

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 9 November 2021

Present:

Councillor Nicky Dykes (Chairman)
Councillor Judi Ellis (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Graham Arthur, Hannah Gray, Christine Harris,
Simon Jeal, Robert Mcilveen, Ryan Thomson and
Stephen Wells

Also Present:

Councillor Kate Lymer, Children, Education and Families Portfolio
Councillor Kieran Terry, Executive Assistant for Children, Education &
Families

Councillors Vanessa Allen, David Cartwright QFSM, Ian Dunn and
Kevin Kennedy-Brooks

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Neil Reddin and Councillor Graham Arthur attended as substitute. Rev. Roger Bristow also submitted apologies.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

33 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

34 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

The following question to the Portfolio Holder was received:

From Ms Alsia Igoe

Could you kindly tell me the total amount of money in the Welfare Fund for the year 2020-2021, how much of it was spent in that year and how much remained, if any, at the end of that financial year and where any remaining and unused funds were allocated? Thank you.

Reply:

The Welfare Fund earmarked reserve administered by the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Service, had a balance as at 1st April 2020 of £639k. During 2020/21, £147k was drawn down from the reserve, leaving a balance of £492k as at 31st March 2021. This balance is retained in the earmarked reserve for use in 2021/22 and future years.

Supplementary Question:

It's excellent to see the Council promoting the government's funding for the Housing Support Fund on social media yesterday, 8 November. However, I am concerned that vulnerable residents who are able to self-refer may not read the Policy Document, nor understand exactly what information to provide on or submit with the application form, therefore delaying or cancelling the application to a Fund distributed on a first come, first served basis. The press release encourages them to click on the application form, but makes no mention of the Policy Document, which I have read and throws up the following:

The Policy document states the actual start date of the Fund was 6 October. Why was the Fund not promoted in the last month?

It states those with school age children should contact the child's school for assistance with food vouchers across the holidays. Why are Bromley not offering holiday food vouchers from within this new Fund to those eligible for free school meals over the Christmas holidays?

On boiler repairs, etc, the Policy document states "a minimum of 2 quotes from different providers should be provided". Why does the application form not state this? It is only states "supporting evidence". People may submit only one quote in error.

The Policy Document states "we will publicise the scheme and provide information to relevant agencies, stakeholders and other council services". Which exact date was this information provided to them, by what means and was it from 6 October?

Why is there no mention of the right to appeal in the Council's list of information on the Housing Support Fund webpage?

Reply:

Noting that it was a long question with a number of aspects, the Portfolio Holder asked Ms Igoe to email the question in full to enable a full response to be provided. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that the Welfare Fund was administered by the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Service and that the Portfolio Holder would be happy to take them to the correct department.

The Chairman highlighted that the Department for Children, Education and Families worked closely with vulnerable families across the Borough and had been signposting families to the support available and supporting them through the process.

The Director of Education confirmed that supermarket vouchers would be made available to eligible families through schools as they had been during other school holiday periods.

Following the meeting, the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing provided the following response:

The Household Support Fund was launched on 8th November to provide financial support to residents facing financial hardship. 6th October represented the date the Government notified the Council, along with other local authorities, that this funding would be received. Final guidance to permit the Council to distribute funds was only received on Friday 5th November, so the scheme was launched on the earliest reasonable date and was amongst the first in London to go live.

The initial launch page for the scheme that appeared in the 'latest news' section of the Council website homepage directed residents to an information page about the scheme and not directly to the application. All evidence required is explained in the form and not all information needs to be or should be provided in the initial application form. For example, two quotes for boiler works are required, but residents are only asked to provide this once they are found to be eligible, to prevent residents who are unable to access the fund going to this trouble unnecessarily. The right to appeal is clearly stated on the fund policy page. Naturally the application information and webpages are regularly reviewed, particularly based on resident feedback to ensure it is as clear and accessible as it can be.

These grant monies have also been used to fund school meals during school holidays. Applications to access this funding should be made directly to applicant children's schools, as stated on the webpage and as schools are aware.

A number of partner organisations alongside representatives from Council services were also contacted on 8th November so individual teams can advise clients and residents on how to apply for the grants.

35 MATTERS OUTSTANDING AND WORK PROGRAMME Report CSD21123

The report set out the proposed programme for scrutiny of reports relating to the Children, Education and Families Portfolio for the 2021/22 municipal year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**36 CALL-IN: HARRIS KENT HOUSE FREE SCHOOL INCLUDING
ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TRANSACTION
Report CSD21121**

On 22nd September 2022, the Executive approved the recommendations made in a report on the Harris Kent House Free School.

The decision was called in by Councillors Simon Jeal, Angela Wilkins, Josh King, Kathy Bance, Ian Dunn and Vanessa Allen. This Committee was requested to consider what action should be taken in response to the call-in of this decision; the options were to refer the decision back to the Executive for re-consideration, or to take no further action on the call-in, in which case the decision would stand and could be implemented without any further delay.

Following a request from the Chairman, the Head of Strategic Place Planning outlined the process for the approval and delivery of the free school.

The Harris Federation had made an application for the school through the Department for Education's sponsor led free school route. The school was approved in 2017 as part of Wave 12 of the programme and was originally intended to meet need in Bromley and Lewisham. The proposals were now focused on addressing Bromley's requirements. Once a free school application has been approved there was no DfE process to consult on the chosen sponsor.

The Head of Strategic Place Planning explained that once a school had been accepted into the Department of Education's programme the Council's input into the process was limited to 3 key areas; consultation on the need for school places; discussion about the provision of possible sites and the determination of any planning application. The DfE were responsible for the development of detailed proposals and for taking schemes through the planning process. The process followed for Kent House was the same as the other 6 sponsor led free schools already delivered in Bromley. In line with the DfE's process local residents would have two opportunities for consultation: on any planning application brought forward by the Department for Education in relation to the scheme; and on the trust's consultation to determine whether the DfE should enter into a funding agreement for the school.

The Chairman set out the various Committee processes through which the Harris Kent House site had been considered. This included discussion at a number of meetings of the Local Development Framework Advisory Panel and the School Places Working Group, a sub-committee of the CEF PDS, in 2019, 2020 and 2021. The Chairman noted that no Members of the Labour Group had attended the meetings of the School Place Planning Working Group in 2020 and 2021, despite invitations being extended.

The Committee noted that the proposals had received detailed attention and scrutiny. This stage of the process was not concerned with the detailed design of the proposals as it would be for the DfE to now undertake a full feasibility and submit a planning application in due course. The Council would

not enter into any property transaction until after these matters had been completed.

In response to a question from Cllr Jeal concerning the opportunity to consider other sites, the Head of Strategic Place Planning set out that the Kentwood site's allocation for a secondary school had been determined through the Council's Local Plan adoption process that had included both public consultation and a public inquiry. Any proposal for an alternative site would need to make a very strong special circumstances argument for education use as the Kentwood site had been allocated for use as a secondary school with the adopted Local Plan.

Councillor Jeal, one of the signatories to the call-in, explained that one of the reasons behind the decision for call-in was that the report had not been publicly available at the last Children, Education and Families PDS meeting in September. There was agreement that there was a need for a secondary school in the area however, locally there were concerns around the detailed plans and Ward Member engagement with residents had highlighted concerns that needed to be addressed in order to avoid an inappropriate development. One of the key concerns of residents was that the proposed development was too big. The planning process afforded a truncated list of grounds for approval whereas the Council's current position as freeholder afforded additional powers to those available through the planning process. The reality was that as freeholder the Council currently had greater flexibility to negotiate with the Harris Federation and consult with residents than would be available through planning processes. The Member cited previous issues with development at Stewart Fleming school and argued that waiting for a planning application to be submitted by the DfE would be too late and that these issues should instead be reviewed as part of the feasibility study.

The Vice-Chairman expressed concern that the lines between the planning process for a school and the need for school places were being blurred. The Head of Strategic Place Planning confirmed that the Local Plan established the framework for consideration of a development and until the DfE submitted fully developed proposals it was very difficult for the Council to respond. The Committee noted that planning proposals for schools were often controversial and there were a number of competing issues that needed to be balanced. Where the Council became aware of local concerns, these were raised with the DfE.

The Leader of the Labour Group and signatory to the Call-in raised the following three issues. Firstly, in terms of transparency, there had been significant concerns around the absence of Part 1 (public) papers at the meeting of the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee on 14 September 2021. It was stressed that Officers provided a recommendation as to whether an item should be discussed in Part 1 or Part 2 of the agenda, but it was for Members to decide and vote. Secondly, in relation to the Local Plan, objections had been raised about the size of the Kent House site and its suitability for a secondary school at meetings of the Local Development Framework Advisory Panel. Finally, in relation to planning issues, Cllr Wilkins

highlighted that she had attended the September meeting of the Executive where another similar issue concerning a land transaction for a school had been considered. At that meeting a request had been made that the two schools were treated the same. Cllr Wilkins sought clarification that the negotiations on the lease for Kent House would be entered into subject to any planning application.

Members of the Committee questioned exactly what part of the decision taken by the Executive was being called-in. It was noted that the report to the Executive had asked Members to note the progress made and endorse a move to heads of terms.

A Member noted that during the Local Plan processes, Members had clearly been advised by Officers that the Local Plan process was the only opportunity to influence designation of education sites and the Local Plan consultation had been very thorough. There was now a need for Members to consider the current position and wait for the next opportunity to influence further through Local Plan processes.

In bringing the debate to a conclusion, the Chairman confirmed that she had not heard anything which had made her consider that the decision taken by the Executive in September was unsound. Consequently, the Chairman proposed that no further action be taken on the Call-in. The motion was seconded by the Vice-Chairman, put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That no further action be taken in respect of the Call-in.

37 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families, Cllr Kate Lymer, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Committee. Prior to the meeting the Portfolio Holder had provided Members of the Committee with a written update outlining activity across the Portfolio since the last meeting. In particular the Portfolio Holder highlighted the following issues:-

- The Local Authority had received a very positive letter from Ofsted following a recent focus visit. In the letter Ofsted had confirmed that Members, Officers and Partners were doing all they could to help young people reach their full potential.
- The Portfolio Holder had recently addressed a Chair of Governors meetings.
- An invitation had been extended to school to visit the Civic Centre and hold their School Council meetings in the Council Chamber. As part of these visits the young people would meet the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and be provided with a tour of the Old Palace culminating in a visit to the Mayor's Parlor. It was noted that when schools visited local were Members were informed and invited to attend.
- The Portfolio Holder reported that since the last PDS meeting in September, she had attended a number of meetings including the

SEND and YOS Governance Boards. The Portfolio Holder had also recently made a presentation at internal Officer Training.

- In October the Portfolio Holder had chaired her second meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and had also been involved in promoting National Kinship Week.
- In addition, the Portfolio Holder had attended the official opening of the “Beyond Autism” Facility in Bromley North.
- A visit had also been made to the SEND Matters pop up shop in the Glades and Members noted that further pop-up shops would be arranged for Primary and Secondary schools.
- Within the last week the Portfolio Holder held meetings with the new Director for Children, Education and Families and the incoming Director for Corporate Services and Governance.
- Finally, the Portfolio Holder welcomed Richard Baldwin, Director for Children, Education and Families and extended her best wishes to Janet Bailey (Director of Children’s Services) who would be leaving the Council. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that the leadership and dedication demonstrated by Janet Bailey had been truly inspiring and she was genuinely one of the best in the business.

Cllr Lymer then responded to questions making the following comments:-

- A document on the Care Leavers Covenant would be forwarded to Members of the Committee when it was available. Members noted that whilst the Covenant was very much about continuing to provide the support already in place, what it did do was provide the Council’s Care Leavers with national access. The wider audience and ideas coming from the Covenant would enhance the young people and widen their horizons.
- The Ofsted review into Sexual Harassment and Abuse had been regularly discussed at meetings of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership. Since the publication of the Ofsted report a letter, from Ministers had been sent to all Safeguarding Children Partnerships. Discussions were taking place with schools and these had also been attended by a senior police officer. Bromley schools were taking a very proactive approach to discussions and the response with the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership leading the coordination of the Boroughwide response. Officers were looking to develop a set of resources to support schools with their consideration of and response to this matter.
- The Council was in the process of procuring consultants to undertake a strategic review of the SEN estate in Bromley. It was anticipated that current Marjorie McClure would form part of the first phase of property reviews commencing in Spring Term 2022.

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for the update.

**38 PRE DECISION SCRUTINY OF DECISIONS FOR THE CHILDREN,
EDUCATION & FAMILIES PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

The Committee considered the following Part 1 reports where the Children, Education and Families Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision:

A BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22
Report CEF21055

The report provided the budget monitoring position for 2021/22 based on activity up to the end of September 2021.

Members considered issues around the overspend in SEN Transport, noting that following a consultant review, proposals would be developed which would form part of the medium-term financial strategy and were likely to take effect, in varying degrees, from 2023. Some savings and mitigations had already been identified and further actions would be presented to Members as part of the budget setting process. The Director of Education confirmed that the review of SEN Transport formed part of the Council's four year Transformation Programme. Initial benchmarking had established that Bromley was not an outlier in terms of SEN transportation costs, indeed Bromley's costs were lower than some neighbouring boroughs.

In relation to the overspend in SEN Transportation, Members noted that the projection was that the overspend would reach £1.8m by the year end and the Department would be seeking to mitigate as far as possible. Members noted that there were a number of underlying issues and not all of these could be resolved through the consultants report. The Committee requested a further update at the next meeting in January 2022.

Turning to the issue of the cost of placements arising from the decisions of tribunals, a Member expressed concern around the wording used in the report, suggesting that it would be more appropriate to highlight the costs to the Council of placements whilst acknowledging that the placements were appropriate and met the needs of children. It was noted that tribunal processes should be avoided where possible as they carried with them a number of negative effects, not only on parents, but also on the headteacher who were required to compile lengthy reports. It was suggested that a review of the Tribunal Process should be added to the Committee's work programme.

In response, the Director of Education reassured the Committee that from the start of the process children and families were put first and staff were alert to the human aspect of the process. The Department was seeing significant pressures, not just in terms of the number of cases but also in increased complexity of need. The increased complexity of need meant that there were challenges with the sufficiency of places which resulted in a requirement to place children out-of-borough placements. Whilst it was recognised that the independent provision resulted in appropriate placements, they were at the

more expensive end of the scale. Officers did focus on the beginning of the process and engage in mediation prior to tribunal, however increasingly litigious claims were being submitted driven by private law forms.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- 1. Note that the latest projected overspend of £1,806,000 is forecast on the controllable budget, based on information as at September 2021;**
- 2. Agree the use of the £500k Education Risk Reserve and forward to the Executive for their approval as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.**

39 PRE DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 24 November 2021:

A DORSET ROAD SITE DISPOSAL **Report CEF21048**

The Executive was asked to approve and agree to the property transaction for the disposal of the Dorset Road Infant School following the amalgamation of the school with Castlecombe Primary School.

The Committee noted the addendum to the report that had been tabled and published on the website with the meeting papers.

Cllr David Cartwright address the Committee as Ward Member and reported that members of the Mottingham Resident's Association were watching progress on this issue closely. He noted that there were serious structural defects with the school building and that the school was not a listed building. The Resident's Association had indicated that its preference was for a housing development.

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Place Planning confirmed that the process for disposal was elongated as the site is protected by a number of pieces of legislation protecting public land. Section 77 applications to the Secretary of State for Education for the disposal of school land often take a year. The Regional Schools Commissioner had already taken a decision around enabling the schools to amalgamate into the new Elmstead Wood Primary School, which included that the proceeds from the sale of the Dorset Road site would go towards the costs of ensuring that new amalgamated school could physically admit all the pupils from both Castlecombe Primary School and Dorset Road Infant School. The Secretary of State would determine how funds would be used. The exact costs of the works would not be known until tenders had been received and there could potentially be a funding gap. The Trust was responsible for the delivery of the Elmstead Wood School proposal and discussions around any funding gap would need

to include the DfE. The Council's contribution was capped at the level of the capital receipt.

RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to:

- 1. Notes that the amalgamation of the Dorset Infant School and Castlecombe Primary School academies, operated by The Spring Partnership Trust, has been approved by the Department for Education. The new amalgamated school will be called Elmstead Wood Primary School and will be based at the Castlecombe Primary School site.**
- 2. Authorise the Director of Education to apply and obtain formal consent from the Secretary of State for Education to dispose of the Dorset Road Infant School site.**
- 3. Authorise the Council disposing of the Dorset Road Infant School once the 125-year academy lease has been terminated, and the land has reverted to the Council and subject to obtaining the requisite consent and approval of the Secretary of State for Education.**
- 4. Authorise the reinvestment of the capital receipt obtained from a disposal of the property at Dorset Road, estimated at £500,000, to improve the facilities at Castlecombe Primary School site in accordance with Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010.**
- 5. Authorise that the Council's contribution to support the amalgamation of the schools be capped at the value of the capital receipt achieved from the disposal of the Dorset Road Infants School site.**
- 6. Delegate authority for the Director of Education, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and Governance, Director of Finance and Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration, and the Portfolio Holder for Children Education and Families, to agree and settle the commercial terms of the disposal and to enter into all relevant legal agreements and any other ancillary legal documentation relating thereto and to deal with publicising, if appropriate, any Open Space Notices and considering representations received.**
- 7. Note that Secretary of State for Education's consent to dispose of Dorset Road Infants School does not change the Local Plan designation of the site for education use and that any planning application relating to the site will have to demonstrate how relevant Development Plan policies, notably Local Plan Policy 27 Education and Policy 20 Community Facilities, have been addressed.**

**40 BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT (2020/21)
Report CEF21042**

The annual report of the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) covered the period from April 2020 to March 2021. It was a statutory

requirement for safeguarding partnerships to publish this report under Working Together 2018. In line with statutory guidance and best practice, the report would be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care.

In response to a question, the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager reported that a MASH Strategic Group had been established this year in order to review information on referrals.

In response to a question from the Chairman concerning attendance at Board meetings, the Partnership Manager confirmed that with the introduction of virtual meetings attendance had improved and the new meeting process appeared to be working very well.

The Chairman thanked the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership for the informative update.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**41 0-25 PROGRESS REPORT
Report CEF21047**

The report provided an update of the scoping and progress of the 0-25 Project.

The Council's Transforming Bromley roadmap for 2019 to 2023 set out the Children's Services and Education workstream but was cross cutting with Adults, Housing, Health and Commissioning.

This included the following statements: *Statement 5* - Review transition plans and service pathways and *Statement 6* - Explore opportunities for developing an integrated 0 – 25 service offer for children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

An initial scoping report was completed in early 2021 for the transformation board which outlined initial findings some of which were summarised within this report which provided a summary of initial key findings and presented progress and next steps.

In opening the discussion, the Chairman thanked Officers for their work on the transition event which had recently been held. The Committee noted that the intention was to hold such events twice a year. The recent transition event had been a joint venture in partnership with the SEN and Adults Teams. The intention was to further develop the local support available to young people. It was hoped that more young people would help in running the next event and be present at the next event as there was a desire to continue to promote the ambitions of young people. The aim was to continue to develop the transition events around the four areas of the Preparing for Adulthood Pathway.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Head of the 0-25 Project confirmed that success would be measured through supporting young people to achieve positive outcomes in terms of employment, fulfilling lives and the local support that was available. The aim was to implement planning from an earlier age.

A Member highlighted that in order to support a child at times it was necessary to challenge the parental context being provided and work with parents to raise their own expectation of the achievements of their child. Members recognised the importance of informing families of the offer that was available.

The Committee noted that the various strands of the project would report to the 0-25 Governance Board and the Board would receive regular feedback. Co-design work would begin to be initiated following initial consultation with young people, families and professionals and this was happening through October/November 2021. Officers wanted to ensure that local people and parents were involved in shaping the final offer.

The importance of developing a link with local businesses was recognised.

In drawing the discussion to a close, the Chairman suggested that future reports on the 0-25 Project be considered at a joint meeting of the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee and the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. Progress on the 0-25 project be noted and the direction of the project endorsed; and**
- 2. Future reports on the 0-25 Project be considered at a joint meeting of the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee and the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee.**
- 3.**

42 CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES INFORMATION ITEMS

The items comprised:

- Independent Reviewing Officer 6-Monthly Update
- Local Authority Designated Officer 6-Monthly Update
- Youth Offending Service Update
- CEF Contracts Register
- Risk Register

The Chairman reported that the Independent Reviewing Officer 6-Monthly Update had been considered by the Living in Care Council and the Youth Offending Service Update had been considered by the Bromley Youth Council. The presentations would be appended to the minutes at **Appendix A**.

43 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.

The following summaries
refer to matters involving exempt information

44 PART 2 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

Members noted the information provided.

45 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PART 2 (EXEMPT) PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORTS

The Committee considered the following Part 2 reports where the Children, Education and Families Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision:

A CONTRACT AWARD UNDER EXEMPTION FAMILY DRUG AND ALCOHOL COURT SERVICE (FDAC)

The Committee noted the report and endorsed the recommendations

46 PART 2 CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES INFORMATION ITEMS

The items comprised:

- Part 2 (Not for Publication) CEF Contracts Register

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Noting this was Janet Bailey's last meeting, the Chairman led the Committee in thanking Janet for her hard work, dedication and support.

In response, the Director of Children's Services noted the "huge journey" undertaken by Bromley Children's Services, and stressed that all the Members and Officers involved should be proud of what had been achieved.

The Meeting ended at 8.54 pm

Chairman

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IRO ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

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HIGHLIGHTS



WHAT IS THE REPORT?

- **The IRO annual report is required by law**
- **The report is published so that it is available for members of the public**
- **The report is important because IROs have a duty to support the Council in how it behaves as the 'corporate parent'**





TAKING PART

- **IROs have a duty to consider the current wishes and views of young people at their review. This is called consultation. IROs always want young people to take part in their reviews.**
- **It has been difficult with online meetings to make this work for everyone and one in five children and young people chose not to take part in a meeting during the year.**

“LET’S AGREE TO DISAGREE”

- **Sometimes IROs disagree with a care plan for a child or young person, or about the support being given to help children.**
- **IROs have to resolve these differences using the Dispute Resolution Protocol.**
- **IROs formally raised 66 matters of concern in the year, an increase from 22 in 2019-20. Only 3 matters needed to be raised to the Head of Service.**



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BUILDING THE SERVICE

- **The service will be receiving support from our Living in Care Council (LinCC) as a priority area to help our IROs improve young people's participation in their reviews. We have some exciting events planned.**
- **Our IROs have developed and started delivering a regular seminar for our colleagues in Children's Social Care to help all our colleagues grow their understanding and appreciation of the IRO role.**



GROWING THE SERVICE

- **We continue to strive to achieve lasting stability among our group of IROs. This will help the service grow and flourish.**
- **We will be trialling a new method of consultation based on young people's feedback that they would wish their Reviewing Officer to contact them directly to consult in advance of reviews.**
- **We are reintroducing face to face reviews. This will be based upon the personal choice of young people.**





THE LONDON BOROUGH

Bromley Youth Offending Service Update – November 2021

Betty McDonald (Head of Service)

We launched YJ Strategic Plan 2020/23 and Annual Youth Justice plan 2021/22

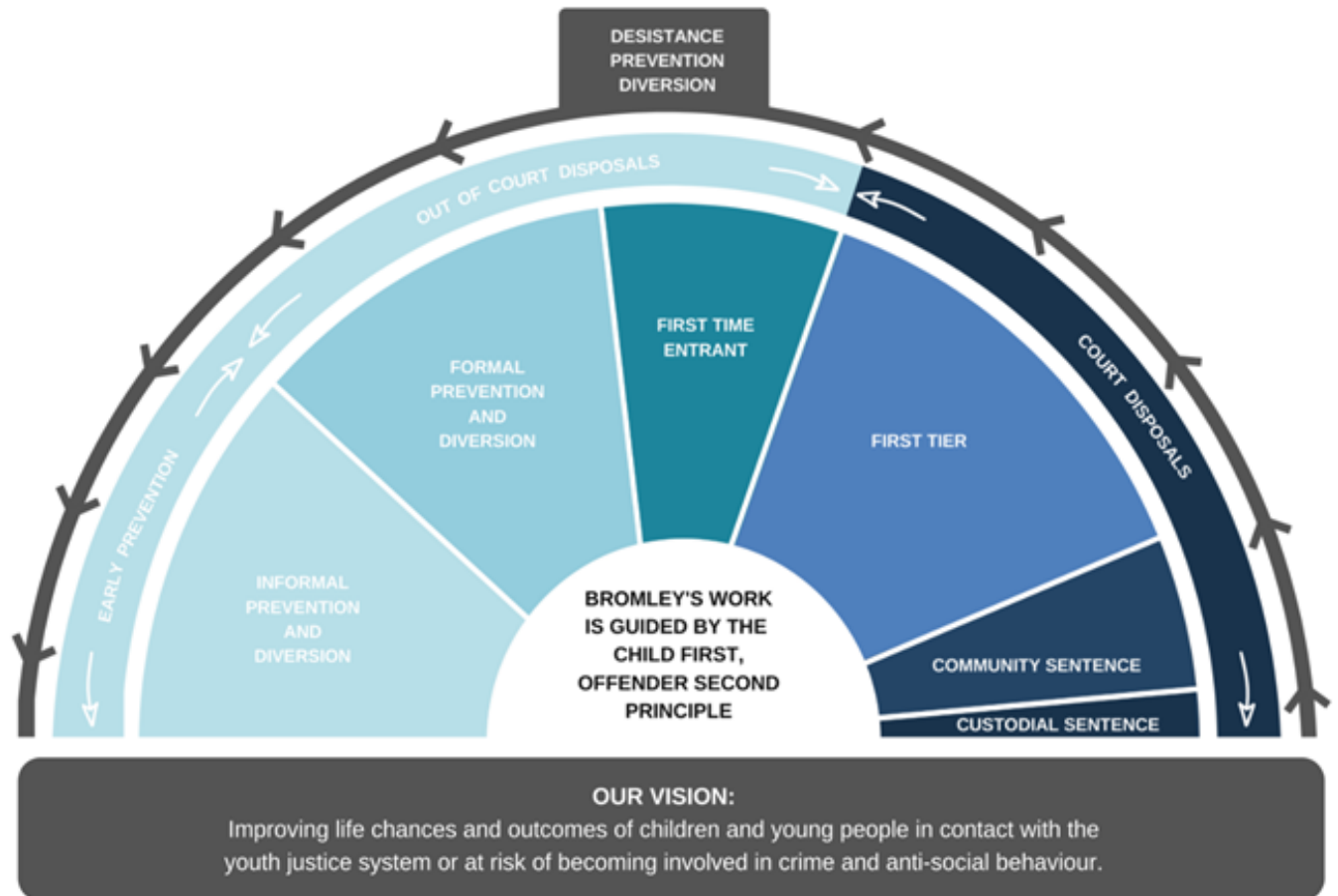
Vision and Strategy



The YOS Partnership have approved the 3-year Youth Justice Strategy 2020-23 that sets out our commitment to our children and young people. We have very high ambitions for our children as outlined in the Borough plan *Building a Better Bromley*.

In our joint effort to support our children we have committed to *reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour in Bromley, through a partnership approach.*

Youth Justice strategy desistance, prevention and diversion model



Child First Principle

To recognise through our assessments and prioritise the needs of children, their capacity, and their potential. We do this by promoting the individual strengths of the child to develop pro social identity for them to desist from offending which will lead to fewer victims and more safer communities.

Risk Factors

- Family - poor parental supervision & discipline, condone offending, low income, housing and family size.
- School – low attainment, bullying, lack of commitment to school, truancy.
- Community – disadvantaged neighbourhood, neglect, availability of drugs.
- Personal and individual factors – hyperactivity & impulsivity, alienation & lack of social communication, early involvement in offending and substance misuse, pro-criminal peers.

Agencies under the YOS

Required:

- Social workers
- Education worker
- Police
- Health workers
- Probation officer

Additional:

- Speech & language therapist
- Parenting worker
- ETE worker
- Substance misuse worker
- Teacher

Interventions we provide

1-2-1 offending behaviour programmes which are evidence based and specific to the relevance of offence e.g. drug dealing; a number of tools are used to assist with these which included Weapons/gangs, anger management, violent offender programme, peer pressure worksheets, motoring programme.

Group work - cognitive behavioural programme - thinking through consequences of behaviours. Girls group.

Substance misuse psychosocial interventions.

Victim awareness sessions and restorative justice which may include direct and indirect mediation with the victim and letters of apology.

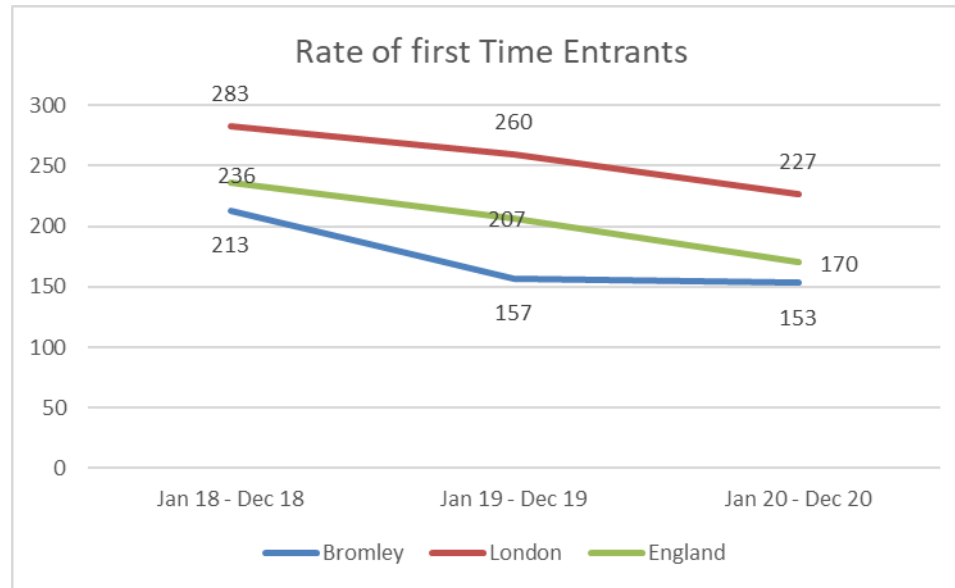
Resettlement support for those returning to the community from custody.

Parenting work – both in 1-2-1 and in groups such as Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities; work closely with Early Help service.

Motivational interviewing, brief solution focused therapy to help enable change.

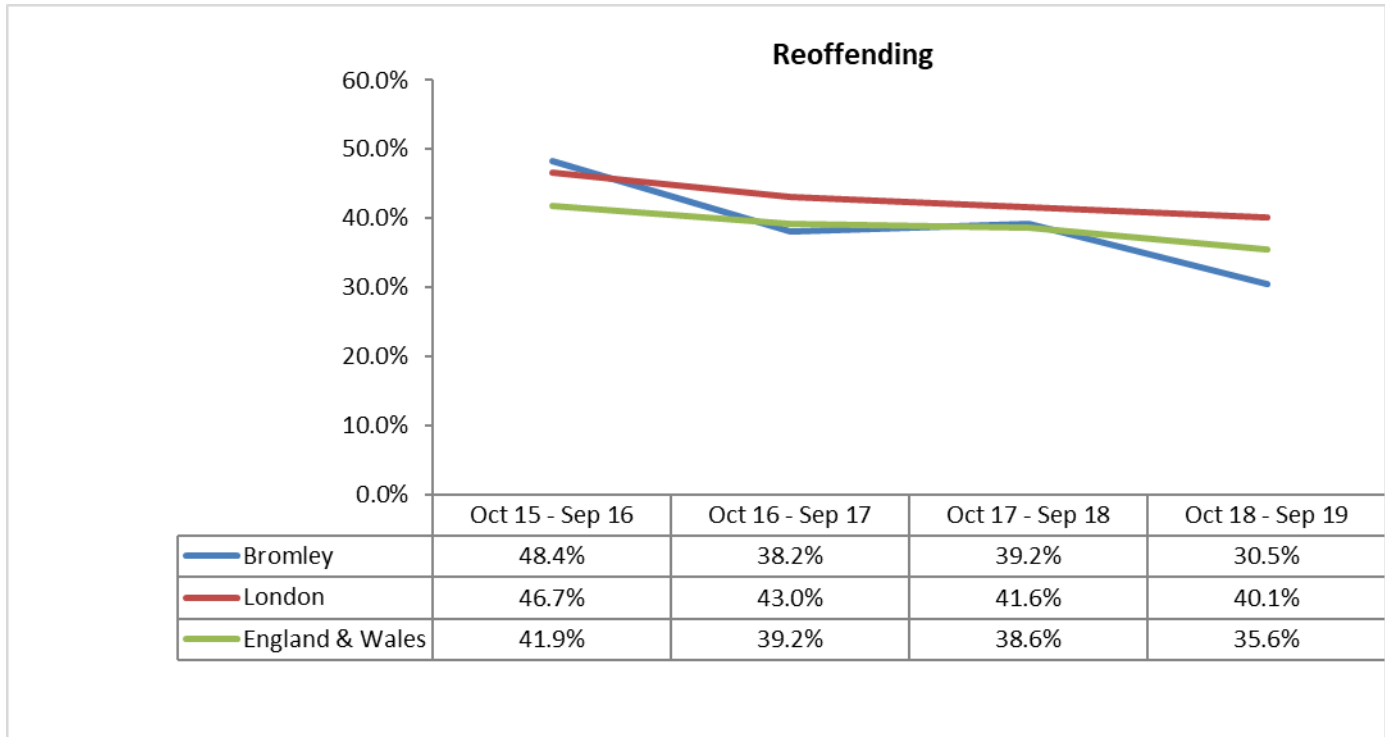
Reparation projects – projects designed to repair the damaged caused by offending. Including Bike maintenance, painting etc,

First Time Entrants



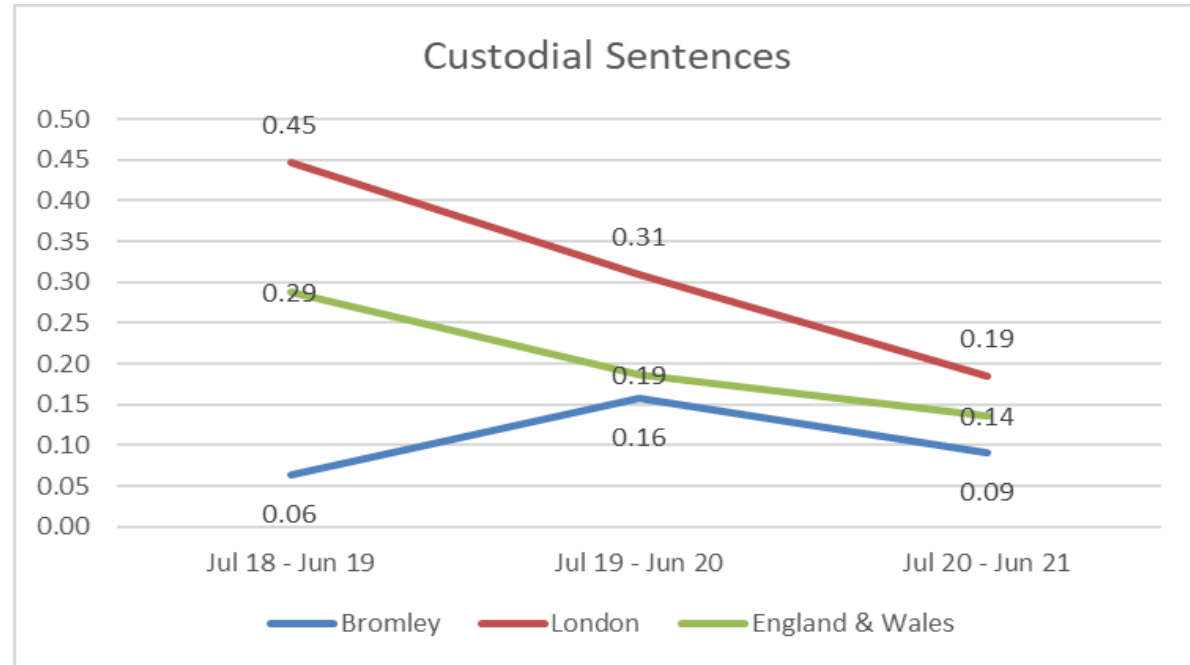
- Bromley have achieved a year on year reduction in the rate of FTE.
- Bromley's rate of FTE is consistently lower than the national and London averages.

Re-offending Rate



- Bromley have achieved an annual reduction in reoffending and the rate is currently lower than the national and London averages
- Bromley has the lowest reoffending rate in London

Custodial sentences



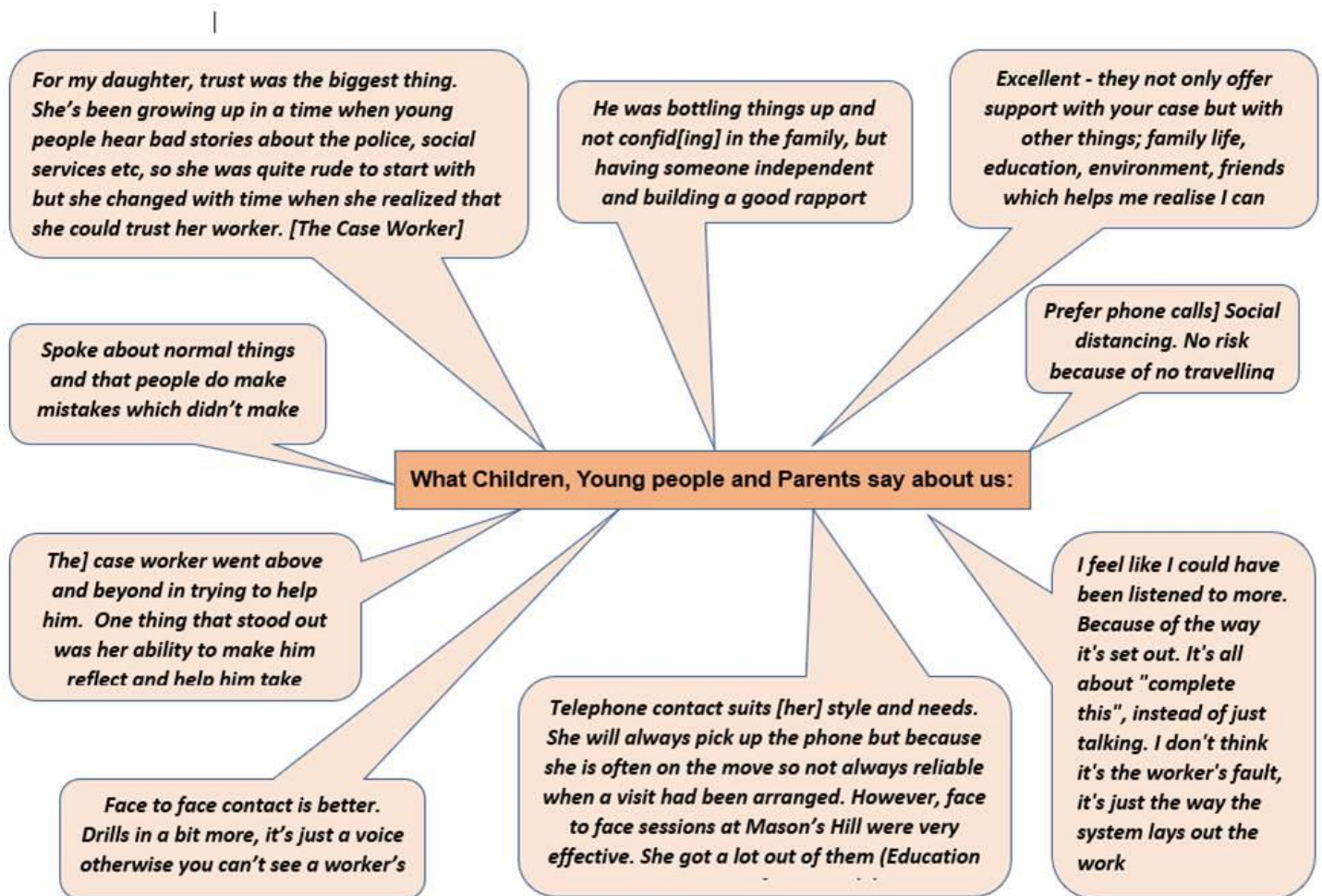
- Bromley have achieved an annual reduction in the rate of custodial sentences.
- Bromley's rate of custodial sentences is consistently lower than the national and London averages.

Serious offending

The operational definition of serious youth violence (SYV) used by the Youth Justice Board is a drug, robbery or violence against the person offence that has a gravity score of 5 or more. Robbery offences carry a gravity score of 6. Gravity scores range from 1 (least serious) to 8 (most serious). In the year ending March 2021 there were 13 offences of SYV committed by children in Bromley.

Serious youth violence continues to be a cause for concern and with heightened attention as we constantly hear of tragic incidents of fatalities and other serious injuries caused by a small number of people.

Voice of the child and parents/carers involved in the youth justice system



Prioritise for 2021/22

- Keeping young people safe.
- Continued commitment to delivering high quality service provision.
- **Developing** wider evidence base on what works to reduce offending and continually upskilling of our staff through training and supervision.
- Sharing our work with partners at all levels to increase their insight and understanding of the work of the service.
- Greater partner involvement and updates of how they advocate and promote the work of the YOS in their organisations.
- Inclusion of a court representative on the YOS Partnership Board
- Our Quality assurance framework of audits and practice reviews will remain and followed.
- Understanding disproportionality and focus on making a difference
- Learning from research, inspection, and serious cases reviews through the YOS and beyond to help develop and enhance our services and support.
- Ensure that we use the voice of the child and parents in our planning and service development
- Implement some of the learning from our covid recovery plan 2020.

Achievements

Bromley YOS is committed to improving the lives of children, young people, their families and the wider community through its key priorities which, in line with national drivers

- **Prevention offer**
- **Strong partnership working**
- **Stable workforce**
- **Work to address desistance**
- **Strong performance against national indicators**
- **Fewer children coming into the justice system**
- **Film project “Take me Please” (2019)**
- **Reparation directory of local projects**
- **Managing well during the pandemic**

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