
Decision Maker: GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: 5 April 2022

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

Title: REPORTS FROM EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Tasnim Shawkat, Director of Corporate Services and Governance

Ward: All

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 As part of this Committee's decisions in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme 2008/09, it was agreed that this Committee should receive an annual report from each of the Executive Assistants outlining the work they have undertaken over the past year in justification of the receipt of their allowance (currently £3,746pa). This decision was reaffirmed by the Committee at subsequent meetings, and is referred to in the Guidance Note: Executive Assistants at Appendix 7 to the Council's Constitution. There are currently five Executive Assistants -

Adult Care & Health - Cllr Mike Botting

Executive Assistant to the Leader - Cllr Aisha Cuthbert

Renewal, Recreation & Housing - Cllr Hannah Gray

Children, Education & Families - Cllr Kieran Terry

Environment & Community Services - Cllr Will Rowlands

- 1.2 Reports have been requested from the current Executive Assistants for 2021/22 and are attached as Appendix A. Reports from Councillors Terry and Rowlands have not yet been received but they will be circulated as soon as they are available.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That reports from Executive Assistants summarising their work during 2021/22 be noted.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Not Applicable
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. MBEB Priority: Managing our assets well.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £18,730
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost: £18,730
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Representation
 4. Total current budget for this head: £1,094,730
 5. Source of funding: Revenue budget
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Not Applicable
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: This report does not involve an executive decision.
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Five Councillors are currently appointed as Executive Assistants
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

Non-Applicable Sections:	Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children, Policy, Financial, Personnel, Legal, Procurement
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Previous reports to GP&L Committee Members Allowances Scheme 2021/22

Cllr. Mike Botting
Executive Assistant to the Adult Care & Health Portfolio Holder

I took over the role of Executive Assistant for the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health Services in late May 2021. I was thoroughly briefed by the Portfolio Holder and in addition met (virtually) with senior officers within the team to get an insight into the responsibilities of the portfolio as a whole, but with a specific remit to concentrate on Care Home monitoring, liaison with Health Watch Bromley, Complaints management and the Learning Disability Partnership board.

I regularly attend the bi-weekly Portfolio Holders Briefing and update meetings with the Director of Adult Care Services and other senior officers where all topics relating to the business of the portfolio and the wider matters relating to the integration with health partners are discussed.

I have now had the opportunity to meet with the Safeguarding, Practice and Quality improvement team leader to discuss the method of monitoring in care homes, how it's recorded and the results of the monitoring visits themselves. So far, I have been able to visit two care homes with the LBB monitoring officer for inspections and in addition to supporting the monitoring visit Inspector, was able to ask questions to better inform myself of the working of the homes and the process for what happens if problems are identified.

I hope that in due course now that Covid restrictions are relaxing I will be able to assist in future inspections on a monthly basis.

I have also had the opportunity to meet the Bromley Healthwatch Coordinator to discuss their strategy, duties in general and how they contribute to and support the Health Economy and Borough services locally. I plan to also accompany the Healthwatch Team on a Care Home 'Enter and View' visit as part of my responsibility to supporting our Care home market.

I have also assumed the role of joint Chairman of the Learning Disability (LD) Board where all matters pertaining to improving services for service users with LD are openly discussed. The board consists of partners, schools, people with learning disabilities and their carers. This is a really rewarding board to Co-Chair with presentations and discussions on a multitude of issues.

With regard to my responsibilities towards complaints monitoring I receive a copy of the weekly lists of any current or outstanding complaints including those relating to financial issues. It is essential that any complaints are not only dealt with within the timescales set out in the Corporate Complaints Policy but are also dealt with appropriately including any that are referred to the Local Government Ombudsman which fortunately are very few.

Although not just specifically relating to the Adult Care and Health Portfolio as it spans a number of Portfolios across the Council, as the LBB Armed Forces Champion I am working towards identifying our veterans through signposting of suitable services in an attempt to ensure that they receive appropriate assistance in respect of health and care issues ensuring that they are aware of and benefitting from the council's loneliness strategy. This in turn supports the Borough's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

I am looking forward to the removal of Covid restrictions in order that I can meet all colleagues and partners in person. My new role feels greatly restricted over the past eight months as my opportunities of personal interaction has been greatly restricted. Being able to network more freely will I am sure greatly enhance my opportunities to develop the role and better support the Portfolio Holder.

Cllr Aisha Cuthbert
Executive Assistant to the Leader

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 Hannah Gray
Executive Assistant to the Renewal, Recreation & Housing Portfolio Holder

I have been delighted to be Executive Assistant to Cllr Morgan also taking on the role of Small Business Champion for the Borough.

This year has seen the continuing administration of numerous grant schemes and I have been working with LBB officers and partners, who have ensured a timely distribution of grants which have been rolled out brilliantly and consistently across the Borough.

We have also worked closely with BT Openreach in order to facilitate the roll out of Fast Fibre across the Borough. The coverage increased significantly to over 30% in February 2022. Further discussions are also taking place to identify and plug gaps in coverage.

I have regularly met with Hal Khanom (Head of Economic Development) and Lorraine McQuillan (Town Centre & BID Development Manager) continuing to facilitate good communication between Small Businesses and LBB. I also ensure that the multitude of networking groups are kept in the loop with developments and plans.

I have worked closely with the Business Support Taskforce members to review and launch the Business Directory www.bromleybusinesshub.org, which has proved to be a great addition to local businesses.

In my role, I have attended weekly meetings between Cllr Morgan and the senior officers discussing Site G, the Regeneration strategy and the new Local Plan.

I have attended Bromley Economic Partnership meetings and increased the awareness of the meeting by inviting additional influential businesses. This meeting has now taken the same form as a PDS committee.

I have worked closely with the BIDS and liaising between them and the LBB officers in the Business Support Taskforce.

Start-up Bromley has been a great success helping entrepreneurs in the Borough with workshops and hubs to work from, in Bromley Central, Orpington and Biggin Hill Libraries.

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

(To follow)

Cllr Kieran Terry
Executive Assistant to the Children, Education and Families Portfolio Holder

(To follow)