

Supplementary Paper to Executive on 27th March 2024

Agenda Item: 5

Title: Budget Monitoring 2023/24

SPEECH and LANGUAGE THERAPY PROVISION AND FUNDING IN BROMLEY;

Recommendation 2.1 (j) Executive are requested to approve additional funding DSG funding of £470k to strengthen early support for Speech and Language services in key local schools, for early identification and intervention for a trial period of one year. This investment is expected to generate greater savings (in excess of £470k) to reduce the DSG Deficit.

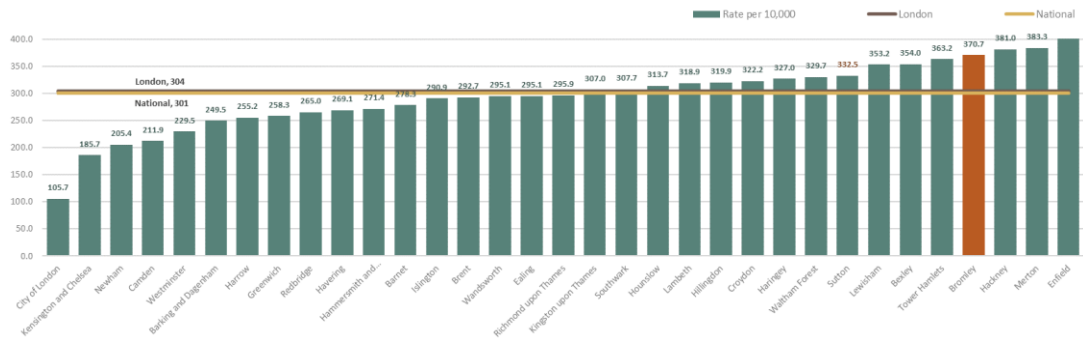
To note that the outcome of the additional investment will be reported back to members in considering options for ongoing funding;

This short paper sets out some of the current pressures in relation to the provision of SaLT (Speech and Language Therapy) for young people across the Borough. Support with speech and Language is a key component in supporting young people with autism and special needs, and is particularly effective in assisting with early identification and prevention of escalating concern and complexity. For this reason, a comprehensive service across our schools is one way of reducing the escalation of further concern and complexity.

At present our SaLT provision is provided by Bromley Health Care and jointly funded by the ICB and ourselves. Currently the ICB pay £1.942 million per annum and LB Bromley fund 147k per year.

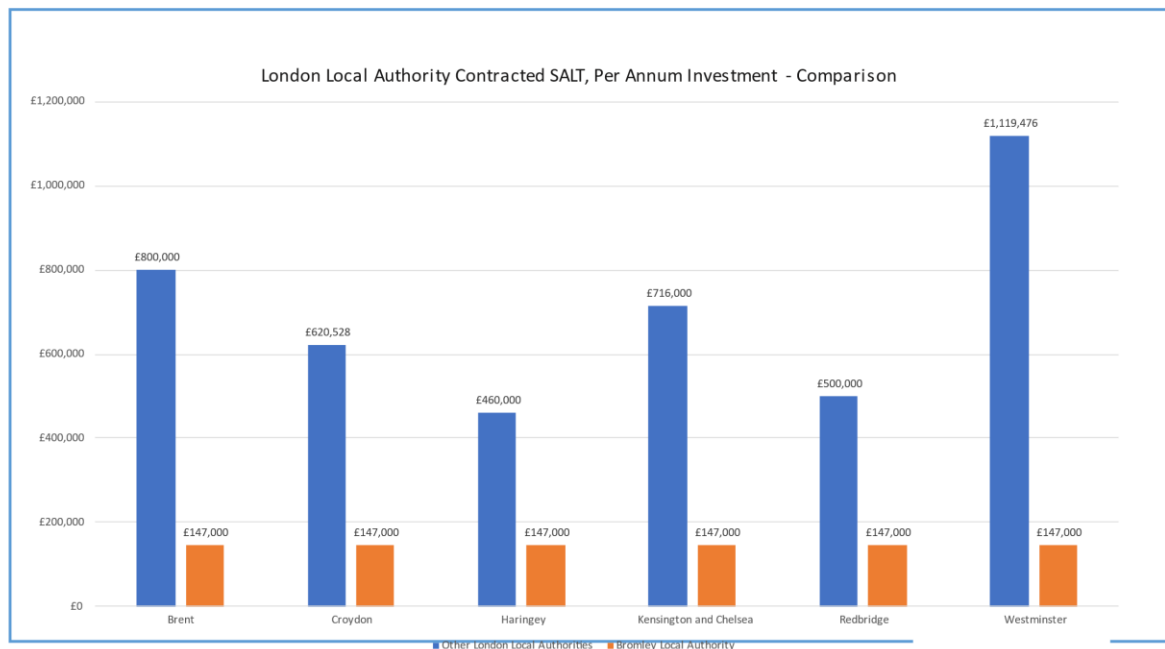
BHC have recently requested an increase in this funding in order to significantly strengthen and extend the early intervention service across a number of key schools in the Borough. If effective this is likely to have a significant impact in reducing demand for EHCP's (Education, Health and Care plans) and SEN transport costs by identifying need earlier and preventing escalation of demand and complexity.

Although LB Bromley issues a high number of EHCP's the relative spend linked to these plans indicates that Bromley is a low spend authority on SaLT. A review of a selection of other comparable Local Authorities (Bexley, Sutton, Hammersmith and Fulham, Richmond) shows that the average LA spend on SaLT provision is 1.2 million.



This diagram (above) shows the number of EHCP's issued by LB Bromley in comparison with other London Boroughs. This confirms that demand remains high. The diagram shows our ECHP rate per 10,000, (370.7) is broadly in line with Sutton (332.5), higher than Bexley (354) and higher than Richmond (295.9).

Whereas a comparison of budget spend on SaLT indicates that a number of LA's spend a greater amount than ourselves;



In addition we also know that;

- We spend less top up funding – than Sutton and Bexley, (in line with Richmond)
- We spend the less 'Therapies and other health related funding (significantly less than Sutton)
- We spend more on SEN Support and inclusion (double than that of Sutton, Bexley and Richmond).

The strengthening of early identification and early intervention through schools based support could assist in reducing demand, and complexity.

Demand for EHCPs last year continued to be high (616 initial requests) although we have seen a 10% reduction of requests for assessment from the year before (678) – a reflection of the positive impact of the ‘graduated approach’, a core aspect of the transformation/mitigation programme.

It should also be noted that initial or assessment refusals are inevitably contributing to tribunals and a significant increase in corporate complaints.

The 2023 primary needs identified aligns with the previous years. Over the last five years the authority has seen a growth especially in autism and speech, language, and communication needs, which represents half of all EHC Plans.

Whilst initial requests have reduced. We are issuing an average of an average of 36 new plans per month. This continues the growth trend experienced over the past five years.

The deficit position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is reported to the Executive, CEF PDS and Schools Forum through budget monitoring reports. The latest budget monitoring report (22 November CEF PDS) sets out an in-year overspend of £4,034k, leading to a forecast deficit position of £16,149k by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

Performance against KPIs is reported to each meeting of the SEND Governance Board. This data exemplifies a significant over-representation in Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) needs in Bromley, particularly in the Early Years, shown as red and amber in the table below:

Primary Need	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24+	Total
SLCN - Speech, Language and Communication Needs	56%	67%	75%	52%	54%	38%	36%	30%	31%	23%	22%	22%	24%	17%	24%	20%	22%	24%	29%	29%	20%	20%	31%
ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder	0%	10%	7%	19%	17%	25%	14%	21%	22%	20%	21%	21%	22%	23%	24%	22%	20%	26%	25%	27%	39%	23%	21%
SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health	0%	1%	2%	2%	8%	15%	12%	18%	19%	23%	28%	28%	28%	31%	24%	29%	32%	19%	13%	6%	16%	7%	20%
SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty	11%	6%	4%	5%	7%	8%	14%	11%	10%	11%	9%	8%	10%	5%	9%	5%	7%	5%	11%	15%	14%	18%	9%
MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty	0%	2%	4%	6%	2%	5%	8%	5%	6%	8%	7%	4%	8%	8%	7%	9%	7%	12%	10%	6%	2%	9%	6%
PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%	6%	3%	4%	3%	7%	3%	3%	4%	5%	4%	5%	2%	0%	3%
PD - Physical Disability	22%	1%	1%	9%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	4%	2%	4%	2%	6%	2%	1%	2%	5%	2%	9%	3%
HI/VI/MSI - Sensory Impairments	0%	5%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	0%	0%	7%	3%
OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability	11%	8%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	0%	3%	2%	2%	5%	2%	5%	5%	2%	3%
SPLD - Specific Learning Difficulty	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	5%	4%	2%	4%	3%	0%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	5%	2%
Not recorded	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

The external specialist SaLT review undertaken by expert Marie Gascoigne found a direct causal link between the lack of universal and targeted SaLT provision in Bromley and the medicalisation and specialisation of children’s needs, driving higher numbers of EHCP requests, which in turn increases costs to the DSG. A 30% reduction in the number of EHCPs issued each year for SLCN, is estimated to lead to c50 fewer EHC Plans being issued each year. With a DSG deficit any further increase in costs needs to be avoided. However, a trial period of one year is requested on the basis that the Director of Education has advised that the additional

costs will be more than offset by savings from the benefits of expanding this service thus reducing the overall DSG deficit. Additionally, it is anticipated that a strong universal and targeted offer for SaLT could facilitate a reduction of specialist SaLT provision through Annual Reviews, working closely with BHC.. Further detail will be reported through the DSG Deficit Recovery Management Plan update in summer 2024 and the outcome of the trial period and consideration of any continuation of funding will be reported back to members.

In order to provide the additional SaLT provision into schools, BHC is requesting additional investment of £470k for one year. This will be a key component in changing the delivery of services in order to break the current cycle of rising demand, continued assessments and associated costs.

The service will allow Bromley Healthcare to expand SaLT provision into key schools and work pro-actively with children and families.

This investment will greatly assist the early identification of emerging SEN concerns within school settings and enable all agencies to intervene earlier and prevent/reduce the escalation of concern. In taking this preventative action, this will significantly reduce demand for expensive and more complex intervention later on. On this basis it should reduce overall costs over a number of future years.