

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 23 January 2013

UPDATE FROM THE SEN EXECUTIVE WORKING PARTY

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update following the meeting of the Executive Member Officer Working Party for Special Educational Needs held on 27th November 2012.
- 1.2 Following the resignation of the Chairman, Councillor Stephen Wells who remained as a member of the Working Party, Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe was elected Chairman and Councillor Judi Ellis was elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year until May 2013.

2. THE BRIEFING

- 2.1 A number of areas were considered as part of the meeting:

SEN and Disability Strategy

- 2.2 Members considered a report which provided an update on Phase V of the SEN Strategy, which had been agreed on 21st May 2009 and aimed to reduce reliance on out-of-Borough placements, increase parental confidence and reduce tribunals, and improve SEN funding methodologies.
- 2.3 It was noted that further objectives would need to be considered in line with new legislation expected to be introduced following the publication of the Green Paper – ‘Support and Aspiration: A new approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability’ (March 2011) for which Bromley had been a Pathfinder Local Authority. It was anticipated that statutory regulation would become law with Royal Assent (subject to Parliament) in Spring 2012 to be implemented from September 2014.

Pupils with Nurture Needs and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

- 2.4 Members considered a report outlining the proposal to transfer the Key Stage 1 Nurture Group from Manor Oak Primary School to the specialist provision at Groveland’s Pupil Referral Unit.
- 2.5 The proposed unit would provide for 8 pupils with complex behavioural needs, and would largely be funded by the transfer of monies currently allocated to Manor Oak Primary School

for this provision. Additional funding would be required from the SEN budget to fund the transfer, including £20k to provide a higher level of support staff for children with more complex needs and a one off start up fund of £10k for resourcing the Key Stage 1 curriculum. This would prevent the need to access costly out of borough provision for children with these complex needs.

Bromley and Bexley SEN & Disability Green Paper

- 2.6 Members considered a report providing an update on the progress of Bromley and Bexley SEN and Disability Green Paper Pathfinder and implications and opportunities of Pathfinder work in Bromley. It also outlined special educational needs and disability issues raised through the draft statutory clauses for pre-legislative scrutiny of the new proposed Children and Families Bill (September 2012).
- 2.7 The new Bill would incorporate SEN and Disability issues informed by Pathfinder work and it was noted that Pathfinder funding had recently been extended until September 2014.

Education Funding Reform

- 2.8 Members considered a report which provided details of the Government's proposals for School Funding Reform arrangements for 2013/14.
- 2.9 The Dedicated Schools' Grant would be divided into three separate blocks; Early Years, Schools and High Needs, and the amount of funding allocated to each block would be based on the Local Authorities Section 251 Budget statement for 2012/13.

Implications for Schools

- 2.10 Members considered a report which detailed the Government's proposals for School Funding Reform, which was the first step towards the introduction of a new national funding formula during the next spending review period and would ensure that similar pupils would attract similar levels of funding across the country.
- 2.11 The Department for Education aimed to simplify the local funding arrangements for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and to introduce a new approach to high needs funding that would help to improve transparency, quality and choice for young people and their families.

Managing the Changes

- 2.12 Members considered a report which outlined risks to the Local Authority from changes to the way funding for Special Educational Needs was delegated to schools from 1st April 2012. The new funding formula would be in place for 2 years prior to the introduction of a National Funding Strategy and would provide a minimum funding guarantee of minus 1.5% to ensure schools had a guarantee of funding levels.