

REPORTS FROM EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS

(3) Cllr Kieran Terry

Executive Assistant to the Children, Education and Families Portfolio Holder

This was my first full year holding the position of Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families. This period has presented a diverse set of challenges for the department, however from my perspective it has been pleasing to see the continuing strength of our service thanks to the hard work of Council staff and others. The below update to the General Purposes and Licensing Committee summarises my main areas of focus during the year.

For me one of the most interesting and rewarding experiences from being an executive assistant came early last year during my visit to the Council's Youth Offending Service site alongside local MP Sir Bob Neill and portfolio Holder Cllr Peter Fortune. During the visit, I met some of the young people being supported by the service, hearing about their background, experiences of the service and what they were currently doing, which included gaining qualifications with the intention of later employment. I also got to see one particular project, a short film written by young people and supported by the team, a YouTube video called 'Take Me' which examines the relationships of different family members, the choices they make and the consequences of those choices. This video has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times and is a great example of some of the positive work performed by our Youth Offending Service.

During the year, I have been involved with School Places Planning, which highlighted a particular focus for an increase in provision locally for children with SEN. I look forward to working closely with officers and others to bring this forward in the forthcoming months. I have also attended the Council's Budget Sub-Committee during the year, which highlighted some of the budgetary challenges the department has in forthcoming years.

The past year has been especially challenging for the Children, Education and Families Portfolio. Despite this, our department has reacted with great resilience and dynamism thanks to the hard work of Council staff and other related parties. I have really enjoyed being involved with this and seeing first hand the work performed to ensure services continue to operate despite the challenges the ongoing pandemic has brought. As part of this, I have also been involved with preparing the weekly update to members outlining the key areas of focus for the department and keeping them up to date in relation to the areas residents care about the most.

During the year, I have represented the London Borough of Bromley at a number of meetings held by London Councils. In particular I have found it very interesting to witness some of the issues raised by other councils, especially in the context of Coronavirus and discuss some of the challenges facing Children's services teams across London.

Lastly I have also built relationships with key community groups in the borough. I have recently been appointed to Bromley Y, a local organisation that works with schools and other key agencies to promote the wellbeing and mental health of children and families. I look forward to building further on this experience in future.

(4) Cllr Will Rowlands
Executive Assistant to the Environment and Community Services Portfolio
Holder

It has been my second year as assistant to Cllr Huntington Thresher and a rather eventful one. When I wrote my report for last year, no one could have possibly predicted that the world would be turned on its head and our way of life would drastically change pretty much overnight. Despite the challenges we faced, the entire department conducted themselves in the most professional of ways to ensure that the front line services to our residents were maintained at the highest level given the circumstances. Due to the pandemic some of the projects I was set to work on had to be shelved and alternate projects assigned. I will now give you a brief analysis of what I have done in the past year.

Fly Tipping

Fly tipping was a project that overlapped from last year into this one. It was felt that given the increased levels of fly tipping during the first lockdown, the project needed to continue for a little while longer. It was agreed that I would monitor the situation to begin with until levels fell however, as the combination of people working from home and the unavoidable closure of our recycling sites led to bad habits continuing, the project has been extended for the foreseeable.

Recycling around flats

In correlation with the continued project above, another project I was given was to try and help encourage recycling around blocks of flats. It was identified by our officers that people who live in flats are less likely to recycle due to the infrastructure where they live not being accommodating towards recycling. My aim was to talk to and work with residents, residents associations and stakeholders to encourage and promote the advantages of recycling.

Unfortunately, lockdown struck and communication became restricted - and face to face communication more or less banned. It also meant that any sort of pilot scheme would most probably be delayed to 2021/22. This meant that the way of working had to change. I identified that the majority of our flats are owned and operated by Clarion Housing Association and they would therefore play a vital role in the success of this project. I have been in contact with Clarion to see if they will offer assistance with mixed success so far.

While trying to contact Clarion, I have also contacted some resident associations who I know are closely linked with Clarion to try and help encourage the project to be successful. The main association who came back enthusiastically was the Gefferys Estate Residents Association (GERA). They have agreed to be a participant in any forthcoming pilot scheme that takes place - although it must be mentioned their involvement would probably need to involve Clarion for reasons stated previously.

Anti Idling Campaign

Another project which caused great optimism was being involved with the anti-Idling campaign. The aim was to work with schools across the borough to clamp down on

cars idling at the school gates. Unfortunately, lockdown meant the schools were closed obviously defeating the point of the project, and when they did reopen, the schools who were going to participate have wanted to understandably prioritise working their way through this pandemic. Once some form of normality resumes in life I look forward to this project being given a proper chance to take off.

Fix My Street

Arguably the most important task I'm assigned, Fix My Street is arguably the core of the Environment departments operations. It helps the council to maintain the high standards it prides itself on while also allowing the council to identify patterns emerging in cases such as fly tipping or if we have an underperforming contractor. Due to the efficiency and good relations council officer have with contractors a lot of the issues raised on Fix My Street are dealt with almost immediately the vast majority of the time, and where delays have occurred, it has been the result of the pandemic leading to material orders being delayed or a shortage in the workforce due to isolation.

Connected Kerb

One of the advantages of Cllr Huntington Thresher's management style is that he has allowed to me explore potential new openings which would be of benefit to the council going forward - giving me a degree of free reign in the process.

In April, a representative of Connected Kerb contacted me to discuss the viability of their electric charging points being rolled out across Bromley. With the consent of Cllr Huntington Thresher I explored further with talks culminating in a meeting in August. Connected Kerb are a new up and coming provider of electric charging points within the sector and have a fast growing reputation backed with multiple awards for their service and products. Connected Kerb have recently signed a contract with one of Bromley's contractors 'Riney' to roll out charging points.

I am still in discussions with Connected Kerb while procurement procedures are conducted and should hopefully have an update in the summer on progress.