

London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: **EXECUTIVE, RESOURCES AND CONTRACTS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date: **13 October 2021**

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

Title: **SCRUTINY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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Chief Officer: Ade Adetosoye OBE, Chief Executive

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

This report provides a written update to inform the scrutiny of the Chief Executive at Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are requested to note the report.

3. COMMENTARY

Introduction

3.1 Since my previous scrutiny session in February 2021, I can provide the following updates:

- Updates on key organisational priorities for 2021/22
- COVID-19 updates

3.2 Updates on key organisational priorities for 2021/22

Delivery of Transforming Bromley Programme

3.3 As we are now at the midpoint of the four year Transforming Bromley programme from 2019 - 2023, a report came to the Executive in June 2021 to outline the achievements of the programme to date.

3.4 The six transformation workstreams have so far identified £10.6m in savings that have been built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and are due to be delivered by 2024/25. Alongside this, some additional savings have been earmarked to mitigate growth pressures on the Council's budget, which have been taken as separate savings.

3.5 Over the last 18 months, the transformation agenda has progressed despite the highly challenging context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our Covid-19 response has informed our future transformation approach and the key priorities for the next two years, including better use of technology, shared use of data and intelligence, better strategic decision-making, and better collaboration across services and with partner agencies.

3.6 In this third year of our Transforming Bromley programme, we continue to develop transformation savings proposals that will inform budget setting for 2022/23. These proposals will formally go for decision to the relevant PDS Committees and the Executive, and Chief Officers will provide regular updates on business-as-usual transformation activities at their respective PDS committees. I will also continue to provide transformation updates via my committee scrutiny sessions.

Long-term budget management and financial strategy

3.7 Alongside the Transformation Programme, we maintain a strong focus on prudent financial management strategy in Bromley through the following mechanisms:

- Regular 'Are We On Track' monthly assessment meetings through all departmental meetings to determine whether we are on course to deliver projected budget savings and to manage and scrutinise growth
- Monthly overview discussion of transformation/mitigation savings and financial impact of COVID-19 at the COE Transformation Board
- Bi-monthly 'hot spot' monitoring and full quarterly financial monitoring reports will be undertaken quarterly as at present.

3.8 The Council has exercised significant financial prudence in ensuring that the COVID-19 crisis has not adversely affected the Council's budget and monitoring the extent to which the Government funds the net cost to the Council. While we have set aside £8m of Government funding to address the additional cost pressures on the 2021/22 budget, there remains ongoing work to mitigate income losses and to deliver any ongoing COVID-19 related business requirements.

3.9 Over the course of delivering our COVID-19 programmes, the Council has been recognised for our highly cost-effective approach:

- Our lateral flow (LFT) community rapid testing programme, in place since January 2021 and delivering over 25,000 tests, has been recognised nationally as the most cost-efficient rapid testing programme in England.
- Our Shielding, Volunteering and Assistance programme was delivered through 130 redeployed staff from across the organisation, resulting in minimal staffing expenditure.

3.10 With my senior leadership team, we will prepare an updated financial forecast in September 2021 to reflect our current position and our proposals to manage ongoing demand, mitigate future potential growth, and potential transformation savings.

3.11 As further indication of our strong financial management, the Council has also been included in the final shortlist for 'Excellence in Asset Management' for the 2021 Public Finance Awards. The submission mainly related to the Council's outstanding performance on treasury management and the pensions fund.

Building a Better Bromley Corporate Plan

3.12 The refresh of the Building a Better Bromley Corporate Plan is coming to Members for approval in September 2021 and sets out our proposed strategic priorities as an organisation over the next five years.

Delivery of the Regeneration Strategy for 2020 – 2030

3.13 In line with the Regeneration Strategy, a number of key development priorities continue to be taken forward:

- The Regeneration Plan for Crystal Palace Park received outline planning permission in March 2021 from the Local Planning Authority. Subject to the outline planning application approval at the GLA, the Regeneration Plan will be delivered in two stages over the next five years.
- Works are now underway to restore the Crystal Palace Subway following the successful award of £2.8m in grant funding. The Subway site is due to be removed from Historic England's At Risk Register in summer 2022.
- A Board has been established to support and oversee the Orpington Town Centre development plans. Officers are working with Areli, our development partner, to ensure that the Council's key objectives for this scheme are met, including the re-provision of the leisure and community facilities, service continuity or alternative arrangement for the existing services, and delivery of affordable housing
- Work is progressing to restore Beckenham Public Hall into a mix of publicly accessible and independently operated work, event and entertainment spaces.

Improvement journey in Youth Offending Service (YOS)

3.14 We have continued our work with our multi-agency partners to drive improvements in our services for children and young people who are known to the youth justice system.

3.15 In March 2021, we reviewed the governance arrangements of the Board to provide greater rigour and strategic direction to the wider improvement agenda. Following consultation, we agreed to establish a YOS Executive Board that will meet quarterly to provide strategic direction to the wider improvement agenda in Bromley in preparation for our YOS inspection.

3.16 At an operational level, 3 operational sub-groups are now meeting bi-monthly and focus on the 3 key performance priorities to drive forward operational delivery of local provision around

'reducing first time entrants', 'reducing use of custody' and 'reducing offending and reoffending'.

Succession planning arrangements and recruitment

- 3.17 We continue to ensure timely succession planning arrangements for the senior leadership team. We have successfully appointed on a permanent basis to the Director of Children's Services post and to the Director of Corporate Services post, with both Directors due to start in post in November 2021.
- 3.18 In terms of recruitment and retention, our Workforce Development team is exploring the following priorities:
- Talent development pipeline/programme for staff from the frontline to grow into middle and senior management roles
 - External opportunities for staff to gain wider learning and experience in their professional sectors
 - Shadowing and mentoring of staff, including cross-borough mentoring opportunities
 - Succession pathway document to plan for recruiting and retaining into roles
 - Prioritising and supporting internal promotions to help grow staff through the organisation
 - External appointments where needed to bring in talent and specialist skills
 - Learning and development opportunities, including 'career progression' workshops for staff

Health integration

- 3.19 The OneBromley partnership continues to work effectively in bringing together health and social care services with the voluntary sector, continues to work together collaboratively to provide seamless and personalised care for Bromley residents.
- 3.20 During the COVID-19 pandemic, we introduced highly effective hospital discharge arrangements with Bromley Healthcare and South East London CCG by setting up a Single Point of Access (SPA) system to ensure swift and timely hospital discharges and keep hospital beds free. This in turn helped us to model pressures on adult social care as residents were discharged out of hospital. For this work, Bromley was shortlisted in the 'Health and Care Integration' category of the 2021 Management Journal Awards in partnership with the South East London CCG.
- 3.21 Over the next twelve months, we will continue with our work to establish an integrated care system partnership in South East London in line with the Government White Paper. For Bromley, we will continue to ensure a clear commitment to the needs of Bromley through the work of our place-based programme board.

Meeting our statutory and regulatory requirements

- 3.22 We are continuing with our inspection readiness agenda across children's social care, adult social care, education and youth offending services to ensure that our regulated statutory services improve outcomes for our residents and service users. We continue to have positive discussions with Ofsted during our Annual Engagement Conversations where we review practice across children's social care and education services.

Delivery of Economic Development Strategy for 2021 - 2031

- 3.23 One of the key levers to drive the recovery of the local economy in Bromley will be the Council's ten-year Economic Development strategy, which was approved by Members in June 2021 and sets out the following 7 key priorities and aspirations:

- 1. Education and Skills:** our residents have access to the right opportunities for skills and education that will ensure healthy employment in the future
- 2. Employment Spaces:** our residents have access to the right employment spaces in the right locations with strong networks which encourages enterprise and facilitates sustained growth
- 3. Thriving and Investing:** our borough is exciting, attractive and a welcoming place where businesses thrive, people aspire to live and visit, and new enterprises seek to invest
- 4. High Streets for the Future:** our high streets can adapt to the changing needs of consumer, continue to have a strong offer, that includes places to live, work and entertain
- 5. Connectivity and Mobility:** our community is well connected through diverse physical and digital infrastructure networks which underpins mobility across the whole borough
- 6. Tourism and Culture:** our cultural and tourism industries continue to grow and diversify, and our unique historical features are promoted
- 7. Green Economy:** we want to promote a green economy to help deliver sustainability and growth

3.24 The strategy is vital to the longer term planning of the local economy recovery and ensuring that businesses recognise Bromley continues to be a centre of excellence for business location.

Operational Property Review and future of the Civic Centre site

3.25 Our Operational Property Review continues to review all of the Council's assets with a view to producing an evidence-led Operational Accommodation Strategy supported by a full financial business case and delivery plan to meet the needs of the organisation in the short, medium and longer term. An update report is due to come to the Corporate Leadership Team in November 2021.

Realignment of communications

3.26 We are strengthening our communications unit over the next year with additional capacity to enable a more strategic and high quality approach to communications across the organisation. This will include:

- Centralising communication skills and provide organisational capacity to deliver corporate communications and engagement priorities to support Cabinet, the Mayoralty, wider Members, the Chief Executive, Directors and officers.
- Robust and timely response to out-of-hours communications challenges including emergency incidents
- Enabling better sharing of expertise and information to the benefit of our residents
- Streamlining content and centralise ownership of web content in the Council and keep all content as up-to-date as possible.
- Ensuring our intranet information is up-to-date and fit for purpose for our staff, Members and contractors.

Digital Strategy and Digital Agenda for the Council

3.27 Our digital vision for the future of Council services has been informed by the Digital Innovation Conference, held virtually in November 2020, which will inform our new Digital Strategy. Our experience during the pandemic, moving many of our services quickly online to support residents and staff during the pandemic, has shown the potential for a digital first approach to services. Moving forward, we are reflecting on what our new model of service should look like and how much of this 'channel shift' we should retain.

- 3.28 Key priorities include:
- Delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy in 2021/22 and setting out the strategic direction through our Digital Roadmap
 - Identifying opportunities for digitalisation in adult and children's social care to reduce demand on statutory services
 - Digital opportunities through our Liberata contract including digital analytics and intelligence automation

Update on 2029 Net Zero Carbon Strategy

- 3.29 The Council is now two years into the delivery of its ten year Net Zero Carbon Action Plan as part of its commitment to meeting its net zero emissions target by 2029.
- 3.30 The total emissions in year 2 reduced by 39.5%, compared to the previous year (2019/20). The large reduction in emissions achieved in year 2 (2020/21) is predominantly a result of Covid-19 impacting on Council operations such as reduced paper use, energy consumption, office waste and business travel.
- 3.31 To get to our net zero emissions target by 2029, our key priority initiatives have been condensed to the seven priority areas:
1. Street Lighting LED Upgrade
 2. Buildings: energy efficiency
 3. Renewable Energy Procure 100% renewable electricity and gas.
 4. Council Fleet Switch to electric vehicle fleet.
 5. Alternative Technologies and Renewables Investment
 6. Woodlands, Parks & Greenspaces
 7. Certified Carbon Offsets (from UK-based projects)

- 3.32 Initiatives 1 - 4 will help drive down the Council's direct emissions as far as possible, whilst initiatives 5 - 7 will be assessed to determine the best mix for offsetting the Council's remaining residual emissions.

COVID-19 updates

Transitioning COVID-19 response into business-as-usual service

- 3.34 Following the end of lockdown restrictions on 19 July, we evaluated the response across all Covid-19 programmes and have identified where business-as-usual services can pick up any ongoing requirements, reducing any ongoing financial exposure to Covid-19 associated costs.
- 3.35 An overarching recovery plan for the Council has been drafted and this is supported by local departmental recovery plans owned by each member of the Chief Officers' Executive Group.

Local contact tracing programme

- 3.36 Our local contact tracing programme continues to support to contact those COVID positive patients that the national Test and Trace team have failed to reach. We continue to experience decreasing numbers of cases into this programme, averaging 35 cases per day over the last two weeks. Our current local call success rate is 52.9%, meaning 88.4% of Bromley COVID-19 patients are being reached either through our local call scheme or the national team.

Community testing programme

- 3.37 In line with other London local authorities, we are noticing an ongoing reduction in the daily average of tests completed through our lateral flow community testing system for asymptomatic staff working in the community who may be COVID-19 positive but show no symptoms. Alongside our face-to-face testing programme, we are distributing kits to young people attending the mass vaccination centre at the Civic Centre before returning to further education. We are also distributing kits outside of the test centre's operating hours and over weekends to widen our reach. Test kits were also distributed to local residents attending the Penge Festival over the Bank Holiday weekend.
- 3.38 We are also working with our service providers to distribute test kits more widely to disproportionately impacted groups through our substance misuse support services, homelessness charities and sexual health clinics.

Vaccination programme in Bromley

- 3.39 The Council continues to support the NHS to increase vaccination rates in Bromley, which remain the highest in Southeast London. The current target cohort is 17 - 16 year olds, who currently have a good take-up rate with 33% having already received one dose, which is much higher than other areas. We are continuing to work in schools to encourage further vaccination uptake, as well as at large events such as the Penge Festival on 28 August.
- 3.40 Our vaccine hesitancy working group continues to monitor and plan interventions for target populations in Bromley where vaccination uptake is lower. We also continue to provide targeted support to care home staff: as a result of this work, the vaccination rate for care home staff has increased by 9% since mid-June to 85% and continues to increase.
- 3.41 Our Covid-19 vaccination centre at the Bromley Civic Centre remains open 7 days a week. We have now completed our second dose programme for the AstraZeneca vaccine, and our booster programme is planned from mid-September onwards.
- 3.42 We will be holding our 100,000th vaccine celebration on 17 September, with a small number of regular volunteers in attendance along with other key leads from across the borough.

Supporting our workforce

- 3.43 We continue to support our workforce and prioritise the health and wellbeing of our staff in a number of ways as we move out of the Covid-19 pandemic:
- Maintaining a 25% occupancy rate in the office in line with public health infection control advice
 - Supporting flexible working opportunities in line with business needs
 - Establishing a Covid-19 vaccination status declaration form on our HR self-service platform to determine vaccination uptake rate across the organisation and progress our phased return to the workplace.
- 3.44 We are also requiring staff who work predominantly in public facing or frontline roles to continue to wear masks when interacting with members of the public to reduce risk of Covid-19 transmission.
- 3.45 In line with Government requirements, we continue to advise Bromley staff who either work in care homes or are required to enter care settings in the course of their work that it will be mandatory from 17 November to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have a medical exemption. Our public health team is providing advice and support to any individuals who have any queries regarding this requirement.

Priorities for the next six months

- 3.46 The key organisational priorities for the next six months are:
1. Delivery of Transforming Bromley Programme proposals for 2022/23 budget setting
 2. Ongoing business-as-usual management of COVID-19 response and moving to organisational and borough-wide recovery
 3. Maintaining our long-term budget management and financial strategy to ensure a balanced budget
 4. Rollout of Building a Better Bromley Corporate Plan (subject to Member approval)
 5. Progressing development of integrated care system in South East London
 6. Reporting on outcomes of Operational Property Review
 7. Strengthening Council's communications, including rollout of refreshed corporate site
 8. Delivery of Digital Strategy and Digital Roadmap
 9. Maintaining organisational resilience, including effective emergency planning
 10. Meeting our statutory and regulatory requirements across all services