

Executive Support Assistant to the Leader: scrutiny report

It has been a very busy year as the country has emerged from the pandemic with services of all kinds reopening their doors and welcoming people back. This is also true for services across Bromley that are crucial to supporting us to tackle loneliness.

The tackling loneliness agenda has been my main focus this year in my role as EA to Cllr Colin Smith. Indeed, it is a top priority for the council with focus on prevention and mitigation of loneliness so that no one in our borough feels lonely or isolated.

Early in 2021 we decided that in order to set out what LBB wanted to achieve with its loneliness agenda, we needed to write a strategy that clearly set out our strategic aims and objectives. The strategy is an important tool for us to communicate our commitment on tackling loneliness to our partners, the public and other stakeholders across the borough.

We started to organise workshops so that our strategy would be co-produced with stakeholders and partner organisations. I was pleased that over 50 different groups took part in our strategy workshops in the autumn and that we delivered our 'Tackling Loneliness' strategy to the Adult Care & Health PDS in November. The PDS unanimously gave their endorsement of the strategy and it was also brought to the attention of the Health and Wellbeing Board as well as the Children and Families PDS.

I'm very thankful to all members for their support for this strategy with a number highlighting key organisations or groups in their wards doing incredible things to tackle loneliness. I'm currently speaking to a few groups that have been inspired by the strategy. They are keen to provide new or additional offers to help tackle loneliness in their communities - this is very welcome and signal that the strategy is working.

Next steps

We will be taking an action plan to the March Adult Care and Health PDS so that we can demonstrate how we will monitor actions and ensure that the objectives within the strategy are achieved.

A community directory of activities and groups residents can join called: Simply Connect, run by Community Links Bromley was a key priority for us to help tackle loneliness. It is up and running and will formally launch later this month, so stay tuned!

We are also working up plans for loneliness awareness week in June. This is also a brilliant way to highlight how important this issue is to us and give a well-deserved spotlight to some incredible groups across the borough.

Reports to committees and full council will soon include a “tackling loneliness” consideration so that officers and members are mindful of implementing solutions to this problem in each and every contract or service.

Lastly, we will be recruiting a ‘Loneliness Champion Officer’ very soon. This role will ensure that our loneliness agenda continues to be a top priority for the council and its partners.

Cllr Aisha Cuthbert
EA to the Leader