



THE LONDON BOROUGH  
www.bromley.gov.uk

BROMLEY CIVIC CENTRE, STOCKWELL CLOSE, BROMLEY BRI 3UH

TELEPHONE: 020 8464 3333

CONTACT: Philippa Gibbs  
[philippa.gibbs@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:philippa.gibbs@bromley.gov.uk)

DIRECT LINE: 020 8461 7638

FAX: 020 8290 0608

DATE: 21 January 2019

To: Members of the  
**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Chairman)  
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Marina Ahmad, Kathy Bance MBE, Yvonne Bear, Judi Ellis, Chris Pierce,  
Will Rowlands and Stephen Wells

Church Representatives with Voting Rights  
Reverend Roger Bristow and Joan McConnell

Parent Governor Members with Voting Rights  
Emmanuel Arbenser, Michelle Fribbens and David Hullah,

Non-Voting Co-opted Members  
Angela Leeves, Early Years Representative  
Tajana Reeves, Young People's Representative

A meeting of the Education, Children and Families Select Committee will be held at  
Committee Rooms, Bromley Civic Centre on **TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2019 AT 7.00  
PM**

MARK BOWEN  
Director of Corporate Services

Paper copies of this agenda will not be provided at the meeting. Copies can  
be printed off at <http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/>. Any member of the public  
requiring a paper copy of the agenda may request one in advance of the  
meeting by contacting the Clerk to the Committee, giving 24 hours notice  
before the meeting.

Items marked for information only will not be debated unless a member of the  
Committee requests a discussion be held, in which case please inform the  
Clerk 24 hours in advance indicating the aspects of the information item you  
wish to discuss

**All Committee Members are invited to the Preparation Meeting  
which will take place from 6.30pm in the Committee Rooms  
at the Civic Centre.**

# **A G E N D A**

## **PART 1 (PUBLIC) AGENDA**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contact details are shown on each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting.

### **STANDARD ITEMS**

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

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**3 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2018 AND 12 DECEMBER 2018 (Pages 5 - 26)**

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

To hear questions to the Committee received in writing by the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 and to respond. Questions must relate to the work of the scrutiny committee.

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

To hear questions to the Committee received in writing by the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 and to respond. Questions must relate to the work of the Portfolio.

**6 EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 27 - 32)**

**7 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE**

**8 EDUCATION INFORMATION ITEMS**

**a MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2018 (Pages 33 - 48)**

### **SELECT COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

**9 SCRUTINY OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**

**10 OUTCOME FROM THE OFSTED INSPECTION (Pages 49 - 60)**

## **SHORT ITEM**

- 11 YOS UPDATE (Pages 61 - 74)

## **SUBSTANTIVE ITEM: THE IMPACT OF BENEFIT CHANGES ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

- 12 WITNESS SESSION:

(A) SARA BOWREY, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, LBB

(B) RACHAEL DUNLEY, HEAD OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

- 13 COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## **PART 2 (CLOSED) AGENDA**

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

The Chairman to move that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it is 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.

- 15 PART 2 (EXEMPT) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2018 (Pages 75 - 78)

## **DATES OF FUTURE EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

13<sup>th</sup> March 2019

This page is left intentionally blank

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 16 October 2018

### **Present:**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Chairman)  
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Marina Ahmad, Kathy Bance MBE,  
Yvonne Bear, Judi Ellis, Chris Pierce, Will Rowlands and  
Stephen Wells  
Emmanuel Arbenser and David Hullah  
Tajana Reeves

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

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Leeves (Early Years Representative) and Reverend Roger Bristow (Church of England Representative).

Apologies were also received from Councillor Fortune (Portfolio Holder) and Councillor Dykes (Executive Assistant).

### **12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no additional declarations of interest.

### **13 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4TH JULY 2018**

With reference to page 10 of the minutes, a Member noted that 'positive discrimination' was in fact illegal. Whilst it was noted that at the meeting this term had been used by the Officer concerned, it was agreed that the reference in the minutes would be amended to "positive action".

Referring to page 12 of the minutes, a Member highlighted that whilst at the meeting the Chairman had referred to 'apprenticeship opportunities for people identified by the Council', following the meeting it had been agreed that the recommendation from the Committee be that contractors should be required to 'offer apprenticeship opportunities to young people'. In light of this the Committee agreed that that this reference should be amended.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were agreed, and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendments outlined above.

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

No questions were received.

**15 MATTERS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME  
CSD18150**

The Committee considered a report dealing with the Committee's business management.

Matters Arising

In response to a question concerning whether a further meeting had been arranged with the Diocese to discuss a Catholic Secondary School in the Borough, the Deputy Chief Executive agreed to investigate further and report back to Members following the meeting.

In response to a question concerning any impact of the Restructure of the Youth Courts the Deputy Chief Executive reported that conversations with the Police had indicated that there appeared to be no immediate impact however, the situation would be kept under review.

The Deputy Chief Executive also confirmed that in respect of Streetwise, a couple of conversations had taken place with Lewisham. The contractual agreement was between Streetwise and Lewisham and as a result of this LB Bromley had limited ability to intervene. However, a further follow up meeting had been arranged between LB Bromley and LB Lewisham and the plans regarding Streetwise had been put on hold until this meeting had taken place.

The Chairman noted that no Bromley children had been forced to attend Croydon schools. The Committee noted that Bromley parents had the choice to send their children to Croydon schools and the Chairman requested that following the meeting information on the number of children who chose to attend Croydon schools be provided to the Committee.

The Chief Executive attended the meeting to provide Members with an update concerning the Aeronautical College at Biggin Hill. In the interests of transparency the Chairman confirmed that he was no longer a Governor at London South East Colleges. In order to support the update the Chief Executive circulated the letter that had been sent to the Principal of London South East College along with two maps of Biggin Hill airport; one of which highlighted 3 specific sites and a 'Strategic Plan' detailing proposals at the Airport.

The Chief Executive provided some context around the history of the issues with the Aeronautical College, explaining that in July 2014 the London Mayor has issued Supplementary Planning Guidance. This had encouraged some land at Biggin Hill to be used as an education facility with specific reference to

aeronautical and high tech. Subsequent to this, there had been a report to the Council's Executive identifying up to £3.5m funding for the Biggin Hill area from Outer London Business Funding that the Local Authority had received.

Referring to the 'Strategic Plan' map, the Chief Executive reported that at the time this had been developed discussions about the Master Plan were ongoing and initial discussions took place about an aviation academy at the 'West Camp Site' owned by Bernie Ecclestone. In the early days it was envisioned that the funding identified would be used to bring that site into use. The intention was for the Council to achieve an asset in return for the investment. However, the plans started to fall through and the Chief Executive explained that the letter he subsequently sent to the Principal of London South East Colleges on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017 was about the funding set aside for skills.

At the same time, in June/July 2017, the Airport indicated that it was seeking to locate the Aeronautical College at site (2) (in proximity to Milking Lane Farm). The Local Authority Planning Department had a number of concerns over this site and as a result of this the Airport offered site (3) to the College. As part of this offer the Airport expected the College to secure a contribution of £1.2m from the Council for road infrastructure and access to the west of the Airport where the site was located. London South East Colleges made a submission to the GLA based on this offer. When Council Officers further investigated the contribution that had been requested it was unclear how the figure of £1.2m had been reached as the Council's estimate of the cost was significantly lower. The Chief Executive highlighted that it was worth noting that at this time proposals had not been presented to any Council Committees and no formal decisions had been taken by the Council.

The Chief Executive reported that the College was now looking to identify a new site. In November 2017, the (new) Leader of the Council had attended a meeting with the Principal of London South East College (which was also attended by the Children, Education and Families Portfolio Holder and the Chief Executive). At this meeting the possibility of exploring a loan from the Council to the College was discussed.

In response to questions from Members the Chief Executive confirmed that as far as he was aware no further meetings had taken place with the Principal of London South East Colleges. No update had been provided by the College concerning the progress of the submission to the GLA.

In respect of the loan, at a rate of 6%, which the Council had offered to the College, Members queried the intention with regard to the Outer London Business Funding given the remit of training and questioned whether the offer of a loan was in place of the funding. The Chief Executive confirmed that the loan was in place of the funding and clarified that the £3.5m identified by the Executive was for skills, training and development in the Biggin Hill area as a development centre.

The Committee explored the issues of the loan at an interest rate of 6%. The Chief Executive reported that the Leader had tasked the Director of Finance with making the terms of the loan as attractive as possible. Given the impact of the expansion of the College the Director of Finance had felt that a rate of 6% was appropriate in the circumstances. The expansion of the College had affected its finances and this raised questions about the use of taxpayer, Council funding under these circumstances.

Turning to the letter to the Principal of the College dated 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, the Chairman suggested that anyone reading the letter would naturally assume that funding of up to £3m was being offered. The Chairman suggested that the letter, the offer of a loan at 6%, and the Leader's response to a question posed at the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018, did not reflect on the Council in a positive manner. In response the Chief Executive stressed that throughout the process the Council had been supportive of the proposal for an Aeronautical College at Biggin Hill, however this support was subject to the formal decision making process of the Council. Following the delivery of the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017 letter, the College had submitted a bid to the GLA reflecting funding of £1.2m (not the £3m referenced in the letter), this indicated that the College had not expected funding of £3m from the Council. The Executive's consideration of £3m funding had been on the basis of the Council gaining a significant asset. However, events moved quickly. When the site moved to (3) Officers had concerns about the value of the £1.2m funding as the Council estimates indicated that the proposed infrastructure would cost significantly less. Since November 2017, there had been no further discussions with the College, although there had been some unconfirmed hearsay about consideration of a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> site (the 5<sup>th</sup> site being within the Business Park).

The Chairman also expressed concern that neither the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families, nor the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing were aware of the existence of the letter. The Chairman expressed serious concern that it appeared that Officers had not adequately prepared the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing for a question that had been asked at the recent meeting of Full Council. The Chairman highlighted that Members should be able to expect clear answers to questions posed at Council. In response the Chief Executive agreed to investigate how well prepared the Portfolio Holder had been for answering the question, highlighting that Officers were not responsible for the final answer given at a meeting of Full Council.

Concluding the discussion, the Chairman reiterated that the events did not reflect well on the Council. The proposal for an Aeronautical College presented a major opportunity for training in the Borough and to this end £3m funding had been set aside, yet to date nothing had been spent. The Chairman queried whether the change in Council leadership had coloured the approach to an Aeronautical College at Biggin Hill.



### Work Programme

The Committee agreed to hold a Special Meeting at the beginning of December 2018. The purpose of the meeting to consider the following issues:

1. Analysis of Education undertaken by the Director of Education
2. Scrutiny of the Education Budget

It was also suggested that as the Portfolio Holder had been unable to attend this meeting he should be asked to provide an update to the Special meeting.

### **RESOLVED: That:**

- 1. David Hullah (Secondary Parent Governor Representative) be appointed as a Co-opted Member to the Children, Education & Families Select Committee for 2018/19 with voting rights;**
- 2. Progress on matters arising from previous meetings be noted; and**
- 3. The 2018/19 work programme be agreed subject to the amendments outlined above.**

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

No questions were received.

### **17 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE**

As the Portfolio Holder was unable to attend the meeting it was agreed that he would be asked to provide an update at the Special meeting due to be held at the beginning of December.

### **18 SCRUTINY OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Education, Care and Health Services, Mr Ade Adetosoye, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Committee. Mr Adetosoye gave a brief introduction with an overview of his first 21 months in post, highlighting the following key achievement and challenges –

- The launch of the 'Roadmap to Excellent' and the Transformation Programme; this introduced the Caseload Promise. Generally the caseload of social workers had been kept below 20 however, the past three weeks had been particularly busy and caseloads had slightly increased.
- 80% of social workers were now permanent staff and the progress that had been made in this area was something to celebrate.

- As a result of additional funding that had been received it had been possible to establish a specialist Team for CSE, Missing and Gangs. In the 2016 Ofsted Inspection the Local Authority's inability to track its young people at risk in terms of CSE and gangs had been particularly criticised and this new team directly addressed this criticism.
- The outcomes of each of the 7 Monitoring Visits undertaken by Ofsted demonstrated measureable progress within the Service. The previous week the annual conversation with Ofsted had taken place.
- It was expected that Children's Services would receive its inspection from Ofsted within the next two months and preparation for the Inspection was ongoing.
- A great deal of progress had been made with the recruitment of social workers and this was something else to celebrate.
- In conclusion, the Deputy Chief Executive stated that he was proud of the way in which the Council had embraced children in care and had taken steps to celebrate the work of children in care.

Challenges included:

- The budget. LB Bromley was still below the national average and its statistical neighbours in terms of the number of children in care. This directly impacted on the budget as it was likely that the Local Authority would see further increases in the number of children taken into care.
- Early intervention. A key area was to work with schools in relation to early intervention. There were a number of options to be explored in relation to encouraging schools to do more in respect of early intervention. The possibility of locating certain early intervention services in schools should also be explored.
- More needed to be done to increase the outcomes for children in care at Key Stage 4 (in respect of achieving 5+ GCSEs). Currently 25% of pupils achieved 5+ GCSE and steps needed to be taken to increase this.
- More work needed to be done around providing apprenticeship opportunities for Bromley's children in care.

In conclusion, the Deputy Chief Executive reported that in the past year there had been 3000 referrals into Children's Social Care, 6000 visits to early intervention centres. There were currently 2000 children in need, 280 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, 310 children in care, and 63 children monitored through the Local Authority's MEGA Panel (relating to CSE, Missing and Gangs). The Deputy Chief Executive stated that he was confident that good foundations for further service improvements were in place. The progress made by the Service had been measured and validated through the seven Ofsted monitoring visits however, capacity to manage future demand would remain a key issue.

Mr Adetosoye responded to questions, making the following comments –

- The last regulatory visit by the Youth Justice Board had been positive. The Youth Offending Service was currently in the process of updating the Youth Justice Plan. A Borough-wide Knife Strategy was being developed in conjunction with the Police. Recruitment issues within the Youth Offending Service were being addressed. A further inspection of the Service was expected in two years and the service was making good progress in maintaining its current position in terms of the inspection judgement. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that if required he would provide a further update to a future meeting of the Select Committee.
- Following a successful recruitment and interview process for the Director of Education a job offer had been made and accepted. It was hoped that the new Director of Education would be in post in January 2019. The Committee extended its thanks to the current Interim Director of Education for her work and the support she had provided to the Committee.
- In relation to Bullers' Wood; a Public Enquiry of the Appeal would be conducted by the Planning Inspector in the first week of November. The Enquiry would relate to the second of the three applications and it was expected that it would take place over 4 days. The Local Authority was also currently working with the School in relation to admissions within the Pan London Agreement.
- Turning to the issue of SEND Reforms; Bromley had been one of the few local authorities to transfer to Education Care and Health Plans (ECHPs) on time. There was now a need to focus on the quality of the plans. Officers were also reviewing the capacity of the local estate to support children with more complex needs that required more expensive independent provision. There was a need to promote amongst parents the excellent schools in Bromley. There was a clear need to look at different ways of managing the budget. To this end a bid for a specialist school at Hawes Down had been submitted to the DfE in recognition of the need to increase the capacity to place children locally. The Deputy Chief Executive stressed that there were no proposals to move children from their current schools and that this was about increasing future capacity. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to circulate the description of the new SEND bid and the proposed plan to Members following the meeting.
- In relation to CAMHS; the Deputy Chief Executive stressed the need to review early intervention to reduce the flow into Tier 3 and Tier 4 of the framework. A number of options were being considered and a bid had been submitted concerning locating CAMHS clinicians in schools. The outcome of the bid would not be known until mid-November 2018. Opinions amongst Members on this proposal were divided with some Members seeing value in the proposals whilst others expressed concern about young people being deterred from accessing services provided in Schools due to the possibility of being identified. The current arrangements provided a more anonymous service that enabled parents to accompany very young children as well as providing services outside of school hours. The Deputy Chief

Executive confirmed that both Bromley Y and Oxleas had been involved in the design of the change to service provision and the Chief Executive of Oxleas was one of the signatories to the bid that had been submitted.

- Turning to the issue of the recruitment of foster carers; the Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that foster-to-adopt secured permanency for a child much earlier. Whilst it may mean that the Local Authority lost a foster carer it was a price worth paying in order to achieve permanency for a young child as the right outcome for the child was secured. Members stressed the need to retain some home grown foster carers as different skill sets were required for fostering and adoption. In response to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that he considered that the regionalisation of Adoption Services was a positive move as it pooled resources and increased choice. It would be possible to take decisions around permanency at a much earlier stage as well as increasing the capacity for recruitment and delivering economies of scale in the future.
- In relation to improving the education outcomes for children in care, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that this was a key priority for the Corporate Parenting Board and the Education Business Partnership. Work was ongoing to identify opportunities for children in care and Officers were working with Bromley College to identify any support that could be provided.
- Attention had now turned to Social Worker retention following the initial focus on recruitment. A Retention Strategy was being developed and a good retention package had been put in place. It was clear that manageable caseloads, in line with the Caseload Promise, would be key to staff retention. The work of the Council's Social Workers was also celebrated. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that he was confident that caseloads were reducing, despite the recent increase in referrals into the Service. In response to a question the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the target was to have a 95-99% permanent work force.

## **19 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18TH JULY 2018**

The minutes of the Education, Children and Families Budget and Performance Monitoring Sub Committee meeting held on 18th July 2018 were noted.

## **20 LIVING IN CARE COUNCIL VIDEO**

The Committee watched a video that had been made by the Living in Care Council entitled "Listen when I Speak". The Committee thanked the Living in Care Council for the informative video, noting that it had raised a number of questions which would feed into the Committee's Scrutiny Review in January 2019 focused on Corporate Parenting.

## **21 WITNESS SESSION: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE BUDGET**

The Committee had been provided with a comprehensive report in advance of the meeting. Included within the report was an overview of the Children's Social Care Budget and data surrounding the families accessing children's social care and the reasons for referrals into the service. In addition to this, Members had before them the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Board Neglect Strategy. Following the publication of the agenda supplementary financial information had been circulated to Members.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ade Adetosoye, Mr Bradshaw and Mr Dare to the meeting. Members of the Committee explored a number of themes and issues with the witnesses.

The Head of ECHS Finance introduced the report and highlighted that the current forecast was a £1.5m overspend in the Children's Social Care budget (after management action). The supplementary information provided to the Committee provided a further breakdown of the budget and current outturn. The Chairman highlighted that in 2016/17 there had been an injection of funding from the Executive following the Ofsted Inspection.

The Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West emphasised that Children's Social Care was a demand-led Service. The report presented to the Committee had detailed some of the reasons that Bromley children had entered care. There was a range of children accessing statutory services, often with a variety of needs. The Committee noted the national challenges around the availability and access to secure beds. The result of the inadequacy of the market to meet the high demand meant that young people often had to be placed in other, non-secure, provision with a high, and therefore costly, ratio of staff to child. The report before the Committee detailed three case studies of Bromley children looked after. Two of the three young people had been unknown to the Local Authority prior to coming into care.

The Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West also emphasised the range of packages that were offered to children with disabilities in order to support them to remain at home. Many of the young people had complex disabilities and this placed an extreme strain on parents. As a result of this parents often required additional support such as, but not limited to, respite care. The costs associated with children with disabilities entering care were high as a result of the complexity of their care needs.

The Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West reported that it was difficult to identify why there had been an increase in the numbers of children being referred recently into Bromley. The Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning informed Members that within Children's Social Care the combination of mental health issues, and drug and alcohol dependency amongst parents was known as the "toxic trio". There were a number of factors that led to children being taken into care. The Local Authority worked

with parents in an attempt to keep children within the home environment for as long as possible however, sometimes the Local Authority had to embark on care proceedings to request endorsement from the judiciary to take children into care. There were times also when a child would enter care in a crisis rather than in a planned way through the Court. Every decision for a child that was taken into care was reviewed at the weekly Placement Panel. All external placements were also reviewed at this panel which was attended by colleagues from the CCG and Education as sometimes the cost was shared. The Panel ensured the placement provider was providing value for money.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the work of social workers in any local authority was to manage risks. If mistakes were made and children placed at risk of harm a social worker could lose their license to practice. The Deputy Chief Executive reminded the Committee that the post holder of statutory Director of Children's Services was the only post in local government could receive the sanction of removal by the Minister for State.

#### Accuracy of Forecasting

The Head of ECHS Finance confirmed that forecasting was robust however, the budget for Children's Social Care remained volatile as a result of the needs-led nature of the Service which was often outside the control of the Local Authority. The Head of ECHS Finance referred to the recent court judgement concerning a Bromley child who required a secure bed. As no suitable secure placement was available it had been necessary to place the young person in a residential placement outside London with 3:1 care. As a result of this the Local Authority had incurred unplanned costs in the region of £5,000 to £6,000 per week. Costs such as these were often hard to predict and therefore hard to reflect in the budget.

The report provided to Members set out the number of children predicted to access children's social care until 2022/32 and the expected numbers in each category of placement. It was noted that realistic baseline budgets would result from robust forecasting however, it was necessary to bear in mind at all times that the budget was subject to the unknown and unplanned influences on the Service.

The Chairman noted that for the current 2018/19 financial year there was already a variance in the budget of £2.4m in Fostering and Adoption Resources resulting from a significant increase in expenditure in just one area. On the basis of this significant variance in budget the Chairman questioned the accuracy of forecasting. In response the Head of ECHS Finance reported that forecasts were based on Officers knowledge of past activity and well as their best prediction of future trends. Targets for mitigating management actions were set but if some were not delivered the budget deficit would continue. The 2019/20 budget process that had just started would be reviewing the current position. There had been a spike in children entering care that had not been predicted at the time the budget was set. There was a clearly a need to set challenging targets however, there was also a need to be realistic about the demands being made on the Service.

The Committee noted that Officers budgeted to actuals although this could be problematic when forecasting future demands. Current forecasting enabled growth to be built into the budget using information from the service, although this was set at a point in time each year. Challenges remained and the expectation was that the service mitigated this as far as possible.

#### Benchmarking with other Local Authorities

The report to the Committee set out details of benchmarking against other Local Authorities. The Head of ECHS Finance urged the Committee to approach the statistics with some caution as differing measurements could lead to different interpretations. The conclusions drawn from the statistics could differ depending on the measurement being considered. With reference to the unit cost for Children's Social Care at Redbridge, the Head of ECHS Finance provided some context and explained that whilst Redbridge did spend less than Bromley overall they had approximately 50% more children in need and as such the averages were skewed. There was undoubtedly more work to do in terms of unit costs and further investigation was required.

#### Learning from Best Practice in other Local Authorities in reducing the Unit Cost

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that further work around reducing the unit cost of placements was a key priority. There was a need to reduce reliance on placements outside of London as the cost of this type of placement was unregulated. There was a clear requirement to manage the market differently and place more children within London as the Pan London Agreement set a cap on the cost of placements.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that there would undoubtedly be growth in the Service but that it was important to manage the growth.

Members of the Committee expressed scepticism around the fact that there appeared to be one Local Authority whose unit cost was £832. It was suggested that this cost was unlikely given the average unit cost was much greater at £11,304. It was agreed that the data would need to be further investigated. Clearly if a local authority had been able to deliver a service that was compliant with regulatory standards for such a low unit cost there were lessons that could be learnt

#### Developing new ways of working and the future use of Artificial Intelligence

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman concerning whether there was any change of practice that would result in teenagers who enter the care system late being identified at an earlier stage, the Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West emphasised that one of the key principals was to leave children in their home for as long as possible. Social Workers tried to support parents as much as possible through early intervention services and support

packages that were put in place. However, ultimately when parents were unable to cope their children enter the care system.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that funding had been secured to establish and deliver a Diversion Programme. Through this programme a team of two social workers would provide support.

In response to a question from a Member the Head of ECHS Finance reported that the Local Authority had received the funding from the CCG detailed in the report. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that discussions with the CCG around additional funding were ongoing. The relationship with the CCG had improved compared to the position 3 or 4 years ago and £1m in funding for placements had been received from the CCG. The position was under review and further discussions would take place with the CCG.

A Member noted that there was an increasing number of children entering care with a similar increase in the complexity of the children entering care because of increasing medical need. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that he was confident if there was a requirement to approach the CCG for additional funding based on the need profile constructive discussions would take place.

In response to a question concerning the 'Staying Put' initiative, the Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged that this was a cost effective way of keeping young people between the ages of 16 and 25 in a stable placement with foster carers they knew. Bromley was exceeding its target for Staying Put and was fulling utilising the available funding.

In relation to alternative options for the placement of children, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that that there was a Commissioning Plan in place and this set out the delivery of mitigation and savings. One of the features of the Commissioning Plan was a review of High Needs Placements. In addition to this consideration was being given to new initiatives that would manage the risks in a slightly different way, especially the risks around leaving children at home when parents exhibited drug and alcohol dependency. Managing such risks in a different way would impact on the budget position.

A Member expressed concerns around proposals that were under consideration to further involve schools in early intervention work. It was suggested that the principal remit of schools was to education young people. The Member noted that currently a great deal of social care based support was provided to families with primary aged children. Once the children transitioned to secondary school the interventions significantly reduced or stopped and families were left unsupported. It was suggested that Children and Family Centres should focus more support on children who were approaching or going through puberty. It was noted that Children and Family Centres did not currently open during the weekend and this was a time when teenagers could access support if necessary. The Member suggested that this gap needed to be addressed. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that Children and Family Centres did run sessions on issues such



as gangs and managing challenging behaviour, and these sessions were targeted at families with teenaged children. It was acknowledged that whilst effective programmes were in place there was always more that could be done and Officers would take on board the concerns that had been raised.

#### Secure Beds

The Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West explained that there were two types of secure placement: a secure placement through the criminal justice route which was court placed; and welfare secure. In the case of welfare secure the Local Authority could place a child in a secure bed for their own safety, although this decision had to be endorsed by the court within 72 hours. Welfare secure placements were in a secure house that was well staffed and often in a remote location. The Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West explained that the placement could often be therapeutic however, the Court would only endorse a placement of 12 weeks. This was in reality very little time to influence and turn around a challenging pattern of behaviour. The Committee noted that the mix of children within a secure placement had to be carefully managed. As a result of this all applications went to a central database where they were carefully reviewed. There were often around 30 applications for a single secure bed.

#### Recruitment of Social Workers

Members noted that the ambition of the Deputy Chief Executive was to reach the target of 90% permanent staff. The intention was to maintain the current 80% permanent staff and increase from this level. A stable, permanent work force would reduce financial pressure and would also provide much needed stability to the children in the care of the Local Authority.

In response to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the Local Authority recruited Social Work Assistants to the Service. However, legally Social Work Assistants were prevented from undertaking Child Protection cases and signing off on assessments.

#### Recruitment of Foster Carers

The Committee noted that the recruitment of foster carers was a key priority for the Service. Foster Carer recruitment had significantly increased from a very low base of 7 and Bromley now had 29 foster carers. Progress was on the right trajectory although there was always more that could be done.

Members noted that the use of Independent Fostering Agencies was far more costly than in-house foster carers. By recruiting more in-house foster carers costs could be significantly reduced.

#### Net Migration and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman, the Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West reported that more families had entered the Borough

than had left the Borough. The Committee noted that where children were subject to a Child Protection Plan or were considered to be 'Children in Need' there was a statutory obligation to notify the new host Local Authority. If a Care Order was in place the responsibility for the child would remain with the family's previous host Local Authority.

The Committee noted that one of the key issues facing the Local Authority was the inadequacy of the funding for unaccompanied asylum seeking children received from Central Government. Currently the funding that was provided did not even cover the placement costs let alone the costs of the social worker and other costs associated with a child in care. Members also noted that no grant funding was provided for the first 25 unaccompanied asylum seeking children placed in the Borough. These costs had to be met from the already stretched local authority budget. In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that if the child's application for asylum was successful and once the necessary paperwork was in place the grant would be received until the young person reached the age of 25. If the application was unsuccessful and the child was to be repatriated the grant would cease.

A Member recalled that there had once been a proposal to encourage families who had migrated to the United Kingdom and subsequently settled in Bromley to foster unaccompanied asylum seeking children. No further updates on this proposal had been received and it was suggested that this should once again be investigated.

### Commissioning Process

In response to a question the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the Commissioning Plan was a three to four year plan which was monitored by a departmental delivery board. Key actions and the processes in place were reviewed on a line by line basis. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that he was confident that the plan would support the delivery of key savings across the Service. Some progress had already been made in delivering savings against the injection of funds into the Service.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Chief Executive, the Head of ECHS Finance and the Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning West for their input into the review. It was noted that once the report had been drafted and recommendations agreed the report would be presented to Full Council for consideration.

The Meeting ended at 10.00 pm

Chairman

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

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 12 December 2018

### **Present:**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Chairman)  
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Marina Ahmad, Kathy Bance MBE,  
Yvonne Bear, Judi Ellis, Chris Pierce, Will Rowlands and  
Stephen Wells

Reverend Roger Bristow and Joan McConnell  
Emmanuel Arbenser, Michelle Fribbens and David Hullah

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Nicky Dykes, Children, Education & Families Executive  
Assistant  
Councillor Peter Fortune, Children, Education & Families Portfolio  
Holder

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

Apologies were received from Angela Leeves (Early Years Representative).

#### **23 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS REPORT CSD18164**

The Committee considered a report seeking confirmation of the Primary Parent Governor Representative on the Committee.

**RESOLVED: That Michelle Fribbens (Primary Parent Governor Representative) be appointed as a Co-opted Member to the Children, Education & Families Select Committee for 2018/19 with voting rights;**

#### **24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Neil Reddin declared a pecuniary interest in Minute 35 (Proposed Contract Extension - Sen Transport and Non-Sen Transport) in respect of a client. Cllr Reddin left the meeting for the duration of the item.

#### **25 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2018 were agreed, and signed as a correct record.

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

No questions were received.

**27 MATTERS ARISING, UPDATE ON PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS, AND WORK PROGRAMME REPORT CSD18180**

Members considered a report dealing with the Committee's business management. The Committee requested an update on the Youth Offending Service at its January meeting and an update on St Olaves at its March meeting.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- 1. Progress on matters arising from previous meetings be noted; and**
- 2. The 2018/19 work programme be agreed.**

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

There were no questions.

**29 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families, Cllr Peter Fortune, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Committee. The Portfolio Holder gave a brief introduction highlighting the following issues –

- The temporary site for Bullers' Wood School for Boys had opened in September and the boys had settled in well. A Public Enquiry to determine the second planning application had taken place and the outcome of the Enquiry was expected by 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- A new Director of Education had been appointed and would start in January 2019. The Portfolio Holder thanked the Interim Director of Education, Gillian Palmer, for her exceptional work over the past year.
- A meeting had taken place with the Chairman of the Spring Partnership MAT. Any ongoing work would be fed back to the Committee.
- The Portfolio Holder had attended the London Youth Games where Bromley had retained its title. The Portfolio Holder encouraged Members of the Committee to attend any future Games if possible.
- Meetings had been held with Primary and Secondary Head Teachers to discuss ongoing funding issues. The Portfolio Holder stressed the need for the Local Authority to work collaboratively with schools in order to lobby where necessary.

- The Portfolio Holder had been in touch with the Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Trust and the Regional Schools Commissioner to ask that the Local Authority be kept updated in relation to ongoing investigations. The Portfolio Holder reported that the DfE had appointed external trustees to monitor the Trust.
- Since the last meeting the Portfolio Holder had visited a number of schools.
- The Corporate Parenting Fun Day had been a success and the young people had really valued the attendance and participation by Members.
- During the Practice Week that had been held the Portfolio Holder had spent a day with the Court Team seeing the valuable work that the Team did.
- Social Worker recruitment was going well and the positive messages coming from the Local Authority were having an impact.
- The Trailblazer funding had been secured.
- During November, Ofsted had come in for an unannounced three week inspection of Children's Services. The quality assurance process was currently underway and until this was complete the final outcome of the inspection would not be known. However, during the feedback session the Inspectors reported that they had found no evidence of inadequate practice. In addition to this the inspectors recognised that social workers knew the children well. Recognising that the improvements that had been delivered within Children's Services were the result of hard work and improvement across the Council, the Portfolio Holder thanked all Members and staff for their hard work and support.

Cllr Fortune then responded to questions, making the following comments –

- The Local Authority had submitted an application to the Secretary of State for Education for a disapplication request for the transfer of £1m from the Schools Block of the DSG to the high Needs Block. It had been important to explain to Head Teachers why the transfer of funds was necessary and moving forward there was an acknowledgement that the Local Authority needed to be transparent about the process. Nationally there were concerns around High Needs Funding. The disapplication request for 2018/19 had been approved by the Secretary of State. The imbalance of funding had occurred a few years before when funds were transferred from the High Needs Block to the Schools Block, this transfer had then been erroneously set in stone when the DfE had undertaken a rebalancing of budgets. The disapplication request would have no impact on the proposed SEN facility in the Borough as the provision sat separately from the funding.
- Feedback from parents clearly indicated that there was a demand for local provision. There was no intention to move children that had been placed in out of borough provision but children entering the system would be placed in the local provision where appropriate. At the same time the Glebe Secondary School had been asked to shift its focus so that they were the local school of choice for children with ASD. Whilst

- Glebe was on the Borough boundary, Officers did not consider that there would be any overlap with the new ASD Free School in Croydon.
- The bid for the new specialist provision had been informed by evidence of need. During a comprehensive analysis the needs of all the children in the cohort had been reviewed. Officers were confident that that there was a local need and that children would want to be placed in the new provision.
  - The SEND4Change report had highlighted that in Bromley there were significantly more children in the Independent Sector than the national average and this was skewing how funding in the High Needs Block was spent.
  - The Portfolio Holder had visited Biggin Hill Airport over half term to see a programme that was being run. There was no further update on the Aeronautical College at Biggin Hill and the Portfolio Holder understood that a different site was under consideration.
  - As schools moved to academy status there was no requirement to follow the RE Syllabus set by the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). The Portfolio Holder noted that Members were currently committed to SACRE and he could not see that changing any time soon.
  - A date in March had been agreed for the Pupil Place Planning Working Group. There was a recognition that there was a need to involve the public in pupil place planning.
  - The Portfolio Holder was reminded that he was expected at meetings of the Education Budget and Performance Monitoring Sub-committee.

### **30 SHORT ITEM: PRESENTATION BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION CONCERNING 2018 EDUCATION OUTCOMES**

The Committee received a presentation from the Interim Director of Education concerning the 2018 education outcomes across Bromley. The presentation is attached at **Appendix A**.

In response to questions the Director of Education confirmed that the Local Authority was working with schools to reduce the disadvantaged gap. Whilst there was a correlation between lack of take up in 2 year old funding within disadvantaged groups and progress later in school, there were a number of reasons why parents did not take up the offer for 2 year old funding (which unlike funding for year olds was not a universal offer). Some parents believed that 2 years old was too young, for some parents there were more complex reasons, whilst some parents were simply not aware of what was on offer. The Department was working with Children and Family Centres to support parents to access the services for which they were eligible and Officers were identifying ways in which this group could be targeted.

The issue of permanent exclusions had been a sharp focus for the Local Authority over the last year. The Department had been challenging schools over exclusions and working with them to identify other forms of redress.

There was also a need for the Local Authority to work on a more diverse offer of alternative provision.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Education for her presentation and for all the advice she had provided to the Committee over the year.

### **31 SUBSTANTIVE ITEM: SCRUTINY OF THE EDUCATION BUDGET**

The Committee had been provided with a comprehensive report in advance of the meeting. Included within the report was the background to the budget, the current 2018/19 forecast, information about population growth, and information around the accuracy of school place planning forecasting.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ade Adetosoye, Ms Gillian Palmer, Mr David Bradshaw and Mr Rob Bollen to the meeting. Members of the Committee explored a number of themes and issues with the witnesses.

The Head of ECHS Finance introduced the report highlighting that the overspends within the budget were mainly around Transport. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) remained an issue, especially in the High Needs Block, however in the main Bromley remained low cost. Historically Bromley had been poorly funded and as a result of this it had been necessary to identify ways to efficiently deliver services.

In terms of pupil projections, the Head of Strategic Place Planning reported that whilst there had been a slight dip in primary numbers, a trend evidenced across London, the size of the pupil population would continue to grow. The real challenge for the Local Authority would be around migration. This was one of the unknowns, due to external factors such as Brexit, and would remain a risk for the Local Authority.

The Chairman noted with interest that the growth in the number of secondary pupils in Bromley was significantly lower than other London Boroughs.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (ECHS) highlighted to the Committee that the budget was predicated on the need for the Local Authority to deliver its statutory duties. These statutory duties were the minimum services that the Local Authority was required to deliver.

#### SEN Transport

The Director of Education explained that the request to extend the existing contract would enable a root and branch review of the current SEN Transport provision. Over the past few years Members of the Committee had supported a continued drive to support greater independent travel and transport. Supporting independent travel and transport would continue to be a theme as the new contract was being developed. One key risk with the new contract that had already been identified was that of increasing fuel costs. Over the past few years whilst fuel costs had increased Officers had worked hard to minimise the impact on the cost of the contract. As the new contract was

tendered there would need to be an awareness of the possible impact of increased fuel costs on the cost of the contract.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of ensuring that as costs increased each bus was utilised to the maximum and this would necessitate further consideration of how to combine Adult Passenger Transport and Children's Passenger Transport.

In response to a question concerning the need to ensure that the staff on the buses were properly trained, the Director of Education confirmed that the need for adequate training was stipulated in the contract. Expectations were clear and DBS checks for staff were mandatory.

A Co-opted Member queried whether there had been a survey of parents as transport was a key issue and it was important that the needs of the child were taken into account. The Director of Education emphasised that it was recognised that travel was an important part of the children's school experience and the quality of that experience. The Local Authority regularly liaised with Bromley Parent Voice. There would be full consultation with parents at the point that the Local Authority was making a proposal for the new contract. It was noted that the Local Authority had a statutory obligation to get children to school on time and sometimes it was necessary to make minor alterations to routes in order to maximise use of the contract framework.

The Chairman reported that he had been given the opportunity to undertake a journey in one of the buses. It was suggested that any Member who wished to experience a journey on one of the buses should contact the Committee Clerk who could make the necessary arrangements.

#### Statutory Assessments for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

The Director of Education explained to the Committee that assessment processes began in schools. One of the duties placed on schools was to ensure that they put in place provision that met the needs of the child. For most children the provision put in place by the School worked and the children made expected progress. For a minority of children further support was required and the schools needed to call upon the additional expertise of the Local Authority. At this stage a statutory assessment would take place.

In Bromley it was recognised that there were issues around the quality of Education Care and Health Plans (ECHPs) that had been produced. The statutory timescales that were imposed had been met but at the expense of quality. The 20 week timescale was a statutory timescale established in the SEN Code of Practice. The role of the proposed Case Work Manager was twofold: (1) to quality assure the plans and ensure that they were delivered in good time; and (2) secure compliance. This year there had been a focus on delivering plans that would help the child to thrive, make progress and prepare for their adult life. Through the creation of the Case Work Manager



role the Local Authority was seeking to put in place improved mechanisms for supervision and managing caseloads.

The Director of Education explained that the dedicated Lawyer was an important role as this should help to reduce the number of Tribunal cases conceded by the Local Authority as a result of the failure to follow procedures. Informed legal advice at an early stage of the process would ensure that policies were being followed and provide for a good service from the outset of the process. An internal lawyer would be in a position to identify early on if essential parts of the process had been missed.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director (ECHS) emphasised that his designation of Statutory Director of Children's Services afforded the discretion to exceed statutory timescales in order to secure good quality plans. This would mean that performance timescales were not met but it was felt that this was a price worth paying for good quality plans that benefitted children.

In response to a question concerning the prevalence of Speech and Language as a primary need for 41% of children in Bromley who had an ECHP, the Director of Education reported that it was recognised that a deep dive into this issue was required and colleagues in Public Health had been asked to review this issue in terms of the issue being identified by Health Visitors at developmental checks for two year olds and educational assessments of children at age 5. The Committee requested that it be provided with further information on this issue.

#### Pressures within the DSG High Needs Block

A Member noted that it appeared that there was a growing gap in high needs funding which was currently being address through the use of reserves. The problem with this situation was that reserves were finite and would eventually run out. In response the Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that securing adequate local provision would be an important step towards addressing the funding pressures. Less reliance on more expensive independent provision would have a significantly positive impact on the budget position as local provision would be far less costly than independent provision. The Director of Education also highlighted the important role of early intervention in order to identify how more children could be supported to remain in school.

Again, the Director of Education emphasised that there was no suggestion that children that had already been placed in independent provision would be moved. It was accepted that it would be wrong to do this. The proposed new provision would meet the needs of children entering the system in the future.

#### School Admissions

Members noted that the cost of processing applications for admissions to schools was just under £600,000. The Chairman suggested that it would be

useful for Members to know how much had been saved by the move to on-line admissions.

In response to a query surrounding whether there were any opportunities for commissioning out school admissions, the Director of Education reported that she was not aware of any local authority that had gone down this route due to the high risks involved. The Committee were also reminded that there were certain functions that statutorily had to be undertaken by the Local Authority and therefore could not be commissioned out.

In concluding the discussion the Chairman noted that the budget under consideration was not a big budget. In addition to this the majority of the budget was not in the gift of the Local Authority. As a result of the constraints on the controllable budget, the Chairman highlighted the importance of charging the maximum for services for which the Local Authority could charge. Members requested further information on the sold/traded services offered by the Local Authority.

**32 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.

**33 PRE DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Committee considered the following exempt reports where the Executive was recommended to take a decision:

**A AUTHORISATION FOR EXEMPTION TO CONTINUE THE CONTRACT FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Committee provided comments for the Executive concerning authorisation for exemption to continue the contract for community wellbeing services for children and young people.

**B PROPOSED CONTRACT EXTENSION - SEN TRANSPORT AND NON-SEN TRANSPORT  
Report ED18089**

The Committee considered the report and supported the recommendations.

The Meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Chairman

Report No.  
CSD19002

London Borough of Bromley

## PART ONE - PUBLIC

---

**Decision Maker:**      **Education, Children and Families Select Committee**

**Date:**                      **29 January 2019**

**Decision Type:**      Non-Urgent                      Non-Executive                      Non-Key

**Title:**                      **MATTERS ARISING & WORK PROGRAMME**

**Contact Officer:**      Philippa Gibbs, Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 0208 313 4508      E-mail: Philippa.Gibbs@bromley.gov.uk

**Chief Officer:**              Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services

**Ward:**                      (All Wards);

---

1.    Reason for report

This report deals with the Committee's business management including:

- Monitoring progress against actions arising from previous meetings;
- Developing the 2018/19 Forward Work Programme; and

---

2.    **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That the Select Committee reviews and comments on:**

1. **Progress on matters arising from previous meetings; and**
2. **The 2018/19 work programme, indicating any changes or particular issues that it wishes to scrutinise for the year ahead.**

## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: None
- 

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council
- 

## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Services
  4. Total current budget for this head: £350,650
  5. Source of funding: 2018/19 Revenue Budget
- 

## Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 8 posts (6.87fte)
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
- 

## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable: This report does not involve an Executive decision.
- 

## Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
- 

## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): This report is intended primarily for the benefit of Committee Members.
- 

## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Impact on Vulnerable People and Children/Policy/Financial/Legal/Personnel/Procurement
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Minutes of previous meetings

### 3. COMMENTARY

#### Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

- 3.1. **Appendix 1** provides a progress update on requests made by the Committee at previous meetings. This list is checked after each meeting so that any outstanding issues can be addressed at an early stage and timely progress made.

#### Work Programme

- 3.2 Each PDS Committee determines its own work programme, balancing the roles of (i) pre-decision scrutiny and holding the Executive to account, (ii) policy development and review and (iii) external scrutiny. E&R PDS Committee has the additional role of providing a lead on scrutiny issues and co-ordinating PDS work.
- 3.3 PDS Committees need to prioritise their key issues. The work programme also needs to allow room for items that arise through the year, including Member requests, call-ins and referrals from other Committees. Committees need to ensure that their workloads are realistic and balanced, allowing sufficient time for important issues to be properly scrutinised. Members also need to consider the most appropriate means to pursue each issue – the current overview and scrutiny arrangements offer a variety of approaches, whether through a report to a meeting, a time-limited working group review, a presentation, a select committee style meeting focused on a single key issue, or another method.
- 3.4 **Appendix 2** sets out the Education, Children and Families Select Committee Work Programme for 2018/19. Committee is invited to comment on the proposed schedule and suggest any changes it considers appropriate.
- 3.5 Other reports will be added to the 2018/19 Work Programme as items arise.
- 3.6 **Appendix 3** sets out the Programme of Visits for the Spring Term.

**Appendix 1**

<b>Minute Number/Title/Date</b>	<b>Action/PDS Request</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>
29 Portfolio Holder Update (12 <sup>th</sup> December 2018)	That a list of MATs across the Borough and the Schools within them be circulated to the Committee.		Director of Education	
31 Scrutiny of the Education Budget (12 <sup>th</sup> December 2018)	That more information concerning the prevalence of Speech and Language as a primary need for 41% of children in Bromley who have an ECHP be provided to the Committee.		Director of Education	
31 Scrutiny of the Education Budget (12 <sup>th</sup> December 2018)	That further information on the sold services provided by the Department be circulated to the Committee		Head of ECHS Finance	
31 Scrutiny of the Education Budget (12 <sup>th</sup> December 2018)	That the savings made by the move to on-line admissions be circulated to the Committee		Head of ECHS Finance	

## Education, Children &amp; Families Work Programme 2018/19

<b>Education, Children &amp; Families Select Committee</b>		<b>29 January 2019</b>
<b>Item</b>		<b>Status</b>
Scrutiny of the Director of Children's Social Care		
References from the Education, Children & Families Budget & Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee		Standing Item
YOS Update		Short Item
The impact of Benefit changes on children and Families		Substantive Item
<b>Education, Children &amp; Families Select Committee</b>		<b>13 March 2019</b>
<b>Item</b>		<b>Status</b>
Annual Scrutiny Report 2018/19	Annual Report	
Scrutiny of the Director of Education		
St Olaves Update		Short Item
Corporate Parenting: The Role of the Elected Member		Short Item
Life Long Learning in a rapidly changing world of work		Substantive Item
<b>SACRE</b>		<b>27 March 2018</b>
<b>Education, Children &amp; Families Budget &amp; Performance Monitoring Sub-Committee</b>		<b>10 April 2019</b>
<b>Item</b>		<b>Status</b>
Capital Programme - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter		PH Decision
Budget Monitoring 2018/19		PH Decision
Education Outcomes		PDS Item
Recommendations made by the ECF Select Committee	See minutes of ECFSC 04.07.18	Standing Item

**PROGRAMME OF VISITS**  
**Council Members' Visits – Spring Term 2019**

Establishment Name		Date	Time
1.	Churchfields Primary School Churchfields Road, Beckenham, BR3 4QY	31.01.19 Thursday	09:30- 11:00
2.	Bright Horizons Shortlands Day Nursery and Pre-School 84 Martins Road, Bromley, BR2 0EF	14.02.19 Thursday	09:30- 10:30
3. 3BP	Langley Park School for Boys Hawksbrook Lane, South Eden Park Road, Beckenham, BR3	14.03.19 Thursday	09:30- 11:30
4.	Holy Innocents Catholic Primary School Mitchell Road, Orpington, BR6 9JT	28.03.19 Thursday	09:30- 11:30



## **EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING SUB-COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 30 October 2018

### **Present:**

Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Chairman)  
Councillor Will Rowlands (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Judi Ellis and Stephen Wells  
Emmanuel Arbenser

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Nicky Dykes

### **19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Ahmad and Cllr Bance attended as substitute.

The Portfolio Holder also submitted apologies. The Committee noted that it was regrettable that the Portfolio was not in attendance but noted that the Executive Assistant was in attendance.

*(Following the meeting it transpired, from discussions between the Chairman and Portfolio Holder, that there had been a misunderstanding regarding the need for the Portfolio Holder to attend the sub-committee's meetings.)*

### **20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

There were no additional declarations of interest.

### **21 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

There were no questions.

### **22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2018 AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018, excluding exempt information, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

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

There were no questions.

**24 PRE DECISION SCRUTINY OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISIONS**

**a BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19  
Report ED18073**

The Sub-Committee considered the budget monitoring position for 2018/19 based on activity up to the end of September 2018. The position reflected in the report was an overspend of £2,030k. This position assumed that further management action would be taken throughout the year to maintain the current position.

An element of the Education Budget was classed as Schools' Budget and was funded by the dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Grant conditions required that any over or under spend be carried forward to the next financial year. The Schools budget was predicted to overspend by £354k in year. This would be deducted from the £1,180k carried forward from 2017/18. £188k of the brought forward balance had been allocated to support the central DSG services in year. In addition £166k of the carry forward figure had been set aside for a clawback of Early Years funding. This gave an estimated DSG balance at the end of the financial year of £472k. The High Needs element of the DSG received additional funding of £1m in 2018/19 from Council resources and the overspend included this contribution.

The Children's Social Care division was overspending by in excess of £1,996k (net of management action of £700k). For the budget in 2018/19 growth of £2,206k was given. This was partially offset by agreed 2018/19 management actions of £1,088k, leaving a net budget increase of £1,118k. The management actions had not all been found in year (about £500k remained) and this had contributed to the overspend position. Placements for children continued to be a pressure area. The overspend before management action stood at £3,085k. The number of placements had increased above budgeted levels, particularly in Residential homes, independent fostering arrangements and special guardianship arrangements. This was in part due to the increase in the number of children reaching the threshold for secure placements and no secure placements being available. Another risk area for placements was the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children cohort. Bromley were experiencing higher levels of children entering the Borough. Whilst there was grant available, it did not cover the costs of the young people being looked after. There was also a small overspend predicted on staffing across the division of £75k (excluding BYSP and EIFS). This was being monitored closely and it was hoped that further strides would be made to move away from agency staff social workers during the year.

The Chairman noted that in the previous day's budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer had allocated further funding for Children's Social Care. It was expected that this would result in an additional £2.2m funding for the Local Authority. Capital funding for Schools had also been announced which equated to an additional £10k for each primary school and an additional £50k for each secondary school. It was noted that the Comprehensive Spending Review was still to come and this was likely to affect the Local Authority's funding.

In response to a question the Head of ECHS Finance confirmed that if more children that were high cost came through Children's Social Care it was likely that there would be a rise in the figures for the next budget monitoring report. The Service currently did not budget for high-cost placements as these were hard to predict however this would be reviewed as part of the upcoming budget setting process.

The Head of ECHS Finance confirmed that colleagues in Bromley CCG and Bromley Healthcare were currently reviewing the redesign of the Speech and Language Service and this would be reflected in the 2019/20 budget. Furthermore the report concerning the Children's Commissioning Plan for Sufficiency and Placements would be reconsidered by the Commissioning Board in due course.

The Chairman noted that the Education, Children and Families Select Committee had undertaken a detailed review of the Children's Social Care Budget at its last meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018. The Select Committee was due to review the Education Budget at a Special Meeting to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

A Member raised concerns surrounding the fact that it appeared that the Local Authority did not fully cover the costs to schools when more challenging pupils were placed in mainstream provision. The Member stressed that this needed to be reviewed and a long-term approach adopted as it was more cost-effective to place pupils in mainstream schools rather than relying on specialist provision. It was suggested that if the full costs to the school was provided by the Local Authority it was more likely that the schools would be willing to take the children but under the current arrangements schools were having to take funding from other pupils in order to adequately support the more challenging pupils. It was agreed that the Head of ECHS Finance would circulate the figures concerning the number of children that schools had turned down based on economic viability as well as details of the per pupil funding allocation in mainstream schools.

*Action Point 1: That the Head of ECHS Finance circulate the figures concerning the number of children that schools had turned down based on economic viability as well as details of the per pupil funding allocation in mainstream schools.*

*30 October 2018*

A Member queried why children that were in receipt of SEN Transport were required to complete a detailed assessment form every year. It was suggested that the assessment may form part of the statutory review of the plan but as the officers did not have detailed knowledge of the assessment process further information would be provided following the meeting.

*Action Point 2: that Officers confirm why there is a requirement for the parents of children in receipt of SEN Transport to complete an assessment form every year.*

Finally, in response to a question, the Head of ECHS Finance agreed to ask the Director of Education to provide further information concerning the number of service redesign exercises being undertaken as part of the SEND Review.

*Action Point 3: That the Director of Education provide further information concerning the number of service redesign exercises being undertaken as part of the SEND Review.*

**RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note that the latest projected overspend of £2,030,000 is forecast on the controllable budget, based on information as at September 2018.**

**b DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS  
SERVICES: EXTENSION OF CONTRACT**

The Sub-Committee considered a report seeking authorisation to apply the formal extension option to the contract with Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid for the delivery of a range of support services to women and girls at risk of, or who had suffered, domestic violence, at an estimated cost of £179k, subject to confirmation of the supporting grant. The Contract commenced in June 2017 at an annual value of £179k. The contract was due to end in March 2019 and had a formal one year extension option.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to monitor the level of domestic abuse in their communities and establish partnerships, in order to reduce the problem as well as work together with other agencies to highlight the issue and coordinate a response. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) came into effect on 13 April 2011. They were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). The Safer Bromley Partnership had the responsibility for establishing domestic homicide reviews within Bromley.

VAWG services were commissioned and approved by the Executive on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016, to deliver an Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocate (IDSVA) service, Community Domestic Abuse Projects and a Perpetrator Program. These services were delivered through a single contract

of two years (2017/18 to 2018/19), with an option to extend for one more year (2019/20). These services were funded by MOPAC as part of the London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF). The LCPF also funded projects across Community Safety. In Bromley there were 13 victims per 10,000 of the local population in terms of recorded domestic offences from September 2016 to September 2017. This equated to 4426. There had been an increasing prevalence of incidents in Bromley.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Head of Early Intervention and Family Support confirmed that an announcement about MOPAC Funding was expected in the next month however it was likely that any funding would be for two years.

It was noted that the increase in the number of referrals for domestic violence was concerning, especially in light of the fact that it was acknowledged that most victims of domestic violence did not report the first 30 instances of violence. The Head of Early Intervention and Family Support confirmed that Early Intervention services were used to support families and provide an opportunity to refer instances of domestic violence. It was hoped that in the long run this would reduce the burden on the contract.

A Member suggested that affected parties needed to be encouraged to pursue issues through the Court and that when the contract was re-tendered KPIs around encouraging individuals to approach the Police at an earlier stage should be included. Whilst acknowledging the points that were being made the Head of Early Intervention and Family Support highlighted that the current emphasis was on making victims feel safe however, when the tender documentation was being drawn up the KPIs would be reviewed. Members noted that as the market was robust they were hopeful that there would be a good response to the tendering exercise.

Members requested that the revised VAWG Strategy was presented to the Sub-Committee when it was available.

*Action Point 4: that the revised VAWG Strategy was presented to the Sub-Committee when it was available.*

**RESOLVED: The Portfolio Holder be recommended to:**

- 1) Approve a twelve month extension commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 at a cost of £179,000 with a total contract value of £516,000, subject to confirmation of the supporting grant.**
- 2) Note that a Gate 1 report will be drafted in the first quarter of 2019 outlining the future long term approach of this contract.**

**25                   BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

The Independent Chairman of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board had been unable to attend the meeting due to a recent bereavement. It was agreed that the item would be postponed to the next meeting and the Sub-Committee extended its condolences to the Independent Chairman of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board.

**26                   UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**

The Director of Children's Social Care reported that just over 80% of staff within Children's Social Care were now permanent.

30 Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) had recently joined the Service. There had been an intensive induction period and the NQSWs had joined their teams within the last two weeks. Handovers were currently taking place as some interim staff were being replaced by NQSWs but this required careful management as NQSWs were on protected caseloads.

In January 2019 there would be a further drive to encourage interim staff to convert to permanent. Ofsted, through both the Monitoring Visits and the Annual Conversation, had indicated that they were impressed with the progress that had been made in terms of recruiting permanent staff. The ambition was to have 90% permanent staff.

In response to a question concerning the number of interim staff in a senior position, the Director of Children's Social Care highlighted that she was interim. In addition to this there were two interim Heads of Service but the remaining 6 Heads of Service were all permanent; all Group Managers are permanent and the majority of Team Managers therefore the interim roles in her service were mainly social work roles. Bromley had developed a Manager Accreditation Programme for front line managers in order to encourage retention.

The Director of Children's Social Care also reported that Bromley was seeking to develop a Social Work Academy to support staff development. Heads of Service would lead faculties and staff would be able to train to be a developer for students. It was felt that this would be a cost effective way to encourage staff recruitment and retention and grow internal talent. In order to encourage staff to stay at Bromley social workers were also offered work shadowing opportunities as well as being able to transfer between services if there were appropriate opportunities available. The view was taken that Bromley would rather not lose good social workers therefore if a social worker had indicated that they were seeking a new opportunity, where possible these opportunities were provided within Bromley.

In response to a matter being raised in relation to social worker retention, the

Director of Children's Social Care reported that one issue commonly cited as a reason for social workers leaving Bromley was the fabric of the building. It was noted that this issue had been raised and discussed at the recent meeting of the Children's Service Improvement Governance Board. In the Breakout Room staff were provided with access to up to date reference material in the form of books and computers. Staff were also offered 'no quit' interviews either face-to-face or they were given the opportunity to provide feedback anonymously. In conclusion, a great deal of effort was being put in to recruiting and retaining a permanent work force within Children's Social Care.

**27                    VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Report ED18074**

The Sub-Committee considered the Bromley Virtual School Annual Report 2017/18. Local authorities had a duty under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. This included a particular duty to promote the child's educational achievement, wherever they lived or were educated. The Authority must therefore give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children, including children who had been placed for adoption until the court made the adoption order giving parental responsibility to the adoptive parents. Every local authority was required to ensure that a Virtual School Head Teacher was in place, giving that officer responsibility for arrangements which ensured that looked after children had access to a suitable range of high quality education placement options and that there were robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children in its care. Reporting on the progress, performance and development of the Virtual School was a key activity and the Annual Report of the Virtual School Head Teacher was a requirement of Ofsted during an inspection.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Virtual School Head Teacher reported that she had very limited power to require Academies to accept children looked after, and any action that could be taken would need to be through the Secretary of State. Placements in Kent were a particularly challenging and Officers were awaiting the outcome of a court case relating to Lewisham concerning placements in Kent.

In response to a question concerning the retention of pupil premium plus funding, the Virtual School Head Teacher confirmed that she did have an element of discretion to retain some funding however she felt that it was her job to direct as much of the funding as possible into schools.

Turning to the issue of apprenticeships, the Virtual School Head Teacher stated that she felt that the Local Authority should be doing more in terms of offering opportunities to its Children Looked After. More also needed to be done to encourage children looked after to submit applications for the positions that were available. The working relationship with London South East Colleges was positive although many children looked after preferred a work based setting rather than an academic setting.

*30 October 2018*

Training and support for applying for jobs was being addressed on a number of levels. The Leaving Care Team undertook specific pieces of work around writing CVs, using The Hub as a base, and providing allowances for an interview suit if required.

The Sub-Committee noted that Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children generally performed well educationally and were often very aspirational. The young people were usually encouraged to access the English as a Second Language course within two weeks. The Sub-Committee requested that Members be provided with a report on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, including their country of origin, ages, how the Local Authority helped them, and where they were placed.

*Action Point 5: That Members of the Sub-Committee be provided with a report on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children following the meeting.*

In response to a question the Virtual School Head Teacher explained the background to Attachment Theory and confirmed that she would be working with schools to help them better understand the effect that disruption, trauma, and neglect could have on children's abilities to form attachments with adults and support young people experiencing issues with attachment.

The Virtual School Head Teacher confirmed that there were no children looked after in elective home education.

**RESOLVED: That the Virtual School Annual Report 2017/18 be noted.**

## **28            ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Report ED18083**

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the activity of the adoption service which fulfilled obligations in the Adoption National Minimum Standards (2011) and Adoption Service Statutory Guidance (2011) to report to the executive side of the Local Authority. The report included performance and developments in Bromley's delivery of adoption services; how the Council was compliant with key national minimum standards and the service offered to those seeking to adopt and those affected by adoption through the provision of adoption support. The report detailed the work of Bromley Council Adoption Service from 1st April 2017 to end of March 2018.

There had been a noticeable change in the pace of improvement delivery from April 2017 to date which included increased management capacity and oversight, an established early permanency scheme and much improved timescales for children. Adoption performance had significantly improved in the last financial year, both in terms of timescales, number of children placed for adoption and adoption placement support. There were 22 looked after children placed for adoption in the year 2017/2018, compared to 8 children placed for adoption in 2016/17. The Scorecard had also improved and performance was better than the national average. Bromley had also been the first London borough to be awarded



*30 October 2018*

the 'working towards Quality Mark' in Early Permanence. Fostering-to-adopt was also becoming an established Early Permanence practice in Bromley and five such placements had been made in the past two years.

In January 2017 agreement to move forward with the London Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) had been reached and all parties involved were ambitious for adoption across London.

In opening the discussion the Chairman noted that the majority of children that had been placed for adoption were 6 years old or younger. In response the Head of Fostering and Adoption confirmed that generally the older children became the harder it was to identify suitable adoptive placements. A number of other London Boroughs did not place children above 4 years old however, Bromley considered all children for adoption and had no such bar. Nationally there were more children waiting for placements than there were approved adopters. It was hoped that more adopters could be approved so that placements could be approved more quickly.

In response to a question concerning inter-country adoption, the Head of Fostering and Adoption explained that the situation was complicated as each country had its own legislation. Bromley Adoption Service would help to direct specific adopters. However one of the first actions would be to establish why the adopters were considering inter-country adoption and see whether a suitable child could be identified nationally in the first instance. Inter-country adoption had become very difficult and as a result of this there had been a significant reduction in the number of inter-country adoptions.

Turning to the issue of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), the Head of Fostering and Adoption explained that the advantages of regionalisation were that best practice could be shared and that a number of agencies were working together under the same remit. Functions such as marketing and administration would be undertaken by the RAA centrally and this would allow social workers to focus on practice. It was anticipated that delays in placements would be reduced. The Head of Fostering and Adoption also reported that it was hoped that CORAM would be a partner to the RAA and this would bring regional expertise.

In response to a question concerning the adoption scorecard indicators for Bromley, a Member noted that the graph on page 37 of the agenda indicated that in relation to the number of days it took for children to progress through the system, Bromley was still 150 days behind the national target. In response, the Head of Fostering and Adoption emphasised that the scorecard was a three year average and Bromley's average was still being affected by the 2015/16 data. Once this data dropped from the average the scorecard would improve. The Head of Fostering and Adoption confirmed that the Service was currently performing better than the national average. The Director of Children's Social Care also highlighted the importance of the individual stories behind the scorecard for context. Outlining the case of a 15 year old who had been with his foster carer for a number of years and was then adopted by the Foster Carers, the Director of Children's Social Care highlighted that whilst this was a fantastic outcome for the

young person, it skewed the scorecard.

**RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the annual report.**

**29 PRIVATE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Report ED18084**

The Sub-Committee considered a report giving an overview of activities in relation to privately fostered children in the London Borough of Bromley from April 2017 to March 2018. The report detailed how the London Borough of Bromley had complied with its duties and functions in relation to Private Fostering. This included how the welfare of privately fostered children had been safeguarded and promoted over the past 12 months. Bromley's Private Fostering Statement of Purpose had been updated and outlined the definition of Private Fostering and the expectations on the Local Authority to meet this. The report also outlined the activities, which had been undertaken to promote awareness of the notification requirements regarding children who were living in Private Fostering arrangements. The London Borough of Bromley had, over the past year, continued to promote local understanding and awareness of Private Fostering and sought to improve how the needs of the children and young people concerned were met. This included using audits to review performance and to identify where improvements needed to be made. Bromley gave consideration of all examples of good practice regarding Private Fostering and demonstrated, where possible, innovative practice as well as aiming to exceed the National Minimum Standards.

The Head of Fostering and Adoption reported that in terms of notifications the Service was doing well in comparison to its statistical neighbours. The need to notify private fostering arrangements had been promoted through schools, education and health services and an app had been developed to support this.

In response to a question, the Head of Fostering and Adoption confirmed that the position in relation to language school placements had improved in the last year and the Service had received notifications prior to children embarking on their journey to the UK.

A Member highlighted that the framework that had been developed was a useful tool and meant that people were more willing to seek help.

In response to a question, the Head of Fostering and Adoption confirmed that the Service was doing everything within its power to promote and encourage people engaged in private fostering arrangements to come forward. The profile for private fostering was being raised and schools were making an increased number of referrals. However, there was always more that could be done and the Service would need to continue to do more in terms of marketing and promotion.

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

**30 LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER REPORT 2017/18  
Report ED18079**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which contained an update on the activity and performance of the Local Authority Designated Role (LADO) for 2017/18. The report provided evidence of the effectiveness of LADO services provided to and on behalf of the Bromley's children in care between April 2017 and March 2018.

The Local Authority Designated Officer reported that awareness of the LADO role was increasing and people were now actively seeking advice which in turn meant that it was possible to provide support. A great deal of training had been provided in Bromley and it was noticeable that the timeliness of referrals had improved.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the LADO explained that there had been no increase in referrals as a result of the work with faith groups however there was a greater awareness as a result of the support and it was clear that there was now better communication and contact from the faith groups. It was also noted that there had been improvements in communicating with partners in the health service. Further training would be provided to Sporting and Leisure providers in November and in addition the LADO had been working closely with the Football Association. The issue of Police Officers making referrals about themselves was national issue and work to address this was ongoing.

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

**31 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18  
Report ED18080**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided evidence of the effectiveness of IRO services provided to and on behalf of the Bromley's children in care between April 2017 and March 2018. The Group Manager described the report as 'a picture of continuous development', reporting that the Service was now focusing on further developing the '4 hats' of IROs as outlined in the report. Over the past year the team had become more child focused and were ensuring that children had good outcomes.

The Group Manager reported that 75% of children attended their LAC review meetings. For those children that did not attend the voice of the child was considered as part of the process. The Service was currently looking at how to make the LAC reviews more appealing to the children.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Group Manager confirmed that in terms of staffing the team was a full strength and that there was consistency for children in terms of the IROs they were allocated. However it was possible that a child could have more than one IRO as a result of staff turnover.

Responding to a question concerning the 18 children at risk of children exploitation, missing or gangs that were currently being tracked by the Missing, Exploitation and Gang Affiliation (MEGA) Panel; the Group Manager confirmed

that prior to being tracked, the children would have been risk assessed and depending on the level of risk involved would then be tracked by the MEGA panel. The Director of Children's Social Care confirmed that the MEGA panel currently tracked around 63 children, not all of whom were looked after children, in order to identify how risks could be mitigated.

In response to whether a protocol had been developed in relation to foster carer participation in LAC Reviews, the Director of Children's Social Care confirmed that the Local Authority was raising its standards for its in house foster carers and was vigilant around consistency of participation. In-house foster carers were clear about what they should do and the expectations of the Local Authority. This was more difficult with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAS).

Highlighting the importance of the IRO Role, a Member who also sat on the Joint Fostering and Adoption Panel reported that for a number of years the Fostering Panel had been disappointed with the level of challenge from IROs. The Member highlighted that the annual report before the Sub-Committee had identified a number of the concerns previously raised by the Panel which was pleasing. The Group Manager confirmed that annual fostering reviews now sat in the quality assurance in seeking more independence and reviews were being carried out.

The Member further expressed concern as a Corporate Parent around the issues of the transference of money when children moved placements. The Children sometimes had significant levels of savings as it was a worry when it was not possible to trace the savings as they moved placements.

A Member sought assurances that the IRO report was included in the papers presented to the Fostering and Adoption Panel. In response, the Group Manager confirmed that there was increased rigor around IRO consultation. Where placement were planned the Service was clear about IRO involvement. Where placements were unplanned the expectation was that IROs would be involved either following a move or if returned home would hold a meeting to consider any contingency planning

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

**32            ANNUAL ECHS COMPLAINTS REPORT**  
**Report ED18075**

The Sub-Committee considered a report setting out statistics on the complaints received by the Council in 2017/18. The report also provided oversight of the annual Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman letter which summarised complaints and queries received by the Ombudsman and the decisions made about the London Borough of Bromley for the year ending 31 March 2018.

The Committee noted that the report would also be considered by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee at an upcoming meeting.

The Sub-Committee noted that 44% of complaints were upheld by the Council and

*30 October 2018*

this reflected the evolving culture of honesty and transparency whereby the Council acknowledged when it had made a mistake. Members also noted that the relationship with the Ombudsman was positive.

In response to a question from the Chairman the Head of Service for Customer Engagement & Complaints reported that it was very difficult to draw comparisons with other Local Authorities as each authority categorised complaints in a different way. Discussions with London local authorities in relation to aligning categories were ongoing.

The Sub-Committee discussed issues surrounding acknowledging and responding to complaints. A Member noted that sometimes it was not clear whether something was a complaint because of the language that was used. It was also noted that often ward councillor involvement prevented an issue from escalating into a formal complaint. In response, the Assistant Director for Strategy, Performance and Engagement confirmed that action was being taken to reduce the number of Council email addresses relating to complains and streamline the process for initial contact. Opportunities for earlier resolution were also being considered in order to resolve issues outside of the formal process where possible.

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

### **33 EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILIES PORTFOLIO PLAN**

It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

### **34 CONTRACTS REGISTER Report ED18070**

The Sub-Committee considered a report presenting an extract from September 2018's Contracts Register for detailed scrutiny. The report was based on information covering all Portfolios, which was produced on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018 and presented to Contracts Sub-Committee on 16 October 2018. The Contracts Register contained in 'Part 2' of the agenda included a commentary on each contract to inform Members of any issues or developments.

The Sub-Committee sought updates on two contracts that had appeared to expire:

- No. 123 - Children's Network Services inc. childminding, buddy and a sitting service for children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities
- No. 313 – Children's – Support Services to Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation. The contract for the support services had been tendered and was due to commence on 1 December 2018. The current provider was completing work with vulnerable children who were in a therapeutic relationship with the provider. Any new referrals would be sent to the new provider. The Director confirmed there was no gap in the service and all her

children that required this service received it.

The Director of Children's Social Care agreed to provide an update following the meeting.

A Member also noted that the Bromley Y contract should also appear on the database but had not been included in the list. The Director of Children's Social Care agreed to follow up after the meeting.

A Member reported that there appeared to be a large number of contracts within the ECHS Department that were experiencing delays. In response the Director of Children's Social Care confirmed that the Departmental Leadership Team regularly reviewed contracts and ensured that appropriate plans were in place. The Director of Children's Social Care was unable to answer further questions in relation to the contracts as the paperwork to which the Member had been referring did not form part of the agenda papers and was therefore not available to the other Members and Officers present at the meeting.

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

**35            RISK REGISTER QUARTER 2**  
**Report ED18077**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which outlined risks that had been identified and the actions taken to control them in line with Audit Sub-Committee recommendations.

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

**36            UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EDUCATION,**  
**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE**

It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education, Children and Families Select Committee would review the recommendation and any responses received in advance of the next meeting.

**37            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.**

**38 BROMLEY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SCHEME - 2014 TO END OF SEPTEMBER 2018**

This item was withdrawn.

**39 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT 2018/19  
Report ED18081**

The Sub-Committee considered a report providing a regular update on the performance of services for children. The Sub-Committee noted the management commentary on indicators performing below expectation.

In relation to EHC Plans, a Member suggested that representations should be made to the DfE to the effect that there should be a focus on the quality of the plans rather than simply meeting tight statutory timescales.

The Assistant Director of Strategy, Performance and Engagement provided assurances that business processes were correct and that there was now a need to ensure (1) the right level of engagement with parents and, (2) time to reflect on the quality of the plans.

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

The Meeting ended at 10.02 pm

Chairman

This page is left intentionally blank



## London Borough of Bromley

### Inspection of children's social care services

**Inspection dates: 19 November–30 November 2018**

**Lead inspector: Dawn Godfrey, Her Majesty's Inspector**

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Since the last inspection in 2016, when children's services were judged to be inadequate, there has been a new and highly experienced senior leadership team which has driven a rapid and sustained pace of improvement, supported by a whole-council investment in children's services. This has led to vastly improved services for children and families. The executive director and his team, together with strong corporate support from members, have ensured an unwavering focus on continuous improvement. Staff at every level have high aspirations for the children who receive services in Bromley.

Children who need help and protection receive good-quality help and support. Early help and family support services are highly effective. Workers are skilled and creative, ensuring that children are at the heart of assessments and plans. This leads to dynamic and proportionate plans, and interventions that improve outcomes. Children in care receive a good service from workers and carers, who 'go the extra mile' to support their needs. They know their children well and have trusting relationships. Care leavers have access to a good range of suitable accommodation, and staff are ambitious for their success.

## **What needs to improve**

- The take-up of return home interviews and the effective use of information to identify and mitigate emerging risks.
- Information provided to homeless 16- and 17-year-olds so that they understand the options available to them.
- School attendance levels and educational progress for secondary-aged children in care.
- The arrangements for care leavers to have access to their health history, and support to care leavers to develop emotional resilience.

## **The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection are: good**

1. Children in need of help and protection in Bromley now receive a timely and effective response. Extensive work by senior managers on improving partners' understanding of thresholds and the management of referrals means that children who are at risk of harm are swiftly identified and protected.
2. The comprehensive early help offer is a significant strength. Early help services were found to be effective in 2016 and have been strengthened further since that time. The early intervention and family support service (EIFS) is underpinned and supported by senior commitment, a coherent strategy and an annual commissioning process. It provides an impressive preventative service for children and their families that successfully reduces the need for statutory intervention. The EIFS service is exceptionally well managed by a dynamic head of service, who oversees and maintains an impressive balance of strategic planning, quality assurance, and staff and service development. Staff are skilled, enthusiastic and child focused; they have a strong understanding of local need and are adept at engaging with families. They provide excellent support services, while being alert to safeguarding issues that may require additional intervention. Successful outcomes for children are demonstrated by the low rate of repeat referrals (almost all families need only one or two cycles of support), as well as the feedback from families, which is sought after each activity.
3. The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) has been established for some time, with good engagement by partner agencies. Thresholds and referral routes are well understood by all partners. Partner agencies contribute effectively to decision-making in the MASH by promptly responding to referrals which do not meet the social care threshold. Information is shared in a timely way and consent for sharing information, when appropriate, is

explicit on children's files. Highly efficient systems mean that no referrals or work are missed, and there is an attention to detail that is evident throughout the decision-making process. Meaningful information-sharing means that risk assessments are dynamic and help staff to determine the action to take. Staff demonstrate a professional curiosity, which means that wider needs and risks are considered, in addition to the presenting issues. Families with disabled children are able to benefit from an online assessment, allowing them to identify their needs and indicate how those needs might be met. This accessible and transparent process means that families receive services swiftly.

4. The out-of-hours service has greatly improved since the last inspection. Increased resources in relation to adult mental health provision have released social work capacity to provide a more timely, effective response to children and their families. Effective handover arrangements, aided by the daily MASH meeting, mean that children and families experience a seamless service and receive a prompt response to out-of-hours issues.
5. Children in need of protection now receive a timely and comprehensive analysis of risk through multi-agency strategy discussions and child protection enquiries, which routinely include police, health and education representatives. Immediate safety plans are clear; these include interventions and services to support families while investigations take place, reducing risk at an early stage.
6. Children benefit from assessments that include good consideration and engagement of parents and extended family, even those at a distance. Assessments demonstrate good understanding of the people who are important in a child's life. The individual needs of brothers and sisters are clearly identified and addressed, and issues relating to identity are well understood; they inform assessment and planning as a matter of routine, including how workers will engage and work with the child and family. This means that children's needs are understood and planned for and that social workers are better able to form a trusting relationship.
7. Homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are provided swiftly with temporary accommodation while a social work assessment takes place, and there is no use of bed and breakfast accommodation. However, assessments for this group of young people are not always explicit about becoming looked after, meaning that young people may not always be fully aware of their options and helped to make well-informed decisions.
8. Direct work with children has become a significant strength in Bromley. Many different tools are used to elicit children's wishes and feelings, complemented by reflective observations by social workers that pick up on non-verbal cues. Children's voices and experiences sing out in their assessments and plans, and social workers give priority to forming strong,

trusting relationships. This enables children to participate meaningfully and to influence their planning.

9. Effective action has been taken to improve the quality of children's plans. Plans are outcome-focused and succinct, and they are specific about what needs to happen and by when. Contingencies are clear and are established early on in the plan, to ensure that they are in place if required. Multi-agency and family networks are used effectively to ensure that children are given the best chance to improve their life experiences. Plans are reviewed regularly, and with rigour, through a range of multi-agency review activities, including panels and conferences. This means that plans are dynamic and they are updated as a child's needs or risks change. As a result, in most cases risks reduce and plans do not drift.
10. Since the last inspection, management oversight and supervision have become routine and embedded. They are threaded through case work and provide clear, directive and purposeful guidance to social workers as risks change. This framework of practice enables social workers to grow in confidence; it means that they are clear about actions and they progress work well.
11. The work of the designated officer is a considerable strength. The designated officer shows excellent attention to the broad range of tasks in her role and tracks all actions, timescales and outcomes effectively to ensure that referrals are responded to promptly and clearly.
12. Vulnerable adolescents now receive a good service. The Atlas team, a joint enterprise between children's social care and the police, launched in 2017, and the new 'missing, exploitation and gang affiliation' panel are highly effective, providing valuable safety planning and risk assessment for children at high risk. Partners are committed, actions are completed in a timely way and wider contextual safeguarding knowledge is shared. This demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of safeguarding responsibilities regarding other children and young people. It also means that young people's networks and associations are well known and that changing associations or previous associations are taken into consideration, resulting in more effective management of risk and vulnerability.
13. Return home interviews are routinely offered to children who go missing from home or care, but take-up has stalled. Persistent efforts are made to engage young people, and when return home interviews do take place, particularly for children at the highest risk, high-quality and important information is gained and shared. This benefits wider safety planning and the identification of other vulnerable children.
14. The management and oversight of elective home education are good. Tight, well-established systems are in place and the experienced and

tenacious team takes appropriate action if there are safeguarding concerns or if the education provision is unsuitable. Professionals act quickly and determinedly to follow up any concerns about children who are out of education. Joint work with primary schools has had a very positive impact on reducing the number of permanent exclusions. The local authority has rightly identified the need to have a similar focus on permanent exclusions from secondary schools and the importance of exploring appropriate alternatives.

## **The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers are: good**

15. Timely and well-considered decisions are made when children need to come into care. All decisions for children to come into care are based on comprehensive, balanced and child-centred assessments which take into account the views of other professionals as well as children and their families. When risks increase, and children are no longer able to live safely at home, statutory powers are used appropriately to safeguard and protect them. The Public Law Outline is used well, and realistic timescales are set for parents to demonstrate progress. Plans are regularly reviewed to avoid drift. Effective support is in place that reduces risk for children when parents are engaging well, but decisive action is taken when there is a failure to improve within a child's timescales. Social work evidence for care proceedings is robust, and a range of assessments and casework tools are used to inform analysis. Well-considered alternatives are presented in detail, and contingency planning runs concurrently, reducing delay for children.
16. Social workers visit children in care very regularly and in accordance with their presenting risks and needs. Children are routinely seen alone and the direct work with them is clearly taken into account in assessments and plans. Children are actively encouraged to attend their reviews, and advocacy is always offered and used appropriately. Social workers maintain logs about children's histories and use these to help children to understand their early life experiences and to build positive relationships with them. This is particularly important when a child experiences a change in social worker, as it reduces the need for them to repeat their story. Inspectors saw many excellent examples of life-story work and later-life letters.
17. The Living in Care Council (LinCC), composed of representatives of children in care, is well established and supported. LinCC is a strong advocate for children in care in Bromley and the annual residential training event is a wonderful example of how children in care are helped to embrace change and to understand their role as LinCC members. Achievements of children in care are celebrated and there is active involvement with children placed at a distance in order to encourage participation. Care leavers are now represented separately through the care leavers' forum and they are

already shining a spotlight on key issues for care leavers, such as council tax exemption.

18. Children in care live in appropriate placements, they have their needs met and they develop well. There is evidence of their outcomes improving because of the care that they receive. Placement matching is of good quality, but for a very small number of children with more complex needs who need to change placement, planning can be reactive rather than proactive due to the limited range of placements available, resulting in multiple moves.
19. Assessments and plans for children in care are routinely updated and reflect changes in children's circumstances. They are insightful regarding risks and barriers to progress, and action to address these is taken swiftly. In stronger examples, care plans are clearly directed by children's views and cover all aspects of a child's life, including leisure activities and interests, which are actively encouraged. Arrangements for spending time with birth families are sensitively considered and timely. Inspectors saw some lovely examples of creative ways to improve the quality of the time that children spend with their families.
20. The quality of looked after reviews has improved markedly since the last inspection. There is now an embedded, timely system in place, and this is enhanced by independent reviewing officers visiting children between reviews, helping children to participate meaningfully and to influence the decision-making about their future. Review notes are written directly to the child and demonstrate genuine warmth and care.
21. Children in care are helped to improve their health. The children in care health team ensures that health assessments are comprehensive, they identify all health needs and are actively followed up to ensure that these needs are met. This service includes children who live out of area and at a distance. A range of resources is available in one location, enabling easy access. For care leavers, current health needs are known and met. However, some care leavers are not aware of their health histories and do not have access to them.
22. Children's emotional and mental health needs are well understood and met. Dedicated workers in the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) use information from strengths and difficulties questionnaires effectively to inform planning and to monitor progress. This work is enhanced by the service offered by 'Bromley Y', a community well-being service which offers a single point of access for CAMHS services, including care leavers who would not reach the threshold for adult mental health services. There remains a challenge regarding access to mental health services for children who require specialist multi-disciplinary services for complex disorders. However, Bromley has recently made a successful bid

to become a 'mental health support teams' trailblazer. This initiative is designed to further improve children's access to mental health support by creating a seamless CAMHS service that covers children and young people from birth to 25 years of age.

23. The virtual school team is effective in its work with children. Children in early years and primary schools make very good progress in their learning, particularly in reading and mathematics. Team members use personal education plans particularly well to ensure a smooth transition between the stages of education, from early years through to post-16. Professionals adopt a range of creative strategies and approaches to ensure that individual children get the right provision and timely support when needed. Improved personal education plans and better tracking of post-16 young people enable the team members to have an accurate picture of children and young people's progress. However, attendance levels and educational progress for some secondary-aged children are not yet good. Team members, working with a range of professionals, have sharpened the focus on earlier intervention. They have tailored support to ensure that more young people have the skills and abilities to sustain their education or employment post-16, and that a higher proportion of 19- to 21-year-olds access and remain in education, employment, apprenticeships or other training.
24. Children receive high-quality care from their foster carers, who are assessed and supported effectively. Support for foster carers is an area of strength that is highly valued by carers, including connected person carers and special guardians. This enables carers to feel prepared to take on the needs and challenges of the children and young people in their care. Ongoing training is adapted and modified to meet the needs of the children and young people and in response to carers' feedback. Attracting a wide range of suitable carers to reflect the needs of children in care continues to be a challenge to managers, but application conversion rates have increased from 2% to 11% following a well-targeted advertising campaign.
25. Permanence planning is understood and pursued with rigour. Family finding and matching for permanence are strengths. Children benefit from the right permanence option for them that meets their needs, and the importance of long-term stability is fully acknowledged. When the permanence decision is for adoption, this is achieved in a timely manner. Early permanence (foster to adopt) is always considered as an option for a child and an effective family finding system supports children to achieve permanence without delay. Children's permanence reports are thorough and well evidenced, and include good consideration of alternatives to adoption, contact, and brother and sister assessments, if appropriate.
26. Effective adoption services result in well-assessed and prepared adoptive families. Prospective adopters benefit from flexibly arranged training, which

changes according to feedback and emerging themes. For second-time adopters, there is consideration of more bespoke training, focused on the needs of existing children, and parenting brothers and sisters. This results in well-prepared adoptive families who have access to excellent adoption support.

27. Care leavers benefit from trusting relationships with social workers and young persons' advisers who know them well. Young people are prepared well for the practical elements of independent living. However, work with vulnerable care leavers on developing the emotional resilience needed for living alone is not as strong. Pathway plans are mostly up to date. They cover all dimensions of a young person's needs, with a real sense of who the young person is and their aspirations. However, plans are not always updated following significant changes to young people's circumstances, for example entry into custody. Care leavers have access to a range of suitable accommodation, with timely consideration of options, including 'staying put'. This provides care leavers with certainty of accommodation as early as possible. Pre-release accommodation planning takes place at an early stage so that the small number of care leavers in custody are well prepared for release.
28. The proportion of care leavers who are in education, employment or training (EET) is improving and compares positively with statistical neighbours and the national average. This is a result of concerted efforts by a specialist worker and others in the leaving care service to provide tailored and creative support with a focus on helping care leavers into suitable opportunities. Staff are ambitious for care leavers, and those care leavers who are not in EET are considered at the fortnightly EET panel. The panel is attended by representatives from a broad range of relevant organisations. This has expanded the range of options available, now including coaching and access to apprenticeships in the Department of Work and Pensions.
29. Care leavers receive a 'sorted and supported' booklet which outlines all of the support and services that they can expect and have access to when they leave care. They understand their rights and are provided with the key documents needed to start their lives successfully as young adults.

### **The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families is: outstanding**

30. Services for children and families in Bromley have improved dramatically since the last inspection, driven by the vision, commitment and determination of senior leaders. All of the recommendations from the previous inspection have been tackled with vigour. There has been a significant shift in political and corporate support for children's services, underpinned by sustained investment. The rapid improvement since the



last inspection continues unabated. Effective action has been taken concurrently across all areas of service and there is an unwavering focus on continuous improvement, with high aspirations for all children. The lead member for children's services is also the deputy leader of the council, a deliberate decision to ensure that children are front and centre throughout corporate and strategic planning. This is further enhanced by the executive director, ensuring, through his leadership of wider services, that cross-departmental issues and decisions are underpinned by a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of need, meaning that children are supported as they move into adulthood.

31. Partner engagement has been re-invigorated by the chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, who is determined and ambitious for children, and who has a proven track record in working collaboratively to improve children's services. A range of apps have been developed by the board to assist partners' understanding of key issues, risks and how to respond effectively, and these are having a positive impact on the quality of information-sharing and collaboration with children's social care. Representatives from Cafcass and the judiciary told inspectors that excellent communication and vastly improved practice since the last inspection mean that issues are now dealt with as soon as they arise, and this has reduced the need for lengthy proceedings.
32. Senior managers have a detailed knowledge of their services and the local community. Commissioning arrangements have been completely restructured since the last inspection, recognising the importance of integrated commissioning in meeting the needs of complex and vulnerable children and young people. This has resulted in swift and better informed joint commissioning, and a strategy based on a comprehensive understanding of local need. Placement sufficiency and need are well understood and result in effective plans. Managers recognise the necessity for a more diverse range of carers to meet the needs of children in care, and to address the rising number of children placed out of borough and at a distance. The local authority is also planning for two residential units in the borough, specifically for children with complex needs, in order to facilitate a return to their 'home' environment.
33. The local authority is now a highly committed corporate parent. Elected members have all received training about their role and the qualities of a corporate parent. This is strengthened by co-chairing of the corporate parenting panel by members of LinCC, and a corporate parenting fun day which is highly valued by children in care. The improvements since the last inspection are palpable. Children in care representatives told inspectors that one of the best things about being in care in Bromley is that 'they are known' and that there is a 'huge' difference now in how much they feel valued.

34. Highly effective quality assurance arrangements drive a cycle of continuous improvement in practice, and there is now a strong focus on outcomes and child-centred social work. This has been strengthened by the commissioning of a service improvement team, which has taken a whole-system approach to quality assurance, including activity at individual, team and service levels. The governance of these arrangements sits with the executive director, ensuring that there is a golden thread of accountability and knowledge which aids accurate self-assessment.
35. Performance information has substantially improved since the last inspection and it can now be relied on to help leaders and managers to identify and understand important areas of risk and to prioritise actions. Senior leaders, including the chief executive and lead member, have a clear understanding of frontline practice and they interrogate performance information effectively in order to continue to improve. The use of performance information is embedded throughout children's services and is accessible to all managers. Improved accountability means that there is sharp analysis and challenge, ensuring that issues are tackled as they arise.
36. There is a sustained focus on increasing stability and capacity in the workforce. The 'Bromley promise' sets out the vision and pledge to staff about what they can expect from the organisation. The promise is being actively delivered and is known and valued by staff. It has proved integral to attracting new staff and retaining existing ones, resulting in a high percentage of permanent staff at the time of inspection. Senior managers have created a culture of high challenge and high support, enabling staff to be confident in their work, and this results in children experiencing good-quality social work and improved outcomes.
37. Senior managers and leaders actively listen to residents and service users and use feedback to improve services. This learning culture is enhanced by the social work practice advisory group, which provides an important direct line of communication for staff, from frontline staff to senior managers, raising key issues that affect them. This ensures quick identification of any issues arising and results in rapid resolution of concerns.
38. Senior leaders have created an outward-facing organisation that embraces innovation and practice in order to enhance its work with children. Staff who spoke to inspectors are inspired by their leaders and managers and believe in Bromley's vision and ambition. This is making a profound difference to improving the lives of children in Bromley.



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018

This page is left intentionally blank

Report No.  
ECHS19021

## London Borough of Bromley

### PART ONE - PUBLIC

---

**Decision Maker:** Education, Children and Families Select Committee

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent                      Non-Executive                      Non-Key

**Title:** London Borough of Bromley Youth Offending Service Update

**Contact Officer:** Betty McDonald, Head of Youth Support and Youth Offending Services  
Tel: 020 8466 3071 E-mail: Betty.McDonald@bromley.gov.uk

**Chief Officer:** Gillian Palmer, Interim Executive Director ECHS

**Ward:** All

---

1. Reason for report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with feedback and an update of progress made by Bromley Youth Offending Service in securing improvement and responding to the inspection findings.

---

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The committee is asked to note the content of the attached report.

## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

### 1. Summary of Impact:

---

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
  2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
- 

#### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
  3. Budget head/performance centre:
  4. Total current budget for this head: £
  5. Source of funding:
- 

#### Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional):
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
- 

#### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
- 

#### Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
- 

#### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
- 

#### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

This page is left intentionally blank



## **1. Background**

1.1 Youth Offending Service were created by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people aged between 10- seventeen years old. This is achieved by delivering and implementing interventions to reduce risk, allow young people to reach their potential and in keeping them and the public safe. Bromley YOS sit within Children's Social Care under the directorate of the Director of Children's Social care.

1.2 The YOS is multi-disciplinary team funded with staff from other agencies that directly provide services to young people as well secondments from Probation and the Metropolitan Police. The majority of the funding is from the Ministry of Justice and the local authority with other partner's contribution in kind and this is in the form of staffing.

1.3 The YOS governance Board comprises of senior managers of partner agencies and is chaired by Chief Executive Officer and following the departure of the previous CEO, the acting CEO has agreed to taken on this function which provides oversight and scrutiny of the work of the YOS Partnership at the highest level.

## **2. Performance**

2.1 In relation to the nationally published performance data from the Ministry of Justice the Bromley position:

2.2 Re-offending rates (see Appendix one for London rates) – the data from this indicator comes from the police national computer and is tracks a cohort of young people who receive an outcome or are released from custody for a 12 month period and the results are usually published between 6 – 12 months thereafter thus a lag in real time reporting. Hence the latest published figure at the time of writing this report is January to December 2016. The Ministry of justice evidencing a 46.1% binary re-offending rate. This compares to the national average of 4.9% higher than the national average. However, in Bromley (table 1) there are fewer young people reoffending year on year. Performance reports are used gain understanding of the service and the work we do to target the most persistent and prolific offenders as well and ensuring that intervention plans are more tailored to address identified needs as well as the inclusion of reparative activities to repair the harm and damage caused by offending.

Re-offending

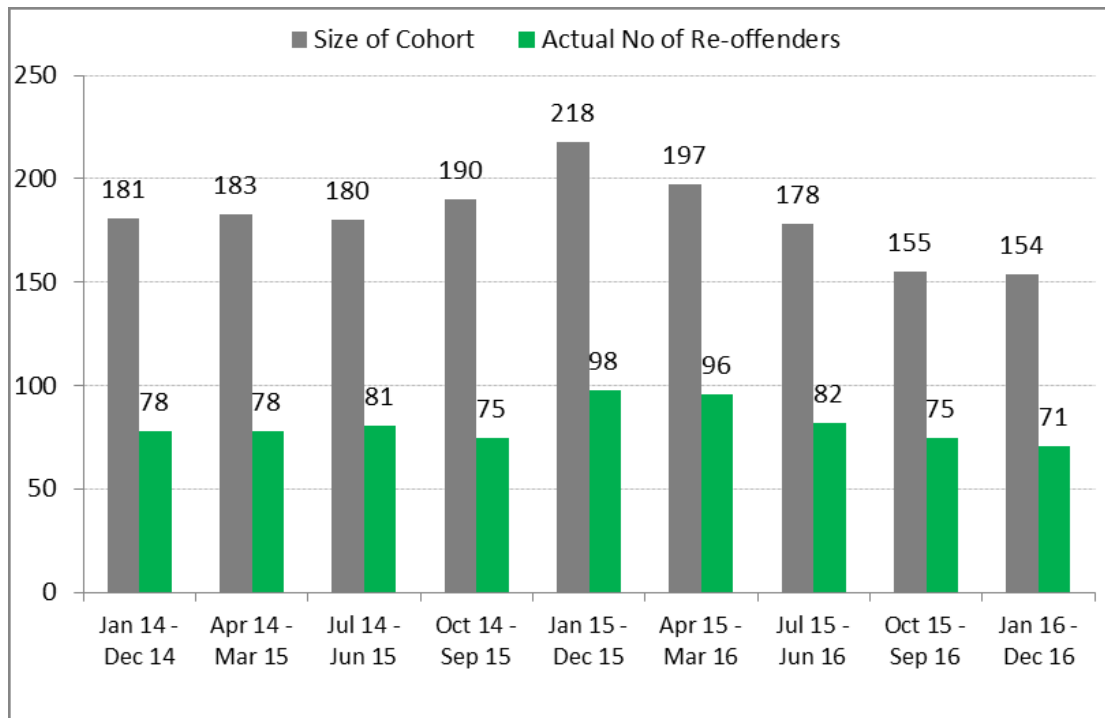


Table: 1

2.3 Reducing the use of custody has been an ongoing focus for the YOS with robust management oversight of young people who are on the cusp of custody due to their offending. We constantly strive to seek alternatives to custody with every high risk case. The use of the national AssetPlus assessment framework has improved the way we assess, plan, intervene and review cases has assisted in how we manage high risk young people, with more of a push towards strengths based approaches. In the latest published data for October 2017 – September 2018 we had 7 young people sentenced to custody compared with the same period the previous year when we had 14 young people serving custodial sentences. The performance in relation to custody represents a 27% reduction on the previous year, 34% below London average and 9% below the national average.

### Custody rates

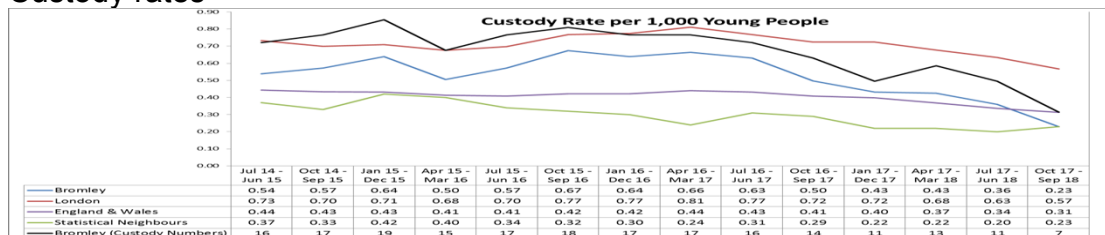


Table: 2

2.4 In respect of first time entrants to the criminal justice system we have seen increases in the borough in relation to this measure. Part of the increases is attributed to young people being arrested and having knives or other offensive weapons on their person. Last period (July 2017 – June 2018) there were 88 young people who came into the criminal justice system as first time offenders of which 47% were for violent offences and 35% were arrested for knife offences. These types of crimes (knife offences) are not eligible for diversion and therefore these young people are then brought into the criminal justice system. Our performance in Bromley is lower than the national average by 12% but higher nationally by 9%.

Table – First Time Entrants

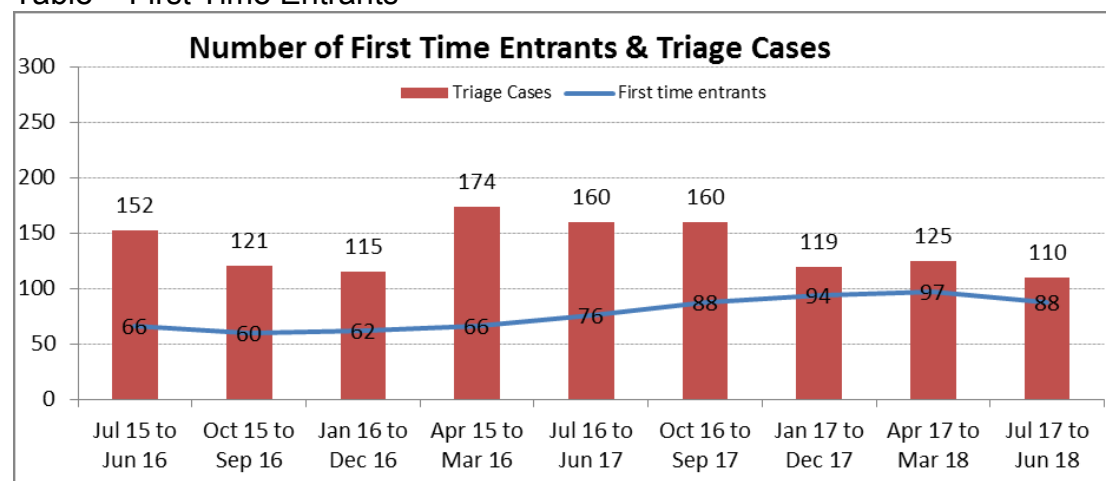


Table: 3

2.5 In terms of work to address this, we have created a newly funded post by NHS England for a diversion worker. Liaison and Diversion service will operate in the police station. The service offer screening and assessment of children and young people within police custody. Liaison and Diversion provision covers the first part of the pathway for entering the CJS, to ensure that where indicated all children and young people who commit an offence have the opportunity of a health and wellbeing assessment, followed by support to access appropriate services. The research and evidence from the pathway and pilot sites across the country demonstrate that this provision positively impacts on reducing and keeping low the numbers of first time entrants into the system; offering support and intervention.

### 3. Interventions

3.1 Children's social care staff working with children and families will be adopting the Bromley relationship practice model for intervening with families. This will mean that the approach we take to the work enables children to be consistently protected from harm and their welfare rigorously promoted within their families, where this is consistent with their safety. Young people

involved in offending are rigorously challenged and supported to prevent offending through individual and group work programmes. We work with victims and young people to protect the public and work to ensure that children are kept safe and serve their sentences, where appropriate.

3.2 The YOS will also be complementing this relationship approach with all staff trained in a “Mentalisation” approach to working with children and young people with complex needs. Mentalisation-based therapy using the AMBIT model to help the staff discharge their duties with this challenging client group informed by a psychological therapy approach to working with colleagues in the same team and in partner agencies. The YOS is currently exploring opportunities for commissioning bespoke training from the tier 4 Adolescent At Risk and Forensic Service based at the Maudlsey Hospital.

3.3 We are looking into opportunities for developing a Non Violent Resistance (NVR) group for parents of young people in the YOS – drawing on local CAMHS expertise if possible. NVR is a group designed to teach parents techniques to help them change their relationship with their child(ren); it relies strongly on the power of parent facilitators ‘lived experiences’ with their own children to provide hope for families. It has an emerging evidence base for conduct disorder. The YOS continues to have a consultant psychologist at the YOS on a part time based working to support staff working with high risk, high needs young people.

#### **4. Staffing and structure**

4.1 The last year has been challenging in appointing staff to the Service with vacancies being advertised on several occasions and not attracting suitable applicants. A range of advertising platforms have been tried and in the absence of securing staff to these positions then the service is then having to rely on locums at a premium rate. Recruitment within social care is managed under the Recruitment and Retention Board and strategies continue to be explored on how we can fill much needed vacancies, some of which are being filled with agency staff after a period of time with the Service have then gone onto applying for the permanent positions. So whilst the spend may initially be more we are seeing some signs of positive progress with those go onto becoming permanent members of staff. We currently have a total of 6 vacancies within the service from social workers to management level positions.

4.2 The service has recently been reconfigured to ensure that we are able to meets the demands of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to deliver services to children and young people. Supporting the core operational work of the YOS is led by a group manager and two team managers and a mixed staff group who enforce orders made by the court and the delivery of interventions attached to the orders, as well as supporting young people who are remanded into custody awaiting trial or sentence and those sentenced to custody by the Courts.

4.3 More recently we have dedicated one post to begin to develop our prevention offer supporting children and young people on the cusp of offending to see if we are able to reduce risk and divert them from the criminal justice system. We will further be increasing our preventative provision with the appointment of a Diversion worker and a new in house provision to divert and support young people away from the criminal justice system.

4.4 We currently have a full time tutor in the YOS providing educational support to young people and we are a registered examination centre enabling young people to sit functional skills entry level examinations. In terms of education we continue to perform, well with 100% of those young people who completed their YOS orders over the last quarter and of school age were in a suitable provision. We have a dedicated worker who works hard to engage and motivate young people into employment and training opportunities. The YOS has achieved some excellent outcomes with some very hard to engage young people, by contributing to the education Top Ten meeting and other panels when placements are sought for young people.

## **5. Improvement plan**

5.1 Following the January 2017 Full Joint Inspection of the Bromley Youth Offending Service (YOS) (published June 2017) the YOS Improvement Plan was developed.

5.2 The YOS Improvement Plan included an initial mapping of all recommendations following the Full Joint Inspections of 2015 and 2017, BSCB Section 11 Audit Bromley YOS Action Plan (2016) and links to the recommendations and key priority areas within the Youth Justice Strategic Plan (2017-19) which was updated and developed in October 2017. The Plan was formally accepted at the July 2017 YOS Management Board following publication of the Full Joint Inspection in June 2017.

5.3 To ensure increased focus and pace, fortnightly YOS Improvement Boards were implemented from November 2017 with one Priority Areas covered at each meeting. As well as compliance updates, evidence is required by the YOS Improvement Board before an improved RAG-rating is given for each indicator within each of the Priority Areas. The YOS Improvement Plan Priority Areas are as follows:

- Safeguarding and Protecting the Child
- Reducing Reoffending
- Protecting the Public
- Governance and Partnerships
- Interventions to Reduce Reoffending
- Ensuring the Sentence is Served
- Improving Practice

Of the original 88 required actions within the YOS Improvement Plan, by December 2018 there was the following breakdown:

- 2 actions RAG-rated 'Red'
- 31 actions RAG-rated 'Amber'
- 46 actions RAG-rated 'Green'
- 9 actions RAG-rated 'Blue' (actions that can be no longer progressed)

5.4 YOS Improvement Plan actions are spread across the multi-agency partnership and are reviewed by the YOS Partnership Board on a quarterly basis. Progress has been steady and improvements have been made to the service including staff training, commissioning interventions and support services for young people from health related support sessions, to interventions support desistance from offending and work related training where some young people have completed work related learning to achieve the construction skills card to enable them to gain employment in the construction industry.

## **6. Serious offending**

6.1 Over the last few months the numbers of young people being supervised by the YOS has largely remained constant. However, locally we have seen an increase on Police directive of increased levels of "Stop and Search" in response to intelligence and concerns related to serious youth violence and other concerns. This has identified young people carrying knives that are not diverted from the criminal justice system and therefore receive support from the YOS to reduce further offending.

6.2 Given increased tensions between rival groups from neighbouring boroughs and ongoing activities of gangs in the area, the 2 murders on the borough within the last year it is unlikely that the levels of Stop and Search will be reduced and Police colleagues will no doubt continue to utilise methods which help to prevent further serious offences from being committed.

6.3 The actual custody numbers are low in the borough and overall across the country the numbers of children in custody continues to be reducing from highs of over 3,000 children and young people over 15 years ago. The Ministry of Justice Youth Custody Service published its latest data on the numbers of children and young people in custody. The numbers of under 18s in custody was 859; this is a decrease of 2 from the previous month and a reduction of 61 from the previous year. In Bromley we currently have 2 young people serving custodial sentences and 5 on remand awaiting trial. All of these young people have committed serious offences that have led to them being sentenced or remanded for those offences and are due to appear at the Crown Court over the coming months. Over the same period last year in Bromley we had 6 young people serving sentences and the remand figures stayed the same.

6.4 Children and young people are supported and visited regularly by YOS workers and social workers to ensure that they are safe and well, plans for release form part of the regular sessions. There have been no safeguarding concerns raised regarding our children and young people in custody. With regards to levels of risk presented, there are 11 young people currently assessed as presenting a high risk of serious harm to others this is due to the nature of their offending and or repeated use or carrying of weapons. The majority of these young people will be known to Children's Social Care either as children in needs with some being discussed at the weekly Missing, Exploitation and Gang Affiliated (MEGA) meetings, where activity and information is shared and tracked via this panel and the YOS is represented at the panel.

6.5 One of the main challenges we face is the emergence of gangs and an increase in knife crime. This increase is not exclusive to Bromley but across the country. We deliver a knife crime intervention for young people involved in carrying or using weapons. All staff recently received training on weapons awareness and is equipped to deliver this programme. However, we recognise that there is a greater need to act to prevent escalations of such behaviours as well as effectively intervening earlier with this cohort. The YOS is working on a more consistent and robust approach to prevention in line with our youth services and identifying and targeting young people via Merlin reports and those coming to Police notice as being on the cusp or involved in offending.

6.6 The YOS continues to work with the courts and the secure estate and partners to implement conditions and requirements attached to individual court orders post custody licence aimed at restricting movement, to protect the public and reduce further offending.

6.7 The YOS supported by work with the police and community safety to tackle anti-social behaviour and serious youth violence. Information is shared across the network regarding locations of concern and other intelligence to prevent crime and public protection issues. Discussions continue to take place around enforcement and disruption activity and in supporting young people to exit gangs as well as consideration for applying for gang injunction and working with Safer London who support young people out of gangs.

6.8 In addition, the YOS within our resources have provided gang awareness training and knife prevention programmes to staff as well as contributing and delivering prevention support to secondary schools within the borough as part of the Impact Roadshow event.

6.9 The multi-agency makeup of the team the service works closely with partners and commissioned agencies at a strategic and operational level to achieve its outcome and aims. The service is working closely with police and community safety on the development of Bromley knife crime action plan as well as with wider partners on improving plans for early intervention to reduce risk of youth violence.

6.10 The YJB has launched its Serious Youth Violence Strategy. As part of the strategy, a serious youth violence good practice reference group has started. The aim of this group is to bring together youth offending teams (YOS) and stakeholders so that they can share effective approaches in this area and/or where significant challenges are faced. Bromley YOS are contributing to the meetings, to enable us to adopt and apply effective practice measures which will be tracked and shared. A serious youth violence toolkit will also be published in due course to help YOS put this into practice.

## **7. Summary**

7.1 The YOS continues to work to improve the performance of the service and in challenging young people in relation to their offending and the impact it has on others. We are currently in the process of setting up a forum for young people involved in the justice system so that we can use their feedback to improve our service offer. The first such group will focus directly on the health needs of young people in the justice system following mapping exercise based on young people health needs. This session will be directly supported by colleagues in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and thereafter we will have themed sessions with young people. Also we continue to seek young people's active input into our assessments and interventions and further follow this up with a standardised feedback tool "What do you think?" that is completed by young people. Generally the feedback received is positive and young people welcoming the support that they get from the YOS officers.

7.2 The challenges going forward is continuing to develop a high quality responsive service through collaboration with partners and colleagues to ensure that we are having the desired impact to support young people, victims and reduce risk.

## **Appendix One: Reoffending Performance for London**

### **Current performance commentary:**

Binary Rate = The number of reoffenders divided by the total annual cohort of offenders.

Bromley YOS ranked 18th out of the 31 YOS in London for the reoffending Binary rate.



Frequency Rate = The number of offences committed, divided by the total cohort of offenders.

Bromley YOS ranked 19th out of the 31 YOS in London for the reoffending frequency rate.

Binary Rate (%)	Jan 16 - Dec 16
Havering	33.1%
Bexley	33.8%
Ealing	36.4%
Sutton	37.6%
Hounslow	38.4%
Harrow	38.8%
Barnet	40.2%
Kingston and Richmond	41.9%
Westminster	42.0%
Barking and Dagenham	42.0%
Enfield	42.3%
Hackney	42.8%
Newham	43.9%
Hillingdon	44.2%
Greenwich	44.5%
Tower Hamlets and City of London	44.9%
Waltham Forest	45.9%
<b>Bromley</b>	<b>46.1%</b>
Islington	48.0%
Haringey	49.3%
Brent	49.6%
Hammersmith and Fulham	49.7%
Croydon	50.5%
Southwark	51.3%
Camden	51.4%
Lewisham	51.7%
Kensington and Chelsea	51.8%
Lambeth	51.8%
Redbridge	54.1%
Merton	55.4%
Wandsworth	56.3%

Frequency Rate	Jan 16 - Dec 16
Harrow	0.87
Havering	0.92
Bexley	1.03
Ealing	1.13
Greenwich	1.28
Hounslow	1.33
Enfield	1.36
Kingston and Richmond	1.38
Newham	1.38
Hackney	1.43
Waltham Forest	1.44
Barking and Dagenham	1.46
Barnet	1.51
Sutton	1.54
Tower Hamlets and City of London	1.57
Southwark	1.59
Haringey	1.63
Lewisham	1.77
<b>Bromley</b>	<b>1.82</b>
Lambeth	1.87
Kensington and Chelsea	1.87
Hammersmith and Fulham	1.90
Camden	1.91
Croydon	1.91
Hillingdon	1.92
Brent	1.98
Westminster	2.01
Redbridge	2.19
Merton	2.32
Wandsworth	2.61
Islington	2.77

This page is left intentionally blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is left intentionally blank