

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: **General Purposes and Licensing Committee**

Date: **14 March 2012**

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

Title: **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS: ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Mark Bowen, Director of Resources

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 As part of this Committee's decisions in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme 2008/09, it was agreed that this Committee should receive an annual report from each of the Executive Assistants outlining the work they have undertaken over the past year in justification of the receipt of their allowance. This decision was reaffirmed by the Committee at subsequent meetings. Reports from the four current Executive Assistants in 2011/12 are attached as **Appendix 1**.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **The Committee is requested to consider and, if appropriate, comment on the submissions received from the four Executive Assistants relating to the work they have undertaken during 2011/12.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy. Payments to Executive Assistants are made under the London Borough of Bromley Members' Allowances Scheme.
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council .
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost (In 2011/12, four Executive Assistants were appointed at an annual cost of £14,292.88.)
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring cost .
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Representation - Members' Allowances.
 4. Total current budget for this head: £1,150,870; up to five Executive Assistants each receive an allowance of £3,573.22.
 5. Source of funding: 2011/12 budget
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement. Members Allowances' Scheme - Sections 18 and 19 of Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 100 of Local Government Act 2000 and The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Currently 4 Councillors.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 Following a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme 2008/09 which had been carried out by a Member Working Group, this Committee on 21st May 2008 recommended, and the full Council subsequently adopted, various amendments to the Scheme.
- 3.2 As part of the Committee's decisions in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme 2008/09, it was agreed that an annual report should be submitted to this Committee's February meeting from each of the Executive Assistants outlining the work they had undertaken over the past year in justification of the receipt of their allowance, which currently amounts to £3,573.22 each. That decision has been reaffirmed by this Committee in subsequent years.
- 3.3 The Members' Allowances Scheme currently allows for the appointment of up to five Executive Assistants. In 2011/12, four Executive Assistants were appointed –

Cllr Diane Smith (Adult and Community)

Cllr Peter Fortune (Environment)

Cllr Brian Humphrys (Children and Young People)

Cllr Lydia Buttinger (Children and Young People)

Submissions from these Councillors are attached in **Appendix 1**.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy, Financial, Legal and Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Previous reports to General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

Cllr Diane Smith

Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Community:

I have held the Executive Assistant post within the Adult and Community Services portfolio since May 2011.

During this time I have provided support and assistance to the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Robert Evans, operating and working closely under his direction on the wide ranging business which is within his scope of responsibility.

In addition to attending the scheduled Adult and Community PDS meetings and associated Health Scrutiny Sub Committee, I am also committed to participating in the weekly Portfolio Holder briefing sessions which currently, due to the vacancy at Director level are with the Associate Directors within the division.

At these meetings specific and pertinent business areas within the scope of the Portfolio are discussed and I am able to contribute, and support the Portfolio Holder in the decision making process and in shaping key work streams. Members will appreciate that much of the focus has been around identifying and delivering substantial budget savings against a backdrop of protecting services that need to be provided to some of the most vulnerable people within our Borough. In this respect there has been ongoing and keen debate and discussion around services and priorities.

Having had a previous professional career within the National Health Service I have specifically been asked for opinion on health related matters which particularly impact on the Portfolio and Bromley residents. In addition I have also been given the opportunity to further contribute to the health and social care agenda by serving as the LBB representative on the Bromley Healthcare Council of Governors and more recently have welcomed the invitation to become a member of the multi-agency Health and Well-being Board. I have similarly also been involved in discussions with the Orpington project board regarding the future provision of health services within the Orpington area.

With regard the on going concerns raised by Members and planned introduction of new Government legislation, I was asked by the Portfolio Holder to undertake a piece of work looking at the Council's approach to the issuance of Blue Badges with particular reference/ focus on the application of the assessment process in relation to discretionary criteria.

As part of this work I was able to attend the assessment of a Bromley resident who had appealed against their rejection for a badge and who was subsequently asked to attend in person for a further eligibility assessment.

In addition to observing the process I was also able to meet key operational staff including Occupational Therapists responsible for undertaking the reviews, and discuss with them and their managers concerns raised around the administration of the service.

Subsequent to this a request was made for Officers to produce a report and provide detailed and up to date guidance regarding the application of the discretionary eligibility criteria for Bromley residents who are "subject to further assessment". This was considered at the September 2011 PDS and was subsequently approved by the Committee and endorsed by the Portfolio Holder. I understand that a further briefing is currently being prepared and will be distributed to all Members to advise on the current Blue Badge allocation/assessment process.

I have recently visited and observed the work of the Admissions Avoidance Service and PACE (Post Acute Care Enablement) team at the PRUH. I have subsequently been able to provide specific feedback to the Portfolio Holder, giving assurance that by working collaboratively with partners in Health, the LBB funding and staffing components of these teams are effectively contributing to the delivery of care to some of Bromley's most vulnerable residents with improved outcomes. In particular the length of hospital stay has been reduced and there is the opportunity for people to be rehabilitated in their own homes at an earlier stage than was previously possible. Early social care intervention has also contributed to a reduction in the need for longer term care.

Over the last nine months in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder I have taken part in visits to the Borough's Older People's Day Centres, Learning Disability services and housing developments including a visit to the Extra Care Housing development at Crown Meadow Court and the Travellers site in Cray Valley East. I also visited the secure unit at SLAM in the Autumn where there was an opportunity to tour the unit and discuss aspects of the therapy programme.

In addition to meeting and observing LBB frontline staff in the workplace I have also attended departmental management meetings in order to gain a greater understanding of day to day operational issues. Work with the Third sector is an on going theme within the Portfolio and I have attended individual meetings with providers as well as AGMs with key partners such as Community Links Bromley, Mencap, CAB etc.

The above information is a brief overview of my work to date. The ACS portfolio is both diverse and complex and looking ahead there will continue to be some significant challenges. There are several workstreams already underway in which I have a particular interest and I would welcome the opportunity to continue to contribute to these, under the direction of Councillor Evans, providing support to him as the Executive Decision maker.

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Cllr Peter Fortune

Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment:

The role of Executive Assistant is a demanding and fulfilling one that brings you to the heart of policy making. It is a role that I very much enjoy and one to which I believe I still have much to contribute.

The Environment department touches the lives of all of our residents every day. Whether it be the road networks, waste and recycling or the use of our many green parks – the Environment Department is often seen as the 'face' of our green borough.

As a result of this the Environment Portfolio is a large and demanding one. Credit must be given to Councillor Smith for his efforts in maintaining the very high standards that the department constantly sets. It is my job to support him in this role.

I do this by attending meetings and corresponding with various Bromley based members and officers. I also attend Environment PDS committees and other meetings outside of the Borough. I also attend regular meetings with the Portfolio Holder. In these meetings I am often tasked to work on certain initiatives across the portfolio. One such initiative was the Snow Friends scheme.

As a result of the huge amount of Snow Fall in late 2011 I was asked to help prepare the Councils' Snow Friends initiative for 2012. I worked with both the Portfolio Holder and various officers to prepare a strategy encompassing marketing, delivery and logistics for the Snow Friends scheme. We organised two Snow Friends conferences to which we invited residents associations, Safer Neighbourhood Panels, Schools and businesses from across the Borough. We utilized local media and Council literature to widely publicise the scheme and conferences. As a result of our efforts we signed up over 4000 volunteers to hundreds of Snow Friends groups. As well as the administrative side of the scheme I was also questioned by the Environment PDS and received their backing for it.

When the snow fell we were overwhelmed by the positive response from residents and I am now working on efficiencies for the scheme next year.

The Environment Department works right across the spectrum of Council services. As a result, there is often cause for liaising with other departments. One such occasion this year found me working with the ACS department to tackle the fraudulent use of Blue Badges. Working under the leadership of Cllr. Diane Smith (EA for ACS) we investigated ways of punishing those who misuse Blue Badges whilst protecting those deserving users. As a result of this work we have seen some positive results and are continuing to work to discourage fraudulent behaviour.

I have also worked with numerous other councillors, officers, businesses and working parties on road repairs, the use of satellite navigation devices by HGVs, recycling issues and various other projects.

The role of Executive Assistant is one I greatly enjoy and I believe I provide some real value for the department. I am grateful to the Portfolio Holder, PDS committee and to the excellent departmental officers for all of their support over the year.

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**Councillor Brian Humphrys,
Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:**

I have attended numerous visits to the DfE to meet Ministers and senior civil servants to support the Portfolio holder and Director in trying to redress and or clarify issues that have arisen from recent Education legislation; with some success I might add.

Attend all Council CYP PDS meetings as an observer.

Appointed to be a Member of the CYP Trust Board, a member of the Executive Board for YOT, a member of the School Admission Forum and also attend the Secondary Head Teachers' termly meeting with senior officers and the Portfolio Holder.

Attend the Schools Forum meetings as an observer.

Visit, with the Portfolio Holder, schools, CYP social service facilities, youth clubs and partners such as Bromley Y as well as voluntary groups.

Attend the Portfolio Holder's weekly meeting with the Director of CYP and also the annual Budget meeting with Chairmen of Governors.

Am present at award ceremonies for Governors and other groups.

I attended the Safeguarding Board conference.

Prior to my appointment, I have been for many years, and still am, on the Officer/Member Working Party for Primary and Secondary School Development as well as the Executive Working Party for SEN. I am now also a member of the Children's Safeguarding Executive Working Party.

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Cllr Lydia Buttinger,
Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People:

Over the last year I have supported the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young people (CYP) through the role of Executive Assistant. I have attended all CYP PDS meetings, I am vice chair of Children's safeguarding Executive working party and am a member of SEN Working Party.

This year has been exceptionally busy for this portfolio given the fast moving academy agenda, where Bromley has been one of the country's leading Boroughs for schools converting. In addition there has been significant work on budget setting given the reduced government formula grant and much of our focus has been spent on preserving front line and essential services and improving the overall efficiency of the service. In addition we have worked on several invest to save schemes which will help with improved efficiency in the longer-term. The merging of CYP and Adults and Community Services has also been a key focus this year with the new structure being effective from April. Our regular 1:1s with the Director and Portfolio Holder cover both these large ongoing areas of focus in addition to day to day issues that arise.

Another key element of the role has been in engaging both staff and young people within the Portfolio's remit, scrutinising spend on projects and representing the Portfolio at events. This has included; visiting the Hawes Down Centre, the Youth Offending Team, CYP offices and Ravens Wood, opening the Mottingham BMX track, attending the Priory prize giving and governor briefings and meeting with the living in care council.