

## **EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 28 June 2017

### **Present:**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Chairman)  
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Kim Botting FRSA, Nicky Dykes, Ellie Harmer,  
Chris Pierce, Stephen Wells and Angela Wilkins

Mary Capon and Joan McConnell  
Emmanuel Arbenser  
Tajana Reeves  
Alison Regester

### **Also Present:**

Cllr Stephen Carr, Leader of the Council  
Cllr Peter Fortune, Portfolio Holder for Education Children and Families  
Cllr Tom Philpott, Executive Assistant

Ade Adetosoye, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director ECHS  
Carol Arnfield, Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and  
Adult Education  
Jane Bailey, Director of Education  
Janet Bailey, Director of Children's Social Care  
Isobel Cattermole, Independent Chairman, Bromley Children's Service  
Improvement Governance Board  
Debi Christie, 16-25 Commissioning Manager & SEND REform  
Programme Lead  
Jim Gamble, Independent Chairman, Bromley Safeguarding Children  
Board

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Cooke and Aaron Regisford. Councillor Stephen Wells and Tajana Reeves attended as their respective substitutes.

## **2 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS 2017/18**

The Select Committee considered a report which sought confirmation of the appointment of Co-opted members to the Education, Children and Families Select Committee for 2017/18.

The Chairman reported that Mrs Alison Regester had tendered her resignation from the Committee earlier in the day. Mrs Regester had sat on

this and other Committees as Pre-School and Early Years Representative for nearly twenty years and the Chairman thanked her for the dedication and support she had shown to the Council and the residents of the Borough during those twenty years. The knowledge, expertise and insight she had brought to committee meetings had been invaluable and her involvement would be missed. The Committee wished Mrs Regester the very best for the future.

**RESOLVED: That**

- 1. Mr Emmanuel Arbenser be appointed, with voting rights to the Education, Children & Families Select Committee for 2017/18 as Special School Parent Governor.**
- 2. Mrs Mary Capon representing the Church of England and Mrs Joan McConnell representing the Roman Catholic Church be appointed as Co-opted Members to the Education PDS Committee for 2017/18 with voting rights;**
- 3. The Mr Aaron Regisford be appointed without voting rights to the Education, Children & Families Select Committee for 2017/18 as Young Peoples Representative.**
- 4. That a Pre School and Early Years Representative be sought for 2017/18.**

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP declared that he was a Governor of London and South East College and of Southborough Primary School.

Councillor Stephen Wells declared that he was a Member of the Foundation Court of St Olaves and St Saviours School.

Mrs Alison Regester, Pre-School Settings and Early Years representative, declared that she ran a private day nursery in the Borough.

Mrs Joan McConnell, Church representative, declared that she was a Governor of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

Mrs Mary Capon, Church representative, declared that she was an employee of the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust, that her husband was a governor at Newstead Wood and her daughter attended Newstead Wood.

Councillor Chris Pierce declared that he was a Governor at St Philomena's Catholic Primary School.

Councillor Peter Fortune declared that he was a Member of the Court of University of Kent and that his wife was a teacher at an academy in the Borough.

Councillor Kim Botting declared that she was a Governor at Blenheim Primary School.

Councillor Neil Reddin declared that he had children who attended schools in the Borough and that his wife was a Governor of two primary schools in the Borough.

#### **4 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2017, 9 MAY 2017 & 10 MAY 2017**

The minutes of the meetings of the Education Select Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017, and 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and the Education, Children & Families Select Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

#### **5 MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Select Committee noted an updated report setting out responses to previous Select Committee recommendations.

#### **6 QUESTIONS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions had been received.

#### **7 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions had been received.

#### **8 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE**

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

Since the last meeting the Portfolio Holder had been on a number of visits. This included an informative and interesting visit to Glebe School which had been hosted by the Head Teacher, Mr Keith Seed. The Portfolio Holder reported how the School did wonderful work with children with Special Educational Needs. During the visit the Portfolio Holder had attended an internal Council meeting which brought together staff and students to discuss issues. The Portfolio Holder had also been invited to visit Westminster Academy which was run by the Harris Foundation. A number of Bromley children attended Westminster Academy. A further visit made by the Portfolio Holder was to the Bromley Rotary Club Education Day which had involved a debating society.

The Portfolio Holder had also attended Link and LA Governor Forums. These had been arranged by Michelle Graydon at the Octavo Partnership and the

Portfolio Holder conveyed his thanks to Ms Graydon for arranging these sessions.

The official report setting out the outcome of the inspection of the Bromley Youth Offending Service (YOS) had now been published and recognised the progress that had been made in improving the YOS. The Service had gone from 1 star to 3 star with one element judged to be 4 star. The Portfolio Holder conveyed his thanks to the staff and management of the YOS for their work in driving improvement.

In relation to Children's Services, managers had been working hard to recruit staff and deliver the Council's Caseload Promise. The Portfolio Holder had recently filmed a recruitment video to encourage more social workers to join the Council's workforce. The Portfolio Holder had also attended an Apprenticeship Day and had actively encouraged potential staff to join Bromley. The Council was now working hard to improve communication with Partners in order to drive further service improvement. To this end, the Portfolio Holder had attended a constructive meeting with the Independent Chairman of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board to discuss work being undertaken to deliver the actions within the Children's Service Improvement Plan.

In April, the Portfolio Holder, along with the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, and Chairman of the Children's Service Improvement Governance Board, had attended a Quality and Improvement Practice Week. This provided Members and the Senior Management Team with the opportunity to see first-hand the work undertaken with children and families.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the third Ofsted Monitoring visit had been undertaken in May 2017, and the letter setting out the outcome of the Visit (which was contained in the agenda papers for the meeting) demonstrated that the Service was now moving in the right direction although there was still more work to be done. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that Frankie Sulke, the DfE appointed Children's Commissioner for Bromley, had now completed her allotted time with the Council and had submitted her report to the DfE, although due to Ministerial changes the report had not yet been published. The Portfolio Holder thanked the Commissioner for the support and challenge she had provided to the Council.

Finally, the Portfolio Holder reported that work was underway on arrangements for the Corporate Parenting Fun Day which would take place on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and highlighted the value of a good Member turn out at the event.

Responding to a question surrounding mechanisms for ensuring that the improvements that had been made in the YOS were monitored and remained on track, the Portfolio Holder explained that an improvement plan had been developed and progress against the improvement plan was monitored by the YOS Management Board. There was a good range of representatives from

the Council and Partner Agencies on the Management Board and this provided a robust challenge mechanism.

In response to a question concerning how Bromley had come to have such poor outcomes in inspections of the YOS and Children's Service and whether there were any common contributing factors, the Portfolio Holder suggested that since the poor inspection outcomes communication with partners had significantly improved. Partners were now members of strategic groups, there was increased data and information sharing and organisations were now working towards a common cause. The Portfolio Holder recognised that there was still more work to do, especially with schools but significant improvements had been made.

In answer to a question surrounding concerns that had been raised by Members of the Schools' Forum in relation to school funding, the Director of Education explained that there was not a head teacher in Bromley that was not concerned about their budgets and the proposed cuts to funding. There was currently a question mark over the proposed National Funding Formula. In addition to this, there were tensions between primary and secondary head teachers in relation to the ratio of funding. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Director of Education confirmed that losses faced by schools had been capped and the maximum a school was likely to lose as a result of the changes to funding was around 3 or 4 per cent. It was agreed that the information on school funding that had been collated by Officers would be disseminated to the Select Committee.

Responding to a question from the Chairman surrounding accommodation for children from families that were homeless, the Portfolio Holder responded that following the question that had been raised at Full Council on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June, work had begun on addressing the issue. The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director ECHS reported that a policy framework, agreed by Full Council in 2015, was in place. The Deputy Chief Executive had met with the Portfolio Holder for Care Services (who was responsible for the housing portfolio) and a review was being conducted by staff within the housing service. It appeared that where families were housed in Kent (which was the third option considered by the Council) a number of these families chose to educate their children in Kent. The Chairman stressed that Members needed to know how many of the Borough's children were travelling large distances to attend school.

The Chairman noted that the recent Queen's Speech had not mentioned the abolition of the 50% admissions figure for faith schools and requested that this be further investigated as there could be implications for the proposed Catholic Secondary School in the Borough.

The Committee discussed the issue of planning for future education sites in the Borough and the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he was confident that the allocation within the Council's Local Plan was sufficient to meet demand. A great deal of work had been undertaken to ensure that all Members understood the challenges faced in relation to the Council's statutory

responsibility to provide a sufficient number of school places for the population of the Borough.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Schools' Partnership Board was evolving and a review of the remit and function of the Board was being undertaken.

The Chairman requested that the Schedule of School visits for the Summer Term be circulated to all Members of the Committee and the Schedule of Visits for the Autumn term be circulated as soon as it was available.

**A    PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING CHILDREN'S SERVICE  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
Report ED18009**

The Select Committee considered a report which set out the progress that had been made in addressing the 18 Recommendations that had been made by Ofsted following the inspection of the Council's services for Children in Need of help and protection and Children Looked After. The Ofsted inspection had taken place between 11 April 2016 and 5 May 2016 and following its inspection Ofsted had found the Council's services to be inadequate in all areas.

The Council had developed a Children's Service Improvement Plan in conjunction with partner agencies and this had been submitted to Ofsted in September 2016. The Plan had contained 10 priorities and 306 actions, reflecting work needed to address the 18 Ofsted recommendations. Ofsted acknowledged that the Improvement Plan was ambitious for children and young people in the Borough, extending beyond the recommendations made by Ofsted.

The report considered by the Select Committee provided a comprehensive update on the actions taken to date in response to each of the 18 Ofsted recommendations.

The Chairman requested that when reports were written the author of the report consider their audience and ensure that acronyms and technical terms were clearly set out to assist readers with limited knowledge in their understanding of the issues.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

**9       EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILIES INFORMATION ITEMS**

The Committee noted the information items that had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

**10 EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK  
PROGRAMME  
REPORT CSD17099**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2017/18 and noted the recommendations for items for consideration made by the Education Select Committee on 9 May 2017.

The Chairman highlighted that the name of the Sub-Committee had been changed to reflect the extended remit of the Sub-Committee. There was still one vacancy on the Sub-Committee should any Member wish to join.

The Pre-Schools and Early Years Representative noted that later in the year the Select Committee would be considering the 30 Hour Challenge. This was a big change for the sector and was a significant challenge for providers. 50% of Pre School Settings were indicating that they would offer “some” of the additional hours but it was not yet clear how many additional hours providers would be in a position to offer. Mrs Regester urged Ward Members to contact the pre-school settings in their wards in order to get regular updates.

The Chairman asked that a complete list of Early Years Settings in the Borough, broken down by ward, be provided to the Committee.

**RESOLVED: That the recommended work plan for 2017/18 set out in the report be endorsed.**

**11 ADULT EDUCATION UPDATE**

The Select Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the impacts arising from the 2016 restructure of the Council’s adult education service.

On 10 February 2016 the Council’s Executive endorsed the reorganisation of the adult education service, known as Bromley Adult Education College (BAEC). The reorganisation encompassed a refocusing of the curriculum offer to increase the level of resource used to support vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, a reduction in staffing levels across the service, and withdrawal from the Widmore Centre in Bromley. The Widmore Centre had operated as the main administrative centre for the Service since September 1998. The Kentwood Centre became the new administrative centre for the Service with effect from August 2016. The Governing body of BAEC was dissolved at the end of the 2015/16 academic year and a new body, known as the Community Learning Advisory Consortium (CLAC) was formed. CLAC was chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children & Families and had representation from various sections of the local community, other teams with the Education Care and Health Services (ECHS) Department and the BAEC student body.

Whilst the restructure reduced the volume of courses open to public enrolment, BAEC continued to retain a reasonably wide range of provision within its mainstream offer for members of the public. Up to the end of April 2017, a total of 462 courses had taken place. The accredited provision on offer retained a strong focus on English and maths, including GCSE and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Managers continued to work in partnership with Job Centre Plus to offer specific training and qualifications for unemployed adults, including Universal Job Match, CV writing and interview skills.

Work was underway to address areas for improvement identified during the Ofsted inspection in February 2017. This formed the key process of a post inspection action plan. Ofsted had concluded that the reorganisation of the Service had been well managed and successful with regard to bringing about a closer integration of the work of adult education with that of the Council. Many of the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted in February 2017 had been highlighted by the Service as part of its own self-assessment process and actions to address the issues built into a quality improvement plan.

The Committee noted that the restructure had clearly helped to focus the work of BAEC, ensuring it was well placed to help the Council meet its stated aim of focusing support on the Borough's more vulnerable residents and enabling a more joined up approach with that of other Council Services.

In response to a question, the Head of Service for Early Years, Schools Standards and Adult Education reported that a number of pressures on the Service had appeared in the Autumn Term following the relocation of key staff and functions. It had taken time for staff to adjust to the different ways of working and much of the Autumn Term had been taken up with getting used to the adjustments. However, there was now a buzz around the Kentwood Centre as more space had been opened up for community use. In addition to this, the Poverest Centre was now busier and students had reported that they were happy with the wider range of courses available. Positive feedback had also been received in relation to the evening classes that were being run. Whilst there were still pressure points around staffing, managers were becoming increasingly familiar with the increased expectations from Ofsted.

Referring to tabled 4.5 in the report, average daily room usage 2016/17, the Chairman queried whether there were any plans in place to provide more accommodation at Poverest. In response, the Head of Service for Early Years, Schools Standards and Adult Education confirmed that the huts on the site remained unusable and whilst the former nursery had been converted into teaching space there were no alternative plans for increasing the levels of accommodation.

A Member noted that it was pleasing that positive feedback from students had been received and suggested that it may be helpful to update the report to reflect that positive feedback.



In response to a question concerning funding, the Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education confirmed that levels of funding had not changed for 2017/18 and this meant that it should be possible to provide the same level of courses as in 2016/17. The Committee was also informed that there was a retention and achievement element to the funding. This meant that if students dropped out of courses the funding received would be adjusted. Since the Ofsted inspection the Service had been monitoring levels of drop off more closely and it was agreed that this data would be given to members of the Committee at the end of the academic year.

A Co-opted Member noted that paragraph 3.7 of the report referred to criticism from Ofsted in relation to the slow progress being made by leaders and managers in improving the achievement rates in some of the accredited provision, in particular ESOL courses. In response the Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education reported that the Service was looking at techniques that could be employed to better prepare students for their qualifications.

The Chairman requested that a further update be provided to the Committee when more detail was known around the proposals for a possible move to sharing backroom operations and a move towards a merged hub based structure under the Government's plans for the devolution of funding in the London region.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a further update be provided to the Committee when more detail was known around the proposals for a possible move to sharing backroom operations and a move towards a merged hub based structure.**

## **12 CHILDREN'S SERVICE LANDSCAPE IN BROMLEY WITNESS SESSION**

The Committee had been provided with a range of written evidence in advance of the meeting. This included a report providing an overview of the work of the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Board, a report setting out the role of the Children's Service Improvement Governance Board, a report setting out the aims and objectives of the 'Towards Excellence for Children in Bromley' initiative, a letter setting out the outcome of the third Ofsted Monitoring Visit in relation to Children's Services in Bromley, and an overview of the Bromley Children's Service Department. A written submission had also been received from Ravenswood School and this was tabled at the meeting.

In addition to the written evidence contained within the agenda pack provided to the Committee, the following information was also tabled at the meeting:

- A chart detailing the Children's Service Leadership and Governance Arrangements for Partnership working;
- Terms of Reference for the Safer Bromley Partnership Strategic Group
- The Constitution of the Safer Bromley Partnership
- The Safer Bromley Partnership Strategy 2016-2019

- Bromley Safeguarding Children Board Structure 2017
- Membership of the Safeguarding Children Board (June 2017)
- Youth Offending Service Governance Arrangements
- Membership of the Youth Offending Service Management Board
- Terms of Reference of the Youth Offending Service Management Board

The Chairman was pleased to welcome the following witnesses to the meeting:

Mr Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Chairman of Bromley Safeguarding Children's Board

Mrs Isobel Cattermole, Independent Chairman of Bromley's Children's Service Improvement Governance Board

Mr Ade Adetosoye, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Education, Care and Health Services

Mrs Janet Bailey, Interim Director of Children's Social Care

*Jim Gamble QPM, Independent Chairman of Bromley Safeguarding Children Board*

In providing details of his professional background, Mr Gamble explained to the Select Committee that he had been a professional Police Officer in Northern Ireland and during his career had worked in the anti-terrorist intelligence unit in Belfast, before becoming Deputy Chief Constable of the National Crime Squad, which later merged into the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

Throughout his career, Mr Gamble had been involved in combating child sexual exploitation and he was responsible for one of the earliest reviews into Child Sexual Exploitation – Operation Ore.

In 2013, Mr Gamble was appointed as the Independent Chairman of City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board which in September 2016, became the first Local Safeguarding Children Board in the country to receive an 'Outstanding' judgement, following an Ofsted inspection.

Mr Gamble was appointed Independent Chairman of Bromley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) in January 2017. The Committee heard how Mr Gamble relished the challenge presented by Bromley in terms of implementing improvements to safeguarding practices across the Borough. Mr Gamble highlighted that there was a clear appetite and enthusiasm to learn and improve in Bromley coupled with optimism. The role of Independent Chairman of the Safeguarding Children Board was one of scrutiny, challenge and broader partnership working.

In response to a question from the Chairman of the Select Committee concerning the actions that had been taken since taking up his post in Bromley, Mr Gamble explained that he had immediately tried to deliver three things: grip, pace, and a demonstrable impact. BSCB had moved away from a list of harms to a focus on 4 key issues: i) the context of a child's life in

Bromley, including pathways to harm. The establishment of the Vulnerable Adolescence Working Group was central to this issue. ii) Early help and ensuring that early intervention had a positive impact. iii) Leadership – delivering respectful challenge where it was needed. iv) Health and Wellbeing of the Workforce – oversight and challenge to the support provided by the Council's leadership, oversight of caseloads and supervision, progressing improvement to the working environment of the staff and ensuring that the working environment was conducive to a happy and productive workforce (which it had not been in January 2017). He highlighted his concern that parts of the building did not reflect the standards he would expect for staff doing such difficult and stressful work.

BSCB had developed its work plan for the year; one of the key priorities was establishing and informing a risk register. Mr Gamble stated that when he arrived at Bromley he was concerned that BSCB had not previously had a risk register. One of the actions that had already been taken was a reconfiguration of BSCB, any sub-groups that did not add anything to the work of BSCB had been removed. BSCB was now seeking to develop the authentic voice of young people. This was being done in collaboration with Bromley Youth Council. A Memorandum of Understanding between BSCB and Bromley Youth Council was being developed and the two groups would work to develop a digital footprint survey that would help to provide a better understanding of how young people in Bromley access technology and use social media. In addition to this a Community Engagement Sub-Group had been created and traditionally under-represented groups formed part of the Membership of the Sub-Group. BSCB was also seeking to increase levels of engagement with schools in the Borough.

Mr Gamble described his role and the role of BSCB as one of collective challenge and strategic support. It was now important that the impact of the improvements that had been delivered to date landed on the street and were felt by vulnerable children and families across the Borough through improved outcomes. The investment that had been committed by the Council's leadership had to be used to build a better approach to supporting vulnerable groups in the Borough.

Finally, Mr Gamble confirmed that this year's BSCB Conference would focus on empowering the community to engage and care about vulnerable children and families.

In response to a question from the Chairman surrounding whether additional multi-agency training was required in relation to reporting concerns and thresholds for referrals to Children's Social Care, Mr Gamble highlighted that as well as those partners with the highest number of referrals, BSCB was also looking at those partners who made no, or very few, referrals. The information provided to partners was being reviewed and it was noticeable that there had been an improving cycle of attendance at multi-agency training events. Significant progress in engaging with schools had been made although there was still more to do.

In relation to a question concerning the differing levels of resource contributed by partners, Mr Gamble reported that good financial support had been received from colleagues within education whilst the same could not be said for some other partners. The Police were active and engaged partners who were willing to commit resource. Mr Gamble advised that the geographic realignment of the Metropolitan Police could have implications for Bromley and the impact of this should be monitored. 'Resource' referred to more than simply money, it was about ensuring the right people at the right level were turning up prepared to engage in meetings and discussions. He stressed that all organisations within the partnership were suffering under the blanket of austerity however, it came down to priorities and there was evidence that investment in early intervention delivered savings down the line. It was clear that there was an appetite for change across Bromley.

In terms of how the different sub-groups contributed to the work of BSCB, Mr Gamble explained that in advance of the meeting partners were required to provide a written update. This was circulated to all members of BSCB with the agenda papers. Meetings were conducted on the assumption that all members had read the papers that had been circulated. At the Board meetings a review of the work of the sub-groups was undertaken and a mapping exercise was conducted to ensure that opportunities to collaborate were not missed. Each meeting had a clear focus. Mr Gamble indicated that once the improvement agenda had been satisfied and delivered BSCB may be restructured to adopt a different focus. In order to ensure a clear focus on the child, a Strategic Chairs Group had also been established bringing together BSCB, Health and Wellbeing Board, Safer Bromley Partnership, and the Lead Member for Children's Services.

*Isobel Cattermole, Independent Chairman of Bromley Children's Service Improvement Board*

In providing details of her professional background, Mrs Cattermole explained to the Select Committee that the last 30 years of her career had been spent working in education and children's social care. Mrs Cattermole had held senior positions in a number of inner London Boroughs and had held the post of Deputy Chief Executive in an Outer London Borough. Mrs Cattermole had also worked in Bristol for a year where she had been involved in addressing issues of historic child sexual exploitation. Mrs Cattermole had been a Bromley resident for over 40 years and stated that she had been saddened to hear the outcome of the Ofsted inspection in June 2016.

In terms of her role as Chairman of the Children's Service Improvement Governance Board which she took up in October 2016, Mrs Cattermole explained that she had been both privileged and excited to be approached to Chair this important partnership board. The role of the Service Improvement Governance Board was to forensically examine actions that were being taken to implement the Service Improvement Plan that had been submitted to Ofsted following the Inspection. It was a challenging and ambitious improvement plan which extended beyond the 18 recommendations from Ofsted.

Since the inspection outcome, which had undoubtedly been damaging for the reputation of the Local Authority, progress had been made at a good pace. It was important for any Local Authority to recognise that such a systematic failure of one of its key services was a Corporate failure. It was pleasing that in Bromley there had been a corporate response and good levels of improvement had been made in a relatively short space of time. It was important to recognise that the Council's relationship with the Commissioner for Children's Services in Bromley was pivotal to this improvement. In addition, it was clear that there was good buy-in to the improvement process from partners.

Mrs Cattermole emphasised that Children's Social Care was very much a demand-led service, social workers did not actively seek their client base. It was also clear that the nature and needs of the local community was continuously changing and the Service had to be able to meet and address these ever evolving challenges going forward.

Positive feedback had been received, both from the DfE and Ofsted during the regular monitoring visits. As the report of the Commissioner for Children's Services in Bromley had not been published it was not yet clear what the recommendation would be in terms of whether the Local Authority was deemed capable of managing its Children's Services. Mrs Cattermole however reported that she was encouraged by the progress that had already been made and the determination of the Local Authority and its partners to deliver the necessary improvement.

In response to a question from the Chairman concerning how the Council could be sure that the Corporate Structure was fit for purpose in the future, Mrs Cattermole explained that the only way for the Council to maintain momentum going forward was to realise that the damaging effect of the inspection outcome on both the community and the Council's partners would come back to haunt the Local Authority if it did not triangulate the improvement that had already been made. It was important to ensure that the level of resource that had recently been put into the Service was sustained, and that robust and challenging scrutiny processes were in place to hold leaders and practitioners to account. The Children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), conducted in September 2016, and circulated to all Members following the last meeting of the Governance Board on 23 June 2017, clearly demonstrated the challenges that the Local Authority was facing over the next 5 to 10 years. The Corporate leadership needed to be sighted on the challenges ahead to be able to challenge officers across the Council. Members needed to ensure that the culture of the organisation was such that in the future they were given an accurate picture in terms of the state of services, whether it be good or bad. The strong advice Mrs Cattermole gave the Committee was that Members needed to ensure that the culture of the organisation was conducive to an open and honest professional relationship between Member and Officers.

The Chairman noted the comments made by Mrs Cattermole concerning the fact that Children's Social Care was a demand-led service and questioned what the Local Authority could do to address the social problems that were increasing across the Borough leading to an increase in referrals to Children's Social Care. In response, Mrs Cattermole suggested that for children in need and children who were on the periphery of children's social care, early intervention strategies were key. There was fairly robust evidence that nationally the demise of Children's Centres had led to increased demand within Children's Social Care. Many of the problems that were frequently addressed by social workers started with neglect and parents not knowing or understanding how to safeguard their children. This is why a focus on early intervention was essential. Funding was key to ensuring that services were targeted at the right families and there was a clear role for Members in lobbying the Government to secure sufficient levels of funding for early intervention. Another key area was developing a good relationship with schools in order to support them in their understanding of what safeguarding was and the role they played in safeguarding. Local Councillors needed a clear understanding of the needs and demands of the whole of the community. Mrs Cattermole suggested that it would be helpful to review the allocation of resources on a ward by ward basis. In a diverse borough such as Bromley there needed to be an understanding that wards in the more deprived areas required more of the Council resource than some of the more affluent areas, a holistic approach to the borough needed to be adopted.

In response to a question concerning the ways in which the challenges faced by families had changed Mrs Cattermole explained that there was an increasing number of larger families. There were more vulnerable families who carried with them the associated social issues. Bromley was increasingly becoming more like an inner London Borough but was not receiving the increases in funding to reflect this. It was essential that more data was gathered and analysed in order to highlight the challenges faced by Bromley as a Borough. The information and data within the Children's JSNA that had been compiled by the Director of Public Health was powerful. A detailed analysis of the implications of the data within the JSNA needed to be undertaken in order to inform future service provision and support the Council in making its case for increased funding.

*Ade Adetosoye, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director ECHS*

In providing details of his professional background, MrAdetosoye explained to the Select Committee that he had 20 years' experience of delivering the transformation of Children's Services across a number of London Boroughs including Waltham Forest and Lambeth. During his tenure at Lambeth, Mr Adetosoye had taken Children's Services from Inadequate to Outstanding. Whilst he was Director of Children's Services at the City of London Mr Adetosoye had worked with Mr Gamble through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board which was the only Safeguarding Children's Board to be judged by Ofsted as Outstanding.

Mr Adetosoye had been in his post at Bromley since October 2016, but had worked with the Council in the immediate aftermath of the Ofsted inspection whilst he was still at the City of London. Mr Adetosoye had supported Bromley at the start of its transformation journey and had been heavily involved in advising the Council's leadership in relation to the development of its comprehensive and challenging Children's Service Improvement Plan. The model that Mr Adetosoye was introducing to Bromley was one of simple transformation centred around improved practice. The transformation journey was centred around the Roadmap to Excellent (reproduced in the agenda papers). This provided the structure to ensure that the right families were supported by the Council at the right time. Currently, improvement focused around three key issues:

- Strong leadership – both political and at officer level;
- Permanent staff – with a focus on recruiting the right staff to Bromley thus creating stability;
- Addressing the culture of the organisation – part of this included the environmental issues mentioned earlier by Mr Gamble.

A great deal of positive work in these areas had been undertaken and the direction of travel was now good. There was a clear political commitment and will to drive change and it was pleasing that in their recent Monitoring Visit the Ofsted Inspectors had recognised that Bromley was now moving in the right direction. Once the Children's Service Improvement Plan had been fully implemented and the challenge from the Service Improvement Government Board ceased it would be the responsibility of the Council's internal scrutiny processes and mechanisms to provide robust enquiry and challenge to the Service.

In response to a question from the Chairman surrounding how much time was spent on the different elements of his role as Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of ECHS (Children's Services, Education, Adults Social Care, Health, Housing, Corporate Leadership), Mr Adetosoye explained that due to the service transformation that had been required, fulfilling the requirements of the statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS) had initially been fundamental. In the early days much of his time had been spent addressing the issues within Children's Social Care. One of the biggest challenges had been getting Corporate buy-in to the Children's Service agenda and the changes and improvements that were required. For the time being Children's Services were at the core but as time progressed and the improvements that were being made embedded there would be less of a need for such a strong focus on Children's Social Care.

*Janet Bailey, Director of Children's Social Care*

In providing details of her professional background, Mrs Bailey explained to the Select Committee that she had started her career as a social worker in Bromley 40 years ago. As a resident of the Borough and former employee with fond memories, Mrs Bailey had also been saddened to read about the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of Bromley Children's Services. Mrs Bailey

had previously worked as a social worker in Bromley for 17 years before moving on to a number of other Local Authorities including LB Lambeth with Mr Adetosoye. Mrs Bailey had supported three other local authorities judged by Ofsted to be inadequate through to their next inspection with positive outcomes. Mrs Bailey explained that she knew what 'Good' looked like and made no apologies for judging case audits harshly as this encouraged and facilitated practice improvement. In addition to this, Mrs Bailey had worked with Cafcass and had also had roles within the Courts.

Mrs Bailey explained that when reviewing performance within Children's Services, her mantra was "Is this good enough for my child?", if the answer was 'no' then it was not good enough for the children in the Local Authority's care.

Since December 2016, there had been a marked improvement in staff morale and a tangible difference in the way in which staff were working. There had been a shift in culture as well as a clear confidence in the new Heads of Service that had joined Bromley. Three of the new Heads of Service had originally trained at Bromley and all the new managers had a breadth of experience.

Currently levels of staffing were very fluid. 66% of the workforce were permanent staff and the Children's Service Governance Board had set a very ambitious target of only 10 temporary staff within the Children's Social Care. There were 15 new social workers currently going through HR new starter processes in addition to 10 newly qualified social workers who were joining Bromley. When interviewees declined job offers feedback was sought to identify any improvements that could be made. The help of an agency had also been enlisted to support the recruitment of permanent staff on a payment on appointment basis. A 'Locum to Permanent' event was also being held in order to encourage more locum staff to accept permanent positions. Overall, there were currently 11 vacancies across the Children's Social Care workforce of 215 established posts and these vacancies needed to be filled by high quality social workers.

The Caseload Promise (of between 11 and 15 cases per social worker) was also an attractive incentive, distinguishing Bromley from other Local Authorities. Feedback that had been received was that for social workers, Bromley was now an attractive place to work. Staff now felt respected and supported in addition to being provided with opportunities for career development.

In response to a question surrounding the stability of funding levels, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the additional funding released by the Executive had gone into the base budget and would continue to be available in future years. The Council had recognised that following the inspection additional financial resources were required but Members were also clear that use of resources had to remain efficient and effective. Increasingly capacity was being built into the workforce whilst maintaining the Caseload Promise.



The Council's leadership were determined to deliver improvements in a timely manner in order to improve outcomes for children in the Borough.

In response to a question concerning whether there was anything more that could be done by Councillors, the Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that a high Member turnout at the Corporate Parenting Fun Day would send a powerful message and would enable Members to directly engage with the children for whom the Local Authority had Corporate Parenting responsibility. Members could also engage with future audits and practice weeks, the next Practice Week would be held in October 2017 and social workers would welcome the involvement of more Members. The realignment of portfolio responsibilities and the changes made to the responsibilities of the Council's scrutiny committees was a step towards delivering improvements in internal scrutiny processes. In addition to this, a review of the Member training programme was being undertaken and the Commissioner for Children's Services in Bromley had recommended that the programme of Member training continue.

The Vice-Chairman recognised that concerns identified by the Audit Sub-Committee in relation to the recording of data in the CareFirst system a number of years prior to the Ofsted inspection may have been one of the first indications of failures within the service and suggested that in future a more robust approach be taken when minor deficiencies were identified in services. The Vice-Chairman queried whether the issues with recoding data in CareFirst had now been resolved. In response, the Director of Children's Social Care reported that a new system was being implemented within Children's Social Care – Eclipse. This was a more intuitive systems and managers were optimistic that social workers were now being provided with the right tools to carry out their work and would now be able to spend more time with clients and less time competing reports.

The Chairman asked whether BSCB had any plans to investigate drug related issues, specifically the availability of drugs over the internet and delivery of drugs through the post. The Chairman BSCB confirmed that whilst the issue of drugs was being considered there was not a focus on the use of the internet in the supply of drugs. This would be taken away from the meeting as an action point. The Chairman of the Children's Services Improvement Governance Board reported that there had also be a spate of incidents of drugs being delivered by take away food delivery drivers. The Committee noted that there was clearly work for the Police and Royal Mail to undertake to combat this problem.

The Chairman noted that the reports of the Select Committee in 2016/17 addressed a number of the issues being discussed at the Children's Service Improvement Governance Board. The Chairman sought assurances that the reports and recommendations of the Select Committee would be reviewed and taken on board where relevant.

In drawing the witness session to a conclusion, the Chairman thanked the witnesses for the valuable contribution they had made to the meeting and

indicated that the Committee would be happy to receive any further information and recommendations that the witnesses deemed appropriate to support the Committee's review.

### **13 COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was agreed that the first half an hour of the Education Children and Families Budget and Performance Sub Committee would be set aside for consideration of recommendations arising from the Committee's review of the Children's Service Landscape in Bromley.

The Meeting ended at 10.05 pm

Chairman