

London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE – PUBLIC

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

Date: 22 March 2023

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

Title: SCRUTINY OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for Report

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

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 **Members are requested to note the report.**

3. COMMENTARY

Introduction

3.1 Since my previous scrutiny session in October 2022, I can provide the following updates:

- Updates on key organisational priorities for 2022/23
- Council achievements in 2022.
- Strategic priorities for 2023/24.

4. Updates on Key Organisation Priorities for 2022/23

Delivery of Transforming Bromley Programme 2019 – 2023

- 4.1 Transforming Bromley has emerged as a ‘wide umbrella’ term for ‘true transformation’ but also demand mitigation programmes, service and contract efficiencies, and savings programmes. Collectively these have moved the Council towards a balanced budget and allowed for some programmes which delivered innovation and improved outcomes.
- 4.2 The 2019 – 2023 Programme covered a whole Council approach, and this has been a helpful and inclusive approach for all staff to contribute and take responsibility for ‘Transforming Bromley’.
- 4.3 Collectively the Council has delivered a balanced budget over the last four years, and the Council has met its financial obligations to ensure value for money for residents through efficient and effective use of monies.
- 4.4 In terms of future transformation, the 2023/24 Budget includes the full year effect of the Phase Two Transformation Savings combined with new changes, totalling £2.9 million in 2023/24 increasing to £4.5 million per annum from 2026/37.
- 4.5 The Corporate Transformation Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, will focus on the high risk, high demand, high-cost corporate and interdependent programmes,
- 4.6 As ever, Transformation work continues, and further proposals will be reported to Members in the future as part of addressing the four-year financial forecast and meeting the budget gap whilst ensuring key priorities are met.

Long-Term Budget Management and Financial Strategy

- 4.7 On Wednesday 18 January 2023, Finance colleagues took the [Draft 2023/24 Budget and Update on Council's Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27](#) to Executive, which enables the Council to continue to deliver on key priorities, and the financial forecast enables medium-term financial planning. The budget is broadly balanced next year; however, the future year's budget gap is projected to increase to £29.6 million per annum by 2026/27.

- 4.8 In terms of the financing of the Capital Programme to meet the financial impact of the outcome of the property condition survey, the need for additional housing provision and meeting other ambitions of the Council, the Operational Property Review has now completed, together with a disposals programme and funding strategy, to ensure we can fully fund the Council's Capital Programme. This includes a move to external borrowing for housing schemes.
- 4.9 To ensure we deliver a statutory balanced budget we will continue deliver more proposals as part of the Transformation programme, implement planned mitigation to offset growth pressures, contain growth and cost pressures, invest to save and generate income.
- 4.10 As for financial monitoring arrangements for 2023/24, these have been updated to include full budget monitoring on a monthly basis, bi-monthly budget 'hot spot' monitoring that will focus on key volatile areas, quarterly budget monitoring and challenge sessions for all service areas, focusing particularly on the Core Budget, Transformation savings, growth and mitigation, and quarterly updates on the financial forecast to tie together outcomes from budget challenge sessions.

Accommodation Move Programme

- 4.11 The Accommodation Move Programme was established to lead on the purchase of the freehold of the Direct Line building known as 'Churchill Court' with a view to moving the Council's Offices off the Civic Centre and other satellite sites into Churchill Court.
- 4.12 The Programme of work is to support a modern and efficient style of working, in addition to supporting the Council's financial position. The Programme is being overseen on a fortnightly basis by the Chief Executive and senior leadership team, with reports to the Leader shared on a regular basis.
- 4.13 As work begins on space planning, desk occupancy arrangements for LBB staff are to move the equivalent of 1,200 FTE members of staff (the actual number will be greater as it relates to FTE) from circa 1,600 members of staff into the Direct Line building. This excludes officer colleagues based at the Children's Centres and colleagues from the Youth Justice Services (YJS).
- 4.14 Hybrid working, which has become a successful work model for the Council since 2020 and defines the flexible work arrangements enabled by a blend of in-person and remote working practices, will continue. These arrangements support findings as reported by staff in the Staff Survey, such as better productivity, and also facilitates where Teams by the nature of their work, roles and responsibility are required to work consistently in the Office five (or seven) days a week.

Operational Property Repair Programme

- 4.15 A review of the Council's operational property has been undertaken to identify the optimal operational estate and understand the liability of it over a 10-year period together with the potential to undertake minor refurbishments where appropriate to minimise future liability.

- 4.16 An Operational Estate Strategy has subsequently been adopted by the Council for use as the framework for decision making, with the intention of moving from the estate as it currently is to an optimal estate. Five workstreams will now take forward this key work, with a Programme Board now established that includes functions from Strategic Property, Finance, Procurement, legal and Communications.
- 4.17 In terms of decisions to progress with works in relation to the programme, these will be scoped and costed and reported to the Executive for final determination to proceed and award works packages.

Supporting Our Workforce

- 4.18 A number of initiatives are being implemented by colleagues in HR to address recruitment challenges, which includes targeted recruitment efforts, collaborating with Partners organisations and hosting recruitment events such as our 'We're Bromley People' recruitment fair held on 16 January 2023 and a second event last month to attract those interested in apprenticeships and entry level roles.
- 4.19 As for supporting staff wellbeing, the Employee Assistant Scheme, Wellbeing Wednesday and 'Its OK' campaign continues, which are designed to promote employee mental and physical health, providing advice and support as required.
- 4.20 HR colleagues have also worked hard to ensure that pay and reward policies within the organisation remain fair, transparent, and aligned with market rates. Aware also of the current economic climate and increased costs, and as part of the budget setting process, an additional pay award for all staff and Merited Rewards funding pot for 2023/24 has been agreed, with thanks to Members, and will take effect from 1 April.

Children's Services Inspection Readiness

- 4.21 Inspection readiness is a big focus for the Service this year, with Children's Social Care, the Youth Justice Service and Adult Education provision all set to receive inspections.
- 4.22 In terms of readiness, all Services continue to prepare for imminent inspection, carrying out regular audit cycles of practice. Our Youth Justice Service has recently completed a mock inspection that received positive feedback, and which evidenced strong practice and management oversight and direction in practice. All recommendations for areas where Services can be improved are currently being taken forward.

Adult Social Care Reforms Update

- 4.23 The Government has announced the delay to the rollout of Adult Social Care Reforms from October 2023 to October 2025, and the funding allocated, which equates to £5.9 million in 2023/24 and £8.9 million in 2024/25, will be repurposed and distributed through the Social Care Grant for Adult and Children's Social Care.

- 4.24 Despite the delay to the Reforms, a lot of work in progress continues to enable the Directorate to provide a better response to the community and work to develop a digital offer will also continue with the aim of supporting better systems.
- 4.25 Likewise, the planned reintroduction of an assurance process with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will continue, with key work aiming to ensure that policies and practice are aligned, financial and performance data is made good use off, and the impact of work is evidenced. Part of this work will also involve engagement with the voluntary sector, providers, and service users, to develop practice.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- 4.26 An Integrated Care Systems (ICS) Strategy is currently in development with Partners across South East London, and priorities that have been identified so far include prevention and wellbeing, early years, children and young people's mental health, adults' mental health and primary care and people with long term conditions.
- 4.27 The ICS Strategy is intended to give direction and enhance what is already being done at a local level, which the local One Bromley Strategy will also align to.
- 4.28 In this context, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being refreshed, and it is intended that the final Strategy will align with the two overarching local strategies. The final strategy will be published by December this year.

Tackling Loneliness Update

- 4.29 The Council's principal loneliness champion is coordinating the next stages of the Council's Loneliness Strategy Action Plan, building on and enhancing recent achievements such as the commissioning of Simply Connect, an online directory of voluntary organisations to signpost residents to available support.
- 4.30 Other key successes have included:
- The delivery of an intergenerational project with Schools, Children and Family Centres and MyTime Active afterschool clubs to create Christmas cards for people experiencing loneliness within various care settings.
 - Work by partners in the libraries, leisure and community sectors to support groups at risk of and experiencing loneliness by participating in targeted activities.
 - The new Bromley Well contract started in October 2022 and included the development of a service offer to reduce isolation and loneliness and enhance the befriending offer across all pathways in the service.
 - Entered 'The Campaign to End Loneliness' poster competition to highlight the work which the Council, statutory, private, and voluntary partners are carrying throughout Bromley. Bromley came runner up and was the only UK local authority to be showcased during the international conference '[Tackling Loneliness for a New Era of Connection](#)'.
 - Launched our Volunteering Policy for staff to volunteer up to two days a year to help support a cause or community.

Night-Time Enterprise Zones

- 4.31 The Council made a successful bid to be one of London's three Night Time Enterprise Zones, which will see over £250k invested in events and improved infrastructure in Bromley Town Centre to boost the night-time economy.
- 4.3 The four priorities of the Night Time Enterprise Zone are:
1. To extend opening hours and boost activity on the High Street after 6pm, giving businesses more opportunities to increase income and footfall.
 2. To give local people and visitors better access to shops and services after 6pm.
 3. To make the High Street more welcoming and inclusive for a diverse range of people after 6pm.
 4. To increase the number of night workers that benefit from good standards.
- 4.33 An event programme, consisting of three test events including a Library 'Lates' event where Central Library will open late providing non-traditional activities, a Celebration of Sport event where the High Street will be activated through a series of pop-up sporting activities and a Winter Lights event with temporary lit structures and installations brought in to the town.
- 4.34 A marketing campaign, as well as guidance for businesses to encourage them to open late during the events will accompany these interventions raising the profile of the Town Centre and attracting new users. Infrastructure improvements, including additional electricity and lighting, will also enable further events and markets to take place and provide a safe welcoming environment for users of the Town Centre.
- 4.35 A Night Time Strategy for the borough will be developed within two years of the funding being awarded and will be led and delivered internally in partnership with the Bromley Economic Partnership and shaped by other existing stakeholder working groups with a focus on the evening economy.

Local London Sub-Regional Partnership

- 4.36 Bromley has now moved from being a nominal member to a full member of Local London, that is a sub-regional partnership (SRP) and which plays a key role in supporting the delivery of inclusive growth in the capital by bringing together local authorities, businesses, anchor institutions and communities on a range of issues.
- 4.37 Membership opens up access for Bromley's businesses and residents to the full range of funding programmes such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) that may be secured and commissioned at the sub-regional level. These programmes may also support the Council's Revenue Budgets as streams are closely aligned to the ambitions of the adopted Economic Development Strategy and joining has immediately opened up the potential for the Council to access £1 million of Strategic Investment Pot funding for digital infrastructure, subject to business case approval from the Greater London Authority (GLA).

IT Transformation and Digitalisation

- 4.38 Transformation of the Council's IT Services continues at pace, with plans now to move all on premise services to the Cloud as part of the transformation of the Council's on-premise Data Centre (DC), which will provide a robust offsite platform with built-in Disaster Recovery (DR) resilience.
- 4.39 The solution offers the capability to build out new platforms, flex up or down existing IT platforms and retire legacy infrastructure using a third-party cloud platform, and reduces the need for the Council to continually refresh the on-premise DC environment at each hardware and software renewal lifecycle.
- 4.40 The Council is also replacing several of its current IT Systems, for example in Planning and Building Control, with the expectation that significant long-term improvements will be made for the Council to both staff and workflows, and to the public using these Services in terms of better use of staff time, improved technology to enable more efficient working and improved public access to information.
- 4.41 VoiceBots have also been trialled within the Registration Service helpline to provide assistance and information to customers of the Service over the phone, signposting to online content and Services where appropriate so as to encourage residents to utilise the range of online services available.
- 4.42 In terms of work to progress our Digital Infrastructure Work Plan, we have continued engagement with social housing landlords and infrastructure providers to identify ways of facilitating local arrangements in order to expedite the rollout of full-fibre broadband across existing social housing. The Council also successfully negotiated a fourth Open Access agreement with Ontix Ltd in November last year, to deploy additional 4G/5G mobile cells on lamp columns across Bromley town centres that will boost mobile network capacity and coverage.
- 4.43 Data is encouraging and shows that general full-fibre broadband coverage across the borough increased from 1% in May 2020 to over 41% last November, highlighting the significant progress made in Bromley to narrow the gap in coverage, and is the ninth fastest growing borough out of 33 London boroughs.
- 4.44 The proactive approach taken to improve the borough's digital infrastructure has been noticed by the Government, and Bromley's Economic Development Team was selected by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to share its valuable experience of working with the market to improve coverage at a recent event on mobile connectivity for London Councillors.

Support to our Ukrainian Guests

- 4.45 The Homes for Ukraine Scheme launched on 14 March 2022 and has since welcomed over 100,000 Ukrainian guests to the United Kingdom, with 607 guests (318 families) that have arrived in Bromley.

- 4.46 Support from the Council has assisted families with community integration, education and employment opportunities, and the weekly Ukraine Support Hub has provided support from a range of internal and external organisations that has included Housing, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Education, Social Care, Public Health, Bromley Y, HR Recruitment etc. This has proved to be really helpful for guests and sponsors alike.
- 4.47 Fortnightly meet up sessions also take place at Bromley Central Library to provide guests and sponsors with a space to meet other people from their local community and make connections, which has been very well received.

Housing Delivery Update

- 4.48 As set out in the Housing Strategy 2019 - 2029, the Council faces severe housing pressures and is considering how to deliver more affordable homes and ensure people are placed in quality stable homes rather than costly temporary accommodation. Provision of good quality, value for money temporary and affordable accommodation in the borough is essential if the Council is to reduce the current pressures on its revenue budget and manage future demand for services.
- 4.49 The Council is committed to delivering affordable homes through direct delivery, acquisitions, and potentially joint ventures, with two affordable housing sites (Bushell and Anerley) now completed, with another (Burnt Ash) near completion. Further schemes include one at York Rise that is under construction, another at West Wickham that is out to construction tender, and one at Bromley North, which is ready to progress to planning. Beckenham Triangle is still going through feasibility, and further sites set out in the Operational Property Review are expected to move to feasibility this year.
- 4.50 In terms of acquisitions, as of October last year there were 253 sales agreed through Meadowship Homes, of which 183 exchanges and completed, and 115 were tenanted. Officers are on track for 255 being completed by next month/ April, and then fully tenanted by end of June 2023. In relation to self-delivery, there will be a total of 109 affordable units.

Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and Open Spaces Strategy Update

- 4.51 The Council's target to achieve net zero by 2027 is being achieved through four key initiatives that includes LED upgrades to streetlighting, energy efficiency upgrades to buildings, procuring 100% renewable energy via a Power Purchase Agreement and various offsetting measures to remove residual emissions.
- 4.52 Now in year three, the Council's net zero emissions for 2021/22 totalled 3,646 tCO₂e, which is a 9% reduction against year two (2020/21) and a 51% against the baseline. This demonstrate the positive trajectory the Council is on to achieve its net zero carbon ambitions by 2027.
- 4.53 Our Open Spaces Strategy 2021 – 2031 sets out the Council's vision for an 'open space portfolio that promotes the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of the borough, allowing our residents, communities and wildlife to thrive'.

4.54 To deliver our ambitions, five Strategic Objectives (SOs) set out the direction of work and actions to be taken. Significant progress has been made during the first year of implementation, which has included eight sites achieving Green Flag status in 2022 with the support of the local Friends Groups, the adoption of a Biodiversity Strategy, scoping work for a major heathland restoration project for Hayes Common and Keston Common, and the identified of three sites for woodland establishment, with grant funding secured from the Forestry Commission to do detailed design work and consultation as part of the next stage of feasibility.

The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III

4.55 Officers from across the Council are busy preparing for the Coronation this May, and as residents also begin to plan their celebrations. Small grants of up to £500 from the Community Celebration Fund have been made available to support community groups planning street parties or celebratory events for the Coronation, which compliments the waiving of road closure fees for street parties being held across the borough.

4.56 The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III will take place on Saturday 6 May, with celebrations expected across the special Bank Holiday between 6 and 8 May.

5. Council Achievements in 2022

5.1 As a Council we received national recognition for a number of projects and innovations in 2022. Key accolades include:

- The Council's COVID-19 Contact Tracing Team was shortlisted for 'Team of the Year' at the Local Government Chronicle Awards.
- Our Early Intervention Family Support Service were finalists for the 'Early Intervention' award at the Children and Young People Now Awards, which recognised initiatives that have intervened early and most effectively with children and young people at risk of problems such as poor health, dropping out of education, homelessness, crime or substance misuse, and prevented the transmission of poor outcomes from one generation to the next.
- Bromley were finalists in the Constructing Excellence SECBE Awards in the categories 'Modern Methods of Construction' and 'Net Zero' for partnership work on the Zero-Carbon Social Housing by ZED PODS at Burnt Ash Lane.
- Bromley was accredited with the best level of School Travel Plans in London.
- The borough achieved Green Flag status across eight of its greenspaces.
- The Council's 'Your Waste is Your Responsibility' campaign, which achieved a 60% reduction in fly-tipping within three pilot areas, was shortlisted for a National Recycling Award.

- Bromley was shortlisted in the LGC Awards category for 'Public and Private Partnership' for our Waste Services Online Reporting and Self-Service Garden Waste Account Portal.
- The Council came runner-up in The Campaign to End Loneliness' poster competition, which showcased the work Bromley has been doing around loneliness since 2021. The poster is available to view in their virtual library and was included in The Campaign to End Loneliness' international virtual conference last month.

5.2 We also saw a number of staff recognised for their individual contributions and achievements to public service. This included:

- Sarah Newman, our Head of Service for Community Safety, Licensing, Environmental and Domestic Regulation, received for a consecutive year, the award for 'Recognition for Leadership in Regulatory Services' from the Office of Product and Safety Standards (OPSS), which is part of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
- Louise Watkinson, our Assistant Director of Public Protection, received the Runners Up Award for the 'Making an Impact Through Collaborative Working' category at this year's Awards Ceremony.
- Beverley Nicklin won the 'Safeguarding Award' at the inaugural London Trading Standards Awards 2022 ceremony for her work delivering talks and scam prevention advice, together with her work obtaining significant financial compensation to victims of financial abuse. £1,000,000 in one case alone.
- Julie Langman, our Trading Standards Officer and Consumer Protection Inspector, received the 'National Recognition Award' in the Chartered Trading Standards Institute 2022 Awards.

6. **Strategic Priorities for 2023/24**

Council-Wide

- 6.1 To continue to deliver excellence, and in the context of the number of challenges facing our residents, it is important as an organisation that we continue to care for and support ourselves and one another in order to successfully meet the needs of our borough.
- 6.2 In this way, continuing to provide a caring and safe environment for our staff through caring leadership is more important than ever as we navigate these challenging times.
- 6.3 Measures to deliver on this have already included the pay settlement for staff, which will come into effect next month (April 2023), a bespoke health screening service for

our ageing workforce that will be rolled out later this year, and work to progress our Office Accommodation plans to ensure a decent work environment for all staff that supports modern and efficient styles of working.

Finance

- 6.4 A number of key national issues have the potential to impact public finances over the next four years, and there will be increasing financial volatility, uncertainty, and risk. Delivering sustainable finances are increasingly important during periods of national and international economic issues, and the Council will continue to manage resources well and maintain robust financial management to provide sufficient resources to provide key services that matter to Council for its residents and service users.
- 6.5 It will be important as ever to consider actions now that address the 'budget gap' in the medium term to enable the Council continues to 'live within its means'. A key priority will be to manage growth levels effectively and deliver on the mitigation savings, as well as planned Transformation savings, so as to ensure the future years 'budget gap' does not increase further.
- 6.6 Opportunities to make best use of resources, which includes exploring additional ways to deliver cost-effective, efficient, and excellent Services for our residents through the Transformation Programme, completing further enhancements to Oracle Fusion, namely the integration of the Oracle HR system, and reviewing areas to generate income and manage the finances of the Councils through our Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy seeks to ensure the long term sustainable finances of the Council.

Human Resources, Customer Services and Public Affairs

- 6.7 Work continues to further embed Bromley's Values and Behaviour Framework within the organisation, with a refreshed programme of seminars on our REAL (Respect, Empower, Ambition, Learn) Values planned for this year.
- 6.8 Further training and development for all staff to understand the Values and their importance will also be provided, and will include sessions on 'Compassionate Leadership', 'Leading and Managing Change', 'Developing Growth Mindsets', and 'Adapting to Change and Values-Based Performance Management', in line with our DISCUSS Framework.
- 6.9 Other key priorities to support the workforce will include dedicated work on succession planning and leadership development, focusing especially on the role of apprenticeships, internships, and opportunities for upskilling.
- 6.10 Customer Services will also be looking to further develop the Council website so as to support service delivery, with new voice machine software being explored for public facing phone lines, and work to develop the health and safety culture, including a refresh of some policies are also planned.

Corporate Services and Governance

- 6.11 IT Services have three major projects for 2023 alongside business-as-usual delivery and support with the Council's office accommodation move, these are the re-procurement of our IT services contract, liquid logic and move to Cloud services.
- 6.12 The Directorate also continues to make developments on the Council's commitment to supporting the growth in digitalisation, which includes limiting our paper usage and going green where we can. A review of Legal Services is also underway.

Children, Education and Families

- 6.13 Children's Services and Education continues to make ongoing improvement to deliver an outstanding service for our children and young people, and preparation work continues in anticipation of a number of inspections of our Youth Justice Service, Adult Education and Children's Social Care Services this year.
- 6.14 Additional priorities for the Service include addressing pressures in specialist placements for complex needs children, the rising costs of residential placements and the recruitment and retention of staff.
- 6.15 In terms of addressing the pressures in Special Education Needs and Disability (SEN/D), the Service is continuing to use existing resources more effectively to support placements in mainstream schools. Actions have included successfully bidding for a new special school for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Redwood School, which is expected to open in late 2024 or early 2025 and will enable more children to be placed in Bromley schools.

Adult Services

- 6.16 The Directorate continues to progress with preparation work for the implementation of the Adult Social Care Reforms, including the increased use of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) innovations that make best use of available staff capacity, whilst enabling service users to remain independent.
- 6.17 The delay to introducing the Reforms has temporarily delayed pressures created by the Care Cap, however expectations of the Council moving towards the Fair Cost of Care have been raised, and work is underway to manage this.
- 6.18 The Service also continues to prepare for the new Assurance Framework with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), who will consider if appropriate resource is available to meet statutory requirements and how Adult Services support people in an integrated way. A self-assessment has been completed, and areas for improvement will be taken forward.
- 6.19 The Department continues to build on the successes of the Transformation Programme, with new proposals seeking to address further areas of potential efficiencies and managing demand.

6.20 Other priority areas for the Service include promoting personalisation, increasing take up of Direct Payments, Transitions, closer integrative working with our Partners in Health and greater co-production on the delivery of Services. The Service is also in the process of planning for a celebration event to recognise the good work across Bromley's Care Sector, which is expected to be held later this year.

Public Health

6.21 A key priority for Public Health will be to increase the uptake of Preventative Services, namely NHS Health Checks, vascular checks, cancer screening and immunisations. Linked to this is the development of a dedicated 'Staff Health Checks' programme for those aged 50+, which will work in parallel with the delivery of the national programme.

6.22 As part of the local implementation of the national Drug Strategy, 'From Harm to Hope', our local Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (CDAP) will take forward key actions identified in our local Drugs Strategy Delivery Plan that will deliver on the three following national priorities; breaking drug supply chains, delivering a world class and treatment recovery system, and achieve a generational shift in demand for drugs.

6.23 Other priority areas for the Service will include continued transformative work of the boroughs Sexual Health Services, the recommissioning of the Substance Misuse Service and continued collaborative working with Partners on the delivery of local health initiatives, such as weight management.

Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration

6.24 The Department continues to face increased pressure from those presenting as homeless and meeting the demand for affordable housing. This is also in the context of significant increases in inflation, energy prices and fuel costs, which have placed increased pressure on individuals and households' finances, and ability to cover housing costs.

6.25 Preventative measures will assist with reducing pressures on the Department, as well as our Housing Transformation Plan that includes the delivery of housing development work such as the recently agreed two 'self-financing' acquisition schemes, Beehive and Meadowship Homes venture with Orchard & Shipman. The Service is due to complete on its live housing schemes, and appraisals will be carried out for additional sites. The potential to expand these schemes, and other opportunities will continue to be explored to reduce cost pressures on the Department in future years.

6.26 A number of reviews across the service are also expected to make improvements. This includes a review of the Disabled Facilities Grant to ensure the Council can support people to remain in their own homes, the Housing Allocations Scheme to ensure the Council is making the most of its stock, and the Homelessness Strategy. Offers and processes to ensure the quality of Temporary Accommodation provision will also be reviewed.

- 6.27 Other key priorities for the Department include the delivery of the ‘Highstreet for All’ Programme to increase footfall and the profile of our town centres, stimulating the economy and attracting inward investment, taking forward redevelopment plans in West Wickham and the Walnuts Leisure Centres, leading the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, Afghan Refugees Programme and Household Support Grant, delivering the Disposals Programme and the Noise Action Plan for Bigging Hill Airport, and producing a Leisure Strategy and developing the Council’s new Local Plan that will shape the future of Bromley’s residential, industrial and business space.
- 6.28 Following the completion of our Operational Property Review, plans to undertake a range of building maintenance and refurbishment work to improve Council owned operational properties will also be taken forward.

Environment and Public Protection

- 6.29 The Department is busy delivering on our commitment to have net zero emissions by 2027 and is leading on walking and cycling infrastructure to support ‘green recovery’, and the promotion of active travel in schools and cycling.
- 6.30 Other work for delivery, and as set out in strategies including our ten-year Open Space Strategy to enhance Bromley’s Parks and Green Spaces, includes the planting of 1,568 trees by April this year as part of our ‘Treemendous’ Programme.
- 6.31 A number of initiatives also progress forward in our Waste Services with the aim of improving recycling and championing food waste reduction and maintaining virtually ‘zero waste to landfill’. Whilst priorities in Parking and Highways, include the completion of planned maintenance and traffic projects, the delivery of road safety schemes and education programmes with Bromley schools and move to cashless parking across the borough. The Directorate also makes plans for the launch of the new Out of Hours Noise Service and Safer Bromley Partnership Strategy.
- 6.32 As part of maintaining key infrastructure, investments in the Council’s two Waste Transfer Stations through the Depot Infrastructure Programme are also due to be taken forward, and which will deliver major improvements to the sites. Works are expected to commence in early 2024.

7. Priorities for the Next Six Months

1. Delivery of Transforming Bromley Programme.
2. Support Directors in meeting departmental programmes as set out above
3. Maintain our Long-Term Budget Management and Financial Strategy to manage demand and growth.
4. Transformation work on Council’s Hub to the Direct Line Building.
5. Delivery of our Operational Property Programme.
6. Meet our statutory and regulatory requirements and inspection readiness.
7. King Charles III Coronation preparedness and delivery.
8. Respond to legislative changes and macro issues from Central Government.