

Councillor Julian Grainger declared that he was a Governor of St Olave's Grammar School and Chelsfield Primary School. He also declared that he had a daughter attending Newstead Wood School.

Father Owen Higgs, Church representative, declared that he was the Chairman of Governors at St George's Primary School. He also declared he was Chairman of Bickley PCC which ran the St Georges Pre-School.

Mrs Dolores Bray-Ash JP, Parent Governor representative, declared that she was a Governor at Charles Darwin School.

18 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2ND JULY 2013 AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

In considering matters outstanding from previous meetings, Members were advised that a pan-London conference would be held on 18th September 2013

where representations could be made to extend the use of 'The Hub' to support the availability online of evidence needed for admissions applications.

The Chairman requested that the need to consider the issues faced by young people classified as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) be added to Matters Outstanding as a future item for consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2013 be agreed and that matters outstanding be noted.

19 QUESTIONS TO THE PDS CHAIRMAN FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

20 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

Three written questions were received from Mrs Nicola Ward, Regional Director – London, National Deaf Children's Society and are attached at **Appendix A**.

21 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Education gave an update to Members on work being undertaken across the Education Portfolio.

The need to create additional primary school places in the Borough had been identified as a priority. Applications had been approved for three free schools in the Borough, and the consideration of temporary and permanent expansion of places at existing schools across the Borough would continue. A number of secondary schools were considering whether to develop a primary phase with the potential to become 'all through' academies, and work with the Archdiocese of Southwark continued around the feasibility of establishing a new Catholic secondary school in the Borough. It had been identified that there would be a significant increase in demand for secondary places in the Borough from 2015/16 and the School Places Working Group would be meeting to consider the implications of this shortly.

An interim Executive Board had been put in place to support the Grovelands and Kingswood Pupil Referral Units. The Department for Education and Local Authority were working together to move towards academy status. The potential to develop the Grovelands provision to provide a primary provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in addition to a pupil referral unit was also being considered.

A School Improvement Advisor to offer primary mathematics support had been recruited and was now supporting high priority schools. There remained

a 0.5 FTE vacancy for primary mathematics and the recruitment process was underway.

The Diocesan Board of Education would be approached with regards to nominating a further Local Authority Governor to the Governing Body of St Olave's Grammar School. The constitution of St Olave's Grammar School only allowed one Local Authority Governor representative, however it would be possible to seek the nomination of a chosen candidate to the Governing Body as a representative of the Diocesan Board, where there was currently a vacancy.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder update be noted.

**A) UPDATE OF THE 2013/14 EDUCATION PORTFOLIO PLAN
INCLUDING EDUCATION COMMITMENTS**

Report ED13080

The Portfolio Holder introduced a progress update on the Education Portfolio Plan 2013/14, which had been agreed at the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 23rd January 2013. Each of the seven priorities had clearly defined aims and actions, as well as measures to ensure effective progress monitoring, and the majority of planned actions had now been successfully completed. The Education Covenant and the Local Authority's Education Commitments had been included as part of the Education Portfolio Plan 2013/14, to ensure that the Portfolio Priorities continued to reflect key Education aims and objectives of the Local Authority.

In considering the Portfolio Plan, a Member queried whether challenge meetings could be held with all head teachers and chairs of governors as part of an early intervention exercise. The Assistant Director: Education confirmed that these exercises were part of a targeted intervention for schools identified as causing concern, but that informal contact was made with schools where needed. The re-categorisation of schools based on risk was now underway which would support future intervention and support processes in under performing schools. The Assistant Director: Education also noted that whilst the Local Authority had no formal role in supporting academies, efforts were made to ensure good communications were maintained with academy schools in the Borough which included promoting the benefits of retaining Local Authority Governors on Governing Bodies.

In response to a query from a Member around the aim to continue to support the expansion of selective education, including grammar schools in the Borough, the Portfolio Holder for Education confirmed that both St Olave's Grammar School and Newstead Wood School had been approached to consider further expansion of their schools or to support satellite schools. Another Member noted the importance of ensuring that there were an equal number of grammar school places for boys and girls in the Borough to support equality of opportunity.

A Co-opted Member highlighted that 75 families had registered with National Pathfinder evaluators for the new Education, Health and Care Plan by the end of July 2013. The Head of SEN and Disability confirmed that over 70 plans were now in operation across the age range of 4-19 years. Feedback from parents and carers on the new Education, Health and Care Plans had been positive and work was now being undertaken to develop personal budgets. In considering children and young people with less profound Autism Spectrum Disorder who may be attending a mainstream school, a Member requested that the general support and awareness provided to these pupils be built into the Education Portfolio Plan. The Member also requested a progress report be provided to the Education PDS Committee in March 2013 on the spend to save project which supported young people with special educational needs to access local provision to develop skills for independence as they moved towards preparing for adulthood.

A progress report on the development of the Raising Participation Strategy Action Plan would be provided to the Education PDS Committee in January 2014. The Assistant Director: Education advised Members that the consultation on the action plan was due to take place and that work was also being undertaken to build young people identified as being 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) into the report. It was important to ensure that a broad offer was made available to support young people to remain in education or training, and a Co-opted Member requested that a briefing paper be provided on the programmes that were available to young people who were identified as being NEET. A Member requested further details on the current number of young people identified as being NEET, how this had reduced following implementation of a range of strategies, and how the number of young people identified as being NEET would be affected by the rise in participation age, with further details provided for the proportion of young people classified as NEET who were also looked after children. Another Member queried whether the target of ensuring that more than 85% of all school leavers and others of school leaving age would be in education, employment or training by December 2013 was aspirational enough.

RESOLVED that progress made against the Education Portfolio Priorities (including the Education Covenant and Commitments) during the summer term be noted.

B) OFSTED REPORTS AND FOLLOW-UP ITEMS ON UNDER PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Report ED13081

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report that provided an update of recent Ofsted and school improvement activity across the Borough. Since the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 2nd July 2013, there had been four Ofsted inspections. Scotts Park Primary School, St Mary Cray Primary School and Burwood School had been judged as 'Requires Improvement', and a package of support would be in place from September 2013 to support

improvement within these schools. The Ofsted judgement of Unicorn Primary had not been published at the time of the report.

Ofsted monitoring visits had taken place at Blenheim Primary School, Bromley Road Infant School, Edgebury Primary School, Gray's Farm Primary School, Hawes Down Junior School, Malcolm Primary School, Poverest Primary School, Royston Primary School, St George's C.E. Primary School and St John's C.E. Primary School. It was noted that Gray's Farm Primary School, Malcolm Primary School and Royston Primary School were making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures, and that school leaders and governors had begun to take, or were taking, effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement at Blenheim Primary School, Bromley Road Infant School, Hawes Down Junior School and Poverest Primary School. It had been also been notified that the action plan developed by St George's C.E. Primary School had appropriate actions to tackle identified weaknesses and provide an effective stepping stone for long term planning. The outcome of the Ofsted monitoring visit to Edgebury Primary School had not been published at the time of the report.

Members were advised that the Local Authority had been working with the Diocese to arrange a package of support for St John's C.E. Primary School and that a new Executive Head Teacher and Head of School were now in place. Another Member also noted that Biggin Hill Primary School now had a new Head Teacher and that Charles Darwin School had been approached to act as sponsor to the school. It was confirmed that Malcolm Primary School and Royston Primary School were now academy schools and had been renamed, respectively, Harris Primary Academy Crystal Palace and Harris Primary Academy Kent House. Local Authority Governors had not been retained on the Governing Bodies of these schools.

A Member was concerned that a number of 'Outstanding' schools had not received an Ofsted inspection for several years. The Assistant Director: Education confirmed that the re-categorisation of schools, currently underway, would identify schools, including those rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding', who might be at risk and that further information on the number of high priority schools would be reported to the next meeting of Education PDS Committee.

RESOLVED that recent Ofsted and school improvement activity across the Borough be noted.

C) COMMISSIONING REVIEW OF EDUCATION SERVICES

Report ED13085

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report outlining the results of a commissioning review undertaken of a range of Education Services as part of the Bromley Commissioning Programme, which aimed to consider future delivery options to assist in the achievement of the Council's Target Operating Model as a '... commissioning organisation, determining who is best placed to deliver high quality services based on local priorities and value for money

principles'. The commissioning review had considered the potential to deliver a range of services through either in-house or commissioned external provision, including Admissions, Strategic Place Planning and Capital Management, Education Welfare, Behaviour Services, School Standards, Workforce Development and Governor Services, Early Years and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Inclusion Support.

The Commissioner, Education and Children's Social Care advised Members that there was a need to consider how a range of services currently delivered by the Local Authority might be delivered into the future to ensure best value provision of quality services. Soft market testing had already taken place to establish if there was any initial interest or capacity by external providers, and it was now proposed to undertake full market testing via a tendering process which would allow a range of options to be considered in more detail. This would compare delivery of services through existing in-house provision with external providers. No changes to service were proposed in the report under consideration for any of the services for which it was requested to undertake market testing. The market testing process would include engagement as appropriate with relevant stakeholders and providers as well as with parents and carers. Meetings would be held with schools' representatives to explore how schools and service users could best be engaged as part of the discussion. A Co-opted Member noted that children and young people should also be asked their views over the future provision of services they used.

Following Members' agreement, Mr Glenn Kelly, Staff Side Secretary addressed the Education PDS Committee. Mr Kelly highlighted the need to maintain the current high quality of service provision and ensure that services continued to be targeted at those children considered as being most in need, as well as ensuring that children with lower level special educational needs or disabilities were not disadvantaged by any change in delivery mechanism. External providers would need to be profit driven in the delivery of services which might impact quality of service provision. The Local Authority currently benefitted from some of the services considered within the review which met or exceeded income generation targets, including the Education Welfare, Free School Meals and Education Psychology services. Every child in the Borough had the right to be provided with support to reach their full potential and to access joined up, quality services and Mr Kelly urged that market testing not be undertaken.

In considering the review, the Chairman confirmed that the Local Authority needed to secure the best model for delivery of quality services into the future. A number of other Local Authority services had previously been commissioned from external providers, such as the School Improvement Service, with service quality maintained through rigorous monitoring processes.

A Member queried if the level of current service provision could change in the future, whether delivered by either an in-house or an external provider. The Commissioner, Education and Children's Social Care confirmed that the Local Authority had statutory duties in respect of certain services, but also provided

some discretionary services, and these could alter over time where appropriate.

Another Member highlighted the need for a consistent basis when comparing in-house provision with external providers.

In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that any member of staff interested in developing a social enterprise to deliver services on behalf of the Local Authority should be signposted to impartial advice and support. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) would be applied where appropriate to protect the working conditions of any staff member whose service was transferred to an alternate provider.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- 1) Request that the Council's Executive approve the following proposals:**
 - a) Market testing for all relevant Education Services via a tendering process for a single 'bundle' of services for a contract with a minimum term of five years with appropriate extension options;**
 - b) The commencement of discussions with relevant schools for a contract for services for the Primary Hearing Impairment Unit and Secondary Deaf Centre;**
 - c) The retention of appropriate in-house capacity (in relation to the services in the scope of this report) to ensure the Council can provide strategic leadership and management of the delivery of Education Services, with the details to be finalised aligned with the market testing of services and the on-going Baseline Review process; and,**
 - d) Sustained sold service delivery for relevant Education Services so that they can form part of the market testing approach for the future delivery of services.**

- 2) Request that the Council's Executive agree:**
 - a) That the market testing programme be overseen by the Commissioning Board; and,**
 - b) That a further report detailing the outcome of the market testing and recommendations be reported to a future meeting of the Council's Executive, and that this report describe how quality of service and support for children be monitored and enforced.**

22 PORTFOLIO HOLDER PROPOSED DECISIONS

A) UPDATE ON PROPOSED SCHOOL EXPANSIONS FOR 2014/15

Report ED13089

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report providing details of the outcomes and recommendations of the Primary School Development Plan Working Group which had met on 2nd September 2013 to consider the strategic planning of primary school places and school organisation in the Borough. For the school year 2013/14, applicants for reception class places exceeded previous forecasts and it had been necessary to supplement the agreed changes by 90 places, which included bringing forward a reorganisation of Worsley Bridge Community Junior School to become a 2 form of entry (FE) primary school from 2013/14, to ensure that every on-time applicant received a valid offer. The total number of places originally available for 2013/14 was 3733. This was subsequently increased to 3823 places, and 3820 on-time applicants were made an offer in April 2013, of which 76% secured their first choice of school and 89% secured one of their first three choices of school which represented a slight fall on the previous year, reflecting the increasing pressure on places.

Increased demand for primary places was expected to continue in the long term, with the Greater London Authority forecast projecting a rise of total numbers to 4041 which would be sustained to at least 2030. This was due to a number of factors including migration to the Borough and increased occupancy levels of existing homes. In response to this, it was recommended that the higher Greater London Authority (GLA) alternate roll projection methodology be adopted as the basis of primary school planning for 2014/15 and beyond. It was also recommended that a margin of 2% be considered above projection to provide for parental choice and improve the rate of first choice allocations. To support the expected increase in demand for pupil places, there was a need to consider all schools across the Borough to identify which schools could be expanded on a temporary or permanent basis. A review of secondary provision would also follow, taking account of the future demand for places as the increasing number of pupils at Bromley schools moved through the school system.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the recommendations of the Primary School Development Plan Working Group, taking into account the views of the Education PDS Committee, which comprise:

- 1) That the higher Greater London Authority (GLA) alternate roll projection methodology be adopted as the basis of primary school planning for 2014/15 and into the future;**

- 2) A margin of 2% be considered above projection to provide for parental choice in order to improve the rate of first choice allocations;
- 3) That the Primary School Development Plan Working Group be renamed the School Place Working Group to reflect the need to consider Secondary place planning into the future;
- 4) That discussions be undertaken with schools identified for expansion with a view to reporting the outcome to a future meeting of Education PDS Committee; and,
- 5) That feasibility studies be undertaken in consultation with identified schools to assess the scope and cost of school enlargement as set out below:

Planning Area 1 - Wards: Crystal Palace, Penge and Cator, Clock House

- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at James Dixon Primary School for reception in 2014/15 as well as on a permanent basis.
- To consult with Harris Federation around the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at Harris Primary Academy Kent House for reception in 2015/16 as well as on a permanent basis.
- To consider the potential for other schools to expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.

Planning Area 2 - Wards: Copers Cope, Kelsey and Eden Park

- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at Clare House Primary School.
- To await the outcome of the free school submission proposed by Langley Park Boys and Girls Schools.
- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at Worsley Bridge Community Primary School in the medium term.

Planning Area 3 - Wards: Shortlands, West Wickham, Hayes and Coney Hall

- To keep school organisation and size in the area under review.

- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on either a temporary or permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at St Mark's C.E. Primary School if future demand was sufficient.

Planning Area 4 - Wards: Bromley Town, Plaistow and Sundridge, Bickley

- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at Scotts Park Primary School.
- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 3 FE (from 2 FE) at Parish C.E. Primary School.
- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of consolidating the PAN for St George's C.E. Primary School to 2 FE (from 1.5 FE).

Planning Area 5 - Wards: Bromley Common and Keston, Petts Wood and Knoll, Farnborough and Crofton

- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 4 FE (from 2 FE) at Princes Plain Primary School on the Education Development Centre campus.
- To consider other options to meet the ongoing deficit of places in the Planning Area from 2016/17.

Planning Area 6 - Wards: Chislehurst, Mottingham, Chislehurst North

- To investigate, with Chislehurst C.E. Primary School and the Diocese of Rochester, the feasibility of relocating and expanding Chislehurst C.E. Primary School.
- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary or permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at Edgebury Primary School.

Planning Area 7 - Wards: Cray Valley West and Cray Valley East

- To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a permanent basis to 2 FE (from 1 FE) at Midfield Primary School.

- **To investigate, with Governors, the feasibility of increasing capacity on a temporary basis by 1 FE to 2 FE at St Paul's Cray C.E. Primary School for reception in 2014/15.**
- **To consider scope for other schools in the Planning Area to expand as needed following consultation and feasibility studies.**

Planning Area 8 - Wards: Orpington, Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom

- **No current changes to school organisation or size in this planning area**

Planning Area 9 - Wards: Biggin Hill and Darwin

- **No current changes to school organisation or size in this planning area**

B) BASIC NEED PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report ED13079

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report providing an update on progress in delivering the 2012/13 Basic Need Programme, which was funded by the Basic Need Capital Grant to support the provision of sufficient school places in publicly funded schools, and to request agreement for additional works in 2013/14 and 2014/15 required to meet increased demand for pupil places at Reception age.

To meet the estimated increase in the number of reception age pupils in the Borough from September 2013 onwards, 'bulge years' and permanent expansions were planned at existing local schools to provide the required pupil places, which would be delivered through a combination of modular build and internal refurbishment.

The updated Basic Need Programme for the period 2011-15 had an estimated expenditure of £12,661,990.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- 1) Approve the updated list of schools within the Basic Need Capital Programme;**
- 2) Agree the procurement of schemes within the Basic Need Programme through traditional procurement, the Lewisham Modular Buildings Framework or through devolution of Basic Need Capital Grant to schools; and,**

- 3) Authorise the Executive Director of Education, Care and Health Services to submit planning applications at the appropriate time in respect of the list of schemes.**

C) BROMLEY ACADEMY PROGRAMME AND FREE SCHOOL UPDATE

Report ED13084

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report providing an update on the Bromley academy programme and the number of free schools being established in the Borough. 68% of Bromley schools had now either converted to academy status, were in the formal process of conversion to academy status or were actively exploring conversion to academy status. Four free school applications had received approval from the Secretary of State to open in the Borough in the academic year 2013/14 or 2014/15 comprising Harris Primary Free School Beckenham, Harris Aspire, Family Langley and the Bromley Bilingual Primary School. There were three known potential applications to open free schools in the Borough in the academic year 2015/16 which could include a joint bid by the Langley Secondary Academies for a Primary Free School based on the Langley campus.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director: Education confirmed that Mottingham Primary School had recently had its application for stand-alone academy status refused. There had been a change of policy and the Department for Education was now encouraging primary schools to convert to academy status as part of a group to ensure long term sustainability and realise economies of scale. The Special Schools in the Borough were currently exploring the potential of developing an academy cluster. The small schools in the Borough had also been considering developing an academy cluster, and work was being undertaken by the Local Authority to support these schools in identifying a range of options for academy conversion.

A Co-opted Member noted that the Harris Aspire Free School would provide an alternative education for 11-18 year olds in the Borough. The Assistant Director: Education confirmed that Harris Aspire would primarily support young people who were pupils at other Harris academies but that places could be purchased by other schools or by the Local Authority where this alternative provision was judged as providing the support needed by individual pupils.

A second Academies' Conference would be held in Autumn 2013. This event would help support schools to develop links with other schools or academies with a view to moving towards academy status. It would also provide academy schools with a good opportunity to share their experiences of converting to academy status with other schools.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note the update.

**D) ECHS DEPARTMENT PAY POLICY FOR CENTRALLY BASED
TEACHING STAFF**

Report ED13092

The Portfolio Holder for Education introduced a report outlining a proposed model pay policy for all centrally based teachers, developed in response to the introduction of revised arrangements from 1st September 2013 relating to Teachers' Pay and Conditions through the publication of the statutory 2013 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document. It was noted that 62 staff would be affected by the proposed model pay policy.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- 1) Note Members' comments on the model pay policy; and,**
- 2) Request the Council's General Purposes and Licensing Committee consider the model pay policy for approval.**

23 EDUCATION INFORMATION ITEMS

The Information Briefing comprised four reports:

- Minutes of the Education Budget Sub-Committee held on 23rd July 2013
- Minutes of the Bromley Behaviour Services Working Group held on 23rd July 2013
- Achieving Two Year Olds Capital Allocation – Update
- ECS Contract Monitoring Report

RESOLVED that the Information Briefing be noted.

**24 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE WORKING PARTY:
IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report ED13082

The Chairman introduced an updated report providing details of the outcomes and recommendations of the School Governance Working Group which had met on 12th March 2013. The objective of the Working Group had been agreed as ensuring that the Local Authority had a pool of well-trained governors able to play an effective role in ensuring that schools were well governed, that they were aware of their role and responsibilities and that they worked closely with the Local Authority with the support they needed to undertake their role.

Following consideration, the Working Group had developed a number of proposals to support the role of Local Authority Governor into the future,

including the recruitment, selection and training processes for Local Authority Governors, the development of best practice, and work to promote the benefits of Local Authority Governors to Academy Schools.

In considering the report, the Chairman noted the need to identify how the Local Authority was working to attract volunteers across a range of community activities, including Local Authority Governors. It was also key to ensure Local Authority Governors were supported in ensuring their school had a constitution in place and knew of their right to request information from their school. The Chairman requested that copies of the draft Induction Pack and questionnaire for Local Authority Governors be supplied to the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education PDS Committee for examination and approval before publication.

A Co-opted Member emphasised the importance of ensuring good meeting attendance by Local Authority Governors, and the Lead Officer for School Governance confirmed that Head Teachers, Chairs of Governors and Clerks had recently been provided with guidance to support attendance monitoring of Local Authority Governors, with a view to disqualification where necessary.

The Chairman requested that a further report addressing issues arising from the review be provided to the next meeting of Education PDS Committee.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to request that a review is undertaken on how school governors, and in particular Local Authority Governors, are recruited and appointed.

25 UPDATE ON ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEMS - CHANGES

Report ED13086

The Committee considered a report outlining progress in moving towards online applications for school admissions for primary and secondary schools and free school meals.

School admissions for primary and secondary schools were managed through the Pan-London Co-ordinate Admissions System, operated on behalf of all London Boroughs using a common application form. From 2007, online versions of the common application form had been available, and in Bromley the proportion of primary and secondary applications submitted online for the academic year 2013/14 had reached 64% and 49% respectively. Work was currently being undertaken to increase the proportion of online applications, and to support this, a reduced number of A4 paper application booklets would be produced for the academic year 2014/15, with the introduction of an A5 booklet which included the list of schools, a map and an outline of the application process which promoted online application. Applications for school places required the submission of additional information to prove entitlement, such as a birth certificate, Council Tax payment and child benefit entitlement. This was often submitted in paper format although scanned copies of certain documents could be accepted in some cases.

The online application process for free school meals in Bromley had commenced in June 2012 and 50% of free school meal applications were now made online. Schools actively encouraged parents and carers to apply for free school meals, and applications were required to be renewed on an annual basis or when family circumstances changed. Eligibility for free school meals was largely determined with reference to online systems maintained by the Department for Education which had links to the tax and benefits systems and was therefore less reliant on paper copies of documents.

In considering the report, the Chairman highlighted that parents and carers who had submitted their child's school admissions form online still received an offer letter. The Head of Strategic Place Planning confirmed that the pan-London admissions protocol required an offer letter to be sent which included information around appealing for an alternate school place, but that work continued to be undertaken to streamline the collection of data that supported applications and reduce the need for paper evidence. The Chairman requested that the issue of sending a written letter in response to online applications be discussed at the next meeting of Officers responsible for the pan-London admission system.

RESOLVED that the update be noted and that the issue of sending a written letter in response to online applications be discussed at the next meeting of Officers responsible for the pan-London admission system.

26 SEND PUPILS IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Report ED13095

The Committee considered a report providing details of changes relating to special educational needs, education funding reform and the academies agenda and identifying potential risks for the Local Authority if pupils' special educational needs could not be met by local mainstream schools. It also provided data on progress in reducing costly out-of-Borough placements and the measures put in place to manage spend effectively.

The way that special educational needs support was delivered varied across local authorities. Bromley Council had previously devolved a lower level of resources to schools and had a high level of statements of special educational needs in comparison with its statistical neighbours (although did not necessarily identify more pupils with special educational needs overall). Following the conversion of a considerable number of Bromley schools to Academy status, resources would now be provided directly to schools which would make their own decisions about funding priorities. As the school population increased, there would be a higher number of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities requiring specialist education provision. It was important to ensure that as more schools converted to academy status, specialist education continued to be available in Bromley to support these pupils in accessing high quality education in their local community.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

27 EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2013/14

Report ED13091

The Committee considered the forward rolling work programme for the year ahead, based on items scheduled for decision by the Education Portfolio Holder and items for consideration by the Education PDS Committee.

In considering the work programme for 2012/13, the Chairman requested that a number of additional reports be considered at the next meeting of the Education PDS Committee to be held on 12th November 2013.

- School Governance Working Party: Implementation of Recommendations
- Speech and Language Therapy for Children' with SEN (Gateway Review)
- Attainment of Looked After Children
- Re-categorisation of schools

Members requested that reports on young people classified as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET), Secondary School Places and Educational Welfare (including truancy) be provided to the Education PDS Committee at its meeting on 30th January 2014. Member also requested that reports providing an update on Standards of Attainment and a progress report on the Spend to Save project for young people moving towards transition be reported to the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 18th March 2014.

The Chairman noted that the Schedule of Visits for the Autumn Term 2013 had now been arranged and encouraged Members and Co-opted Members to attend visits to schools where possible.

RESOLVED that the Education Programme 2012/13 be noted.

28 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**29 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 2ND JULY 2013**

RESOLVED that the exempt minutes of the Education PDS meeting held on 2nd July 2013 be agreed.

**30 INDEPENDENT FEE-PAYING FULL-TIME RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL FOR BOYS**

The Committee considered the report and supported the recommendations.

The Meeting ended at 10.27 pm

Chairman

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Minute Annex

EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE 17th September 2013

QUESTIONS TO THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Written Questions for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Nicola Ward, Regional Director – London, National Deaf Children's Society

- Q1 There is only vague reference to a group of peripatetic teachers in the SEN Inclusion Support service. Please can you confirm if this includes Teachers of the Deaf, and if so what plans there are for these posts?

Reply:

As stated in the report, the description of the services in Table 1 of the report is an outline summary only. It is not, and not intended to be, a comprehensive description of each service - no doubt, each service area included in this table could raise similar queries as to why specific references were not included. Table 4, in the Finance Section of the report, details the budget cost centres included under the heading of SEN Inclusion Support. This includes the Hearing Impairment Units at both Primary and Secondary, and the budgets for Sensory Support, Social Communication Difficulties and SEN Support in Mainstream, services which include Teachers of the Deaf.

- Q2. Can you provide a definition of a 'goodwill agreement' and more information about first refusal for referrals? (please see page 8 of Report ED13085)

Reply:

The Hearing Impairment Unit for Secondary Pupils is based in two classrooms of the Darrick Wood Academy. There is no formal agreement in place between the Local Authority and the Academy for this arrangement (e.g. a formal lease or renting arrangement) and therefore it operates currently by mutual agreement between both parties - hence the description of a 'goodwill agreement'.

At this stage there is no further information about 'first refusal for referrals' - this statement describes an intent and an outcome to be achieved, if possible. In implementing the proposals, subject to a decision by Members, the detail of the proposal, including the possibility of securing first refusal for Bromley referrals, will be developed further, the outcomes of which will be subject to further consideration by Members in due course. The intent is that if the Units in question are devolved to schools, via a contract for services as has been the case with all other specialist Units, then the Local Authority will be seeking to ensure that referrals from Bromley are accommodated as a priority before referrals from other agencies are considered. This will also allow the provisions to fall in line with other specialist provisions within the Borough in terms of management and funding. This will ensure the provision is, alongside other resourced provisions, ready for the new national funding system the Department for Education is developing for 2015 and beyond.

Q3 Will the Local Authority ensure there continues to be a specialist management position in the resource provisions? For example a Teacher of the Deaf with specialist experience. We are concerned about this as the document refers to school heads taking on management responsibilities of the units. (please see 3.15.4 and 3.15.5 on page 8/9 of Report ED13085).”

Reply:

At this stage, the proposal put forward before Members is to explore alternative delivery options for the services in scope through formal market testing and through discussions with schools as appropriate. Should the proposal be approved, then detailed modelling of each service, including engagement as appropriate with relevant stakeholders, will be carried out as part of the process. It is at that stage that specific issues related to each service area, such as the query you raise, will be considered. It would be premature to prejudge the outcomes of that detailed process at this time.