

ITEM 6 – PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

Achievements from 2021/22;

- **July 2022 Go Live with a new social care management system.** Procured and implemented Liquid Logic which is a significantly improved case management solution for local authorities which supports all aspects of social work with children. It has been specifically developed by and for practitioners to support case management and record-keeping for children in need, looked after children, adoption, and child protection cases, as quickly and simply as possible.
- **Successful Ofsted “Focussed Visit” on the “Children Looked After” Service.** In between each ILACS (Full) inspection, Ofsted also undertake a “focussed” inspection of a particular service area. In September 2021 Ofsted inspected our Children Looked After service. The inspection was very positive and confirmed that the services to our young people in care remain of a very high standard. Inspectors commented positively on the strength and effectiveness of the way we look after our children in care. This was followed up with a positive “Annual conversation” meeting with Ofsted in January 2022 where we were able to demonstrate positive performance and initiatives across the whole of our Education and Children’s Social care services.
- **Delivering new ‘demand management’ deep dive analysis to inform Transformation;** highlights include baseline understanding of numbers of children likely to come into care leading to informed sufficiency strategy. Evidence based for Budget Challenging session August 2021. Other deep dives included Use of Emergency Foster Placements, led to business case development of in-house marketing service to recruit more specialist in house foster carers who can take emergency placements to meet need. New demand analysis on children subject of ECHP Plans, developed a demand model to forecast to 2026, informed an evidence based of growth pressures in the MTFs. Informed the ongoing service modelling needs for SEND Transport. Reviewed proportions of ECHP CYP who transition to adult’s social care – analysis on trend in growth of CWD caseloads and ASC LD teams informed 0 – 25 service transformation.
- **£700k investment in green technology at Southborough primary -** The department has secured a grant of just under £700k to fund innovative and highly efficient boiler and heating system replacement at Southborough Primary School, saving the Council significant capital maintenance monies and making a major contribution to Bromley’s Net Zero Carbon Strategy by 2029.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing** – early on in the pandemic, the department recognised the long-lasting impact that it would have on the wellbeing of children, families and staff. Working closely with our partners in health, Bromley Y and CAMHS, we developed a comprehensive multi-agency

universal and targeted mental health offer, including our well received digital Toolkit and the establishment of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leads Network for every Bromley school. Mental health and wellbeing will continue to be a key priority, but with these developments, we have an effective early intervention offer for anyone experiencing wellbeing concerns, including workshops for parents which are booked up quickly

- **Opening of “Our House” for our Care Leavers;** The opening of this house just a few weeks ago demonstrates the continued commitment from across the Council to be the best possible “Corporate Parents” for our young people. The house is equipped for meeting rooms, counselling space and IT space where young people can work on CV’s/homework or projects for the In Care Council.

Areas of challenge that we will continue to work on during 22/23 are;

- Continue to bed in the use of Liquid Logic, ensuring that management oversight remains robust and performance is retained.
- SEND and SEND Transport – sustained increases in the volume and complexity of SEND needs continue to present significant challenges to the Children, Education and Families department and our partner agencies. We are working hard with our schools and other provisions to increase the availability of SEN placements and the capacity of services such as therapy provision commissioned by the CCG, but this remains an area of challenge. We continue to work towards the earliest possible opening of the new special free school, which will be known as the Redwood School and will include a Borough-wide multi-agency centre of excellence for autism
- Managing the continued demand linked with the lasting impact of Covid 19. Although demand appears to be steadying, and in some cases reducing from the peak of last spring/summer, demand remains higher than pre-Covid and is likely to remain higher through-out the next 12 months. This means that we will need to continue to work hard to manage pressures, ensure performance and quality remain high and support staff to prevent burn-out and challenges in recruitment.