



THE LONDON BOROUGH

# **Policy Development & Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24**

**For submission to Full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

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# 1. Foreword

1. On behalf of all my colleagues who are engaged in Policy Development and Scrutiny Committees in the London Borough of Bromley, I have great pleasure in presenting our Annual Report for 2023/2024, which summarises the work that has been carried out by the Committees during the Council year.
2. The economy has been through a turbulent time, with inflation impacting heavily on the Council's financial performance. A spike in the CPI inflation measures added to the ongoing cost pressures faced by Bromley Council over the fiscal year just ending. The consequence of the challenges faced, around the revenue budget constraints and the capital and maintenance programme challenges leaves a funding gap in the medium to long term which has to be settled. The 2024/25 budget has been balanced, however for future years the gap as follows; £16.6M for 2025/26 and £34.2M for 2026/27 and £38.7M for 2027/28. These figures allow for growth pressures (net of mitigation) of £24.9M in 2025/6 rising to £36.5M in 2027/8. As part of the budgeting process growth must be contained to ensure that future years budget gaps are met. £10M growth saved in the coming year will reduce the budget gap and reduce the pressure on 2025/6 budget. Early savings will reduce the need to eat into reserves and maintain the income from treasury management. The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget, so effort is needed to generate income and find additional savings over the next 3 year period. Innovation and initiatives, joint procurement, cost initiatives and good contract management over the next few years will be really important in driving down the budget gap for future years. This will mean investing in IT including AI and following through on the accommodation strategy to ensure the Council is fit for the future. But this strategy is even more important in meeting the net zero carbon dioxide target for direct Council activities by 2027. Over the next year more invest to save and efficiency measures should come forward to help promote these ambitions.
3. Against this tough background 2023/24 has come in on budget subject to the use of some contingency and additional income from interest on balances. Over recent years the Council has set balanced budgets, without significantly impairing the delivery of frontline services. However, in light of the challenges ahead, the Council will increase Council Tax this coming year by a Bromley element of 4.99%, including the 2% increase to fund social care. In addition the Labour London Mayor and GLA also increased their precept by a whopping 8.6% when the current CPI rate is 4% making a net overall increase of 5.8% for Bromley residents. Current assumptions indicate a 2.99% increase in Bromley's Council Tax share in 2025/6, although this level could be reviewed up to 4.99%. Bromley Council will as a result of the changes could sacrifice its debt free status, meaning that residents will now contribute towards debt interest rather than benefitting from interest on reserves.
4. The Council continues to promote significant change, both in organizational terms and in its ability to continue to provide services expected by residents. The Council has over 1300 statutory obligations to discharge, which cost several millions of pounds per annum. These take priority over discretionary spending. The funding gap can't be closed without taking some difficult decisions and halting some services all together. Due to prudent financial management, Bromley Council is able to deal with these challenges but needs to ensure that early decisions are taken and adequate reserves are retained and where appropriate invested to maintain sustainable finances.
5. In addition to the financial challenges ahead and the need to become a different organisation with fewer resources, the Council should grasp opportunities for wider integration across public services including health and local government and look at cooperation with other Local Authorities to drive efficiencies. The Council will need to identify new investment opportunities to help protect key services. This might need a new look with an investment and revenue generation sub-committee, to help grow revenue outside the usual call on tax payer funds. Scrutiny will remain key to ensure that there is adequate control and stability. In the context of these challenges, the Council should review its current structures including the PDS function to ensure that scrutiny can drill down to an appropriate level when looking at opportunities for value for money.

6. The PDS Committees will continue to have an important role over the coming years to formulate acceptable solutions for the reduction in service provision, which has to come, whilst continuing to deliver quality services to the residents of Bromley.
7. Finally, I would like to thank all Committee Chairmen, members, and the dedicated Council officers for their diligence and hard work during last year in finding practical solutions, which have ensured that Bromley Council could formulate a balanced budget and is able to continue to provide essential services next year, which are important to our residents.

**Cllr. Simon Fawthrop**

**Chairman, Executive Resources and Contracts PDS Committee**

## 2. Policy Development and Scrutiny Chairmen 2023/24



Cllr Simon Fawthrop  
Executive, Resources & Contracts



Cllr Mark Brock  
Adult Care & Health Services



Cllr Kira Gabbert  
Children, Education & Families



Cllr Adam Grant  
Environment and Community Services



Cllr David Cartwright  
Public Protection and Enforcement



Cllr Tony Owen  
Renewal, Recreation & Housing

# 3. Policy Development and Scrutiny in Bromley

## Introduction

- 2.1 Six Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Committees at Bromley discharge the overview and scrutiny functions conferred by sections 21 and 32 of the Local Government Act 2000 and successive legislation. The Executive and Resources PDS Committee has an over-arching, co-ordinating role on behalf of the other five PDS Committees and is required by the Council's Constitution to present Full Council with an Annual Report "on the Policy Development and Scrutiny functions and PDS budget, and amended working methods if appropriate" (Article 6, Section 6.03 (d) of the Constitution).
- 2.2 The PDS Committees mirror the Council's executive portfolios:
- Executive, Resources & Contracts (covering both the Resources, Contracts and Commissioning Portfolio and the Executive)
  - Adult Care & Health Services
  - Children, Education & Families
  - Environment & Community Services
  - Public Protection and Enforcement
  - Renewal, Recreation & Housing
- 2.3 In addition to these Committees there is one PDS Sub-Committees:
- Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee (Adult Care and Health)
- 2.4 Although they have no decision-making powers, PDS Committees and Sub-Committees have key roles in contributing to policy development and scrutinising the decisions of the Executive and individual Portfolio Holders.

## Policy Reviews

- 2.5 PDS Committees advise Portfolio Holders, the Executive and Full Council on policies, budgets and service delivery. PDS Committees can commission groups of Councillors to review an issue or policy, so assisting a Portfolio Holder or the Executive to improve a service or function affecting local people. This can be linked to a forthcoming decision by a Portfolio Holder or the Executive or to assist in formulating fresh, new policy. In each case detailed, evidence-based assessments are carried out and recommendations made in a report. In the process, Councillors can speak to a broad range of people to help gather information for their evidence-based reports.

## One-Off Reviews

- 2.6 In addition to in-depth policy reviews, PDS Committees can also review a topical issue at Committee with comments and recommendations referred on to the Portfolio Holder. These reviews are often based around a presentation or an evidence-giving session with expert witnesses.

## Performance and Budget Monitoring

- 2.7 PDS Committees monitor the performance of services, functions and contracts within their remit, assessing performance against key performance indicators and policy objectives. Concerns are reported to a Portfolio Holder who can then, if necessary, be called to a PDS Committee meeting to account for the performance of his or her Portfolio.
- 2.8 PDS Committees are also involved in the budget setting process and provide considered comments and recommendations for the Executive to take account of when formulating the Council's annual budget. Similarly, PDS Committees also monitor in-year spend of budgets and raise concerns where there is any possibility of overspend or other issues affecting spending priorities.

## Call-in

- 2.9 The call-in process is a key means by which PDS Committees can hold the Executive to account. Any five Councillors can call in a decision and prevent it from taking immediate effect until it has been re-considered by a PDS Committee. The Committee can then interview the Portfolio Holder and officers and consider whether the decision is appropriate, within the Council's policy framework, and whether it should be reconsidered. If the Committee feels that the decision should be reversed or altered, it can make a recommendation to the Executive, which then has to reconsider the matter.
- 2.10 At the time of writing, no call-ins have been made. The continued low level of call-in reflects an emphasis given to pre-decision scrutiny leading to better and more robust decisions which are less likely to be challenged.

# 4. Report from Executive, Resources & Contracts PDS Committee

**Chairman: Cllr. Simon Fawthrop**  
**Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Robert Evans**

## 1. Introduction

In 2023/24 the Committee held 9 scheduled meetings. The regular meetings included the scrutiny of items to be decided at the Executive's meetings, in addition to matters reported to the directly to the Committee. I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their contributions and thank the Officer team, for their support across the year, including call overs and agenda setting as well as numerous adhoc meetings and briefings. I'd also like to thank Cllr Evans for Chairing the meeting whilst I had covid.

## 2. Policy Development

This has been an interesting year for policy development as the Council has developed and progressed its ground-breaking free speech policy. This gives additional protection to our employees, allowing them to speak out without unintended consequences. Being able to respect, understand and debate other views even if not agreeing with them is fundamental to a healthy democratic society, and to the good functioning of local Government. The Policy has been approved also by the Constitutional Improvement Working Party as well as by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee. There will be more work to do going forward, but a great start has been made.

## 3. Scrutiny of the Executive and the Resources Portfolio Holder

The Committee's principal role is to scrutinize the decisions of the Executive, The Resources Portfolio Holder and to hold the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive Officer and the Resources Portfolio Holder to account. This Committee has discharged its responsibilities diligently and competently during the year. I would like to thank all the above for their valuable contributions.

## 4. Review of Council Activities

The Committee has been very conscious of the need to reduce costs and has diligently scrutinized budget and capital programme reports and measures to bring costs under control, including overspends across some budget headings. The contracts register and the disposal of various surplus assets, the performance of the Council Tax support scheme and issues concerning homelessness and temporary accommodation, Treasury Management performance which continues in the top 10% of Local authority performances, the various invest-to-save projects, as well as details on the growth fund and investment fund initiatives and the risk register were also considered. The committee also considered the best use of assets and had a major report on the capital assets and the future HQ including the potential Library re-location. Lastly the Council is undergoing a transformation programme to help shape the Council's future and change the way it does business, at every stage the programme needs to have the ability to roll back if the transformation leads to degradation in service to our residents, however it should be recognised that ultimately the financial imperative will be over-riding service standards. That does not mean to say that services cannot or should not be delivered differently to how they are delivered today, but value for money has to be extracted for every penny of tax-payer funds.

## 5. Scrutiny of Contracts.

The Committee also reviewed the work of key supplier contracts including the IT Services contract provided by BT. We also reviewed the work of Liberata, whilst it has been good to see the Liberata contract performing well and showing both good value for money and a good level of service, we have also looked at the ways in which they can add more value to their services. We will be looking at both contractors and consultants in the near future to help the drive towards permanent employees which help provide a more consistent service for Bromley's residents.

## **6. Outlook**

The Government's cost reductions have continued to impact on the Council's finances. The task to find the savings necessary to balance the Council's budget has been a major factor across this year. By keeping on top of the cost pressures which include additional growth items, this year will be crucial in delivering a balanced budget in future years. The main challenge is closing the funding gap of £38.7 million by 2027/28, a lot of hard work remains to ensure the Council continues to set legal budgets over the coming years. On a positive note at the time of writing, business confidence is at an all time high, inflation is falling and there are positive signs for the economy on the horizon.

## **7. Conclusions**

The Council is about to enter a new transformation phase, undergoing significant organizational and estate changes, whilst maintaining its ability to continue to provide services expected by residents. The era of streamlining, re-organizing and efficiencies, whilst continuing to provide services "as usual" is becoming harder and difficult decisions will now have to be taken about service provision. Statutory obligations will have to take precedence over providing discretionary support, but innovation and technologies including AI might be able to help contain growth pressures.

The challenges for Bromley Council in the coming years are the need to make the wider public fully aware of the Council's financial position of balancing on-going service pressures against a backdrop of challenging central Tax payer support to ensure that planning is in place for dealing with the budget gap in future years. This will include both cost reductions and revenue generation within the policies of managing resources well, the 2027 zero carbon target and the clean and green approach adopted by the Conservative administration.

**Councillor Simon Fawthrop**  
**Chairman, Executive & Resources PDS Committee**

# 5. Report from Adult Care and Health PDS Committee

**Chairman: Cllr. Mark Brock**

**Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Felicity Bainbridge**

## Introduction

The Committee has met 4 times so far this municipal year with a further meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> March. Alongside the elected Members on the Committee we also have co-opted members representing Bromley Carers, Lived Experience and Safeguarding and Special Educational Needs.

## Policy Development & Scrutiny

During the year the Committee reviewed various services and initiatives as well as decisions for the Executive and the Adults, Care and Health Portfolio Holder.

Key areas scrutinised by the Committee this year were:

- The Portfolio Plan
- Budget Monitoring, Capital Programme and Contracts Register
- Integrated Provision of Mental Health Services
- Tackling Loneliness Strategy
- Housing With Care Strategy
- Carers Plan 2023-2025
- Contract Extension Bromley Healthwatch Service
- Adult Social Care Strategy
- Draft Budget 2024-2025
- Vibrance Direct Payments Support and Payroll Service Provider
- Residents Voice Project and Working Group
- Adult Care Transformation Programme
- Co-Occurring Conditions of Mental Health and Substance Misuse
- Additional Learning Disabilities Funding

Updates were received on the following:

- Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board 2022-2023
- Adult Social Care Reform
- Members Visits
- Tackling Loneliness Action Plan
- Engagement Framework
- Social Care Institute of Excellence and Assistive Technology
- Extra Care Housing Scheme
- Dementia Hub

Information Briefings were received on:

- Risk Register
- Bromley Local Account 2022-2023
- Complaints & Compliments Annual Report 2022-2023
- Capital Program
- Contracts Register
- Minutes from Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meetings

**Key Areas Scrutinised:**

**Adult Social Care Strategy**

The Council has developed a new Adult Social Care Strategy for the period 2023 to 2028 to take account of developments across the social care market, changing government policy and wider technological, demographic and economic changes.

The strategy considers the key challenges of increased service demand and rising costs pressures in relation to supporting vulnerable older residents and working age adults with a disability and/or a long-term health condition.

The previous draft of the strategy had been provided to the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee in March 2023. Further consultation had taken place and key changes have been made to the document.

**Tackling Loneliness Strategy**

The Committee received two further updates this municipal year on the progress of the Tackling Loneliness Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026 which was launched in at the end of 2021. The Principal Loneliness Champion informed Members that a bespoke London Borough of Bromley Tackling Loneliness Workshops had commenced in March 2023. The workshops had received fantastic feedback with 95% of participants having found it to be ‘useful’ or ‘extremely useful’, over 250 people have now participated in these workshops. A reminder to members who have not participated in this workshop to please make time to attend one of the on-line sessions. A Tackling Loneliness Summit had been held at Bromley Civic Centre on Friday 16th June 2023 which had been attended by over 100 people. A number of events had taken place across the Borough for “Silver Sunday” and “Befriending Week” had taken place at the start of November 2023

**Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board 2022/23 Annual Report**

The Committee welcomed the Independent Chairman of the Bromley Safeguarding Adult Board, and the Bromley Safeguarding Adult Board Manager, who presented a video providing an overview of the Annual Report. Members noted the tremendous volume of work completed by the BSAB.

It was explained that an area of focus for the Board was to ensure that there was no disruption to care arising from transition from Child to Adult. In addition, for the past year the Council had been operating a 0-25 Service which sat within Children’s Services. This helped to facilitate better management of transition and in terms of transition, there was also flexibility within Health Services to ensure services to young adults were not disrupted by transition.

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Lastly, I would like to thank all officers, members and co-opted members of the Committee for their hard work and excellent input during this municipal year to the meetings.

**Councillor Mark Brock**  
**Chairman, Adult Care & Health PDS and Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

# 6. Report from Children, Education & Families PDS Committee

**Chairman: Cllr. Kira Gabbert**

**Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Jonathan Andrews**

## **Introduction**

The Committee has considered reports across a range of services including early intervention and family support, education planned maintenance programme, procurement for the Family Group Conference service, the refreshed Engagement Framework, spending by Primary, Secondary and Special maintained schools, award of contract for capital works at Oaklands Primary School, Castlecombe Youth Centre and Mottingham Community Support Centre, Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services, 2024/25 Dedicated Schools Grant and the Children, Education and Families Portfolio Draft Budget 2024/25.

The Committee also has a statutory responsibility to conduct annual reviews of key services including the provision of transport services for all client groups, progress of the 0-25 service, private fostering, adoption, Corporate Parenting, the Youth Justice Service, school place planning and the work of the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP), Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Independent Reviewing Officer.

Deep Dives were undertaken on the areas of mental health services for children and young people, Education, Health and Care plans, Youth Support and NEET (young people not in education, employment or training).

## **Our role as corporate parents**

This year's Children Looked After Celebration of Achievement Awards Ceremony took place in February 2024 at The Warren. This annual event is very popular and recognises various achievements of our children in academic, sporting or artistic fields.

For the first time, Celebrating Bromley SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Stars took place in September 2023. It was a wonderful and hugely popular event with the Mayor of Bromley present at the celebrations. After the huge inaugural success, this event will now be happening on an annual basis.

Every summer, our Corporate Parenting Fun Day is taking place, and this year it will be held on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July.

## **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)**

Our SEND services remain crucial. SEND transport transformation programme is under way. Work is continuing to establish a new Special Free School in the Borough which will provide a much needed in-borough offer to Bromley children whilst reducing the number of costly out-of-borough placements and associated costs such as transport.

Woodlodge is an independent living skills centre in Bickley and Sundridge Ward that supports the development of independence and social skills for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Funding of this vital service has been agreed during the reporting period.

## **Education and schools**

Figures from this year's National Secondary Offer Day (as published on 01 March) reveal that just under 92% of Bromley's school children will be attending one of their top four choices of

secondary school, with just under 69% offered their first preference. The figures demonstrate that our continued collaborative working with the Borough's schools has ensured a sufficiency of places. Since 2020, the Borough has seen provision increased by 150 places, equivalent to 5 forms.

## **Budget**

### Budget 2024/25

Members are aware that there is a clear need to make savings in current and future years. Service transformation is a key mechanism to deliver the required savings. Recruitment and retention of in-house social workers remains an area of primary focus of the department. Recruiting more of the in-house foster carers is also a priority as relying on external agencies creates additional cost pressures. Following a recent fostering recruitment campaign, there are encouraging developments with more candidates expressing the interest in becoming Bromley foster carers.

### Dedicated Schools Grant

There is a significant Government funding deficit, particularly within High Needs Block, which reflects the experience of other local authorities across the country and in London. The officers have developed a Dedicated Schools Grant Recovery Management Plan in consultation with the Department for Education to mitigate the overspend as far as practicable. This remains an area of focus and a huge challenge for the Department and the Committee.

## **Ofsted**

In November 2023 the Ofsted Inspection of Bromley's Children's Services took place and concluded that children in the Borough received "exceptionally strong services". The outstanding rating across all 5 areas was the highest rating that Ofsted could give and Bromley was only the third local authority to have received a judgement of outstanding in all areas since the introduction of the new Ofsted Inspection framework in 2022, which included a new judgement for experiences and progress of care leavers. The outcome of the inspection is a testament to Bromley's position as one of the best boroughs in the country to raise a family, delivering exceptional support to children and young people and their families and carers.

## **Final comments**

I would like to thank the Committee Clerk, Vice-Chairman and all Members of the CEF PDS Committee for their support and input. All Members work in a collegiate way, with new ideas and innovative suggestions often brought up for a discussion. The Members are mindful of both the increasing demand and enormous cost pressures on the services and understand the need to innovate and improve. It is important to acknowledge that representatives of Bromley Youth Council, Church representatives and Parent Governor members provide vital insights and unique perspective to the Committee.

Children and families are at the very heart of what we do in Bromley. I would like to thank every person working in the department for their hard work and dedication. In the face of the enormous challenges and limited funding, the officers and department directors, the Council's senior leadership team and the Portfolio Holder deliver excellence and demonstrate their absolute commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children of our Borough.

**Councillor Kira Gabbert**  
**Chairman, Children, Education and Families PDS Committee**

## 7. Report from Environment and Community Services PDS Committee

**Chairman: Cllr. Adam Grant**

**Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Felicity Bainbridge**

It has been a great honour serving for the past several months as the Chairman to the Environment & Community Services PDS. Members of the committee have robustly and on occasion fiercely scrutinised the reports that have been presented. The year has seen some unexpected changes in the management structure of the committee with Cllr Cuthbert being selected to stand as a parliamentary candidate for Sittingbourne & Sheppey. Cllr Cuthbert has served the portfolio with outstanding dedication throughout her term and our loss is hopefully her new constituencies gain. A fitting and able successor was found in Cllr Rowlands and he took on the role as Environment Portfolio Holder. Cllr Bennett remained in post as Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways & Road Safety.

As I am sure you are all only too aware Bromley is London's Greenest Borough with over 60,400 trees. Our parks & open spaces are our unique selling point attracting young families and downsizers alike to the area. We have seen considerable growth in the local population owing to excellent infrastructure to central London whilst being largely green and relatively undervalued compared to parts of West London.

As with any organisation there are functions that perform well but there is always room for improvement. This report will hopefully give an overview as to some of what has been achieved.

In the last year we have seen Churchfields Depot shut for four months due to emergency works being undertaken, with a successful reopening in December 2022.

We have had a plethora of storms including Storm Kathleen, Ciaran & Henk all of which the council have weathered well.

We have sadly seen some crime within portfolios scrutinised by the committee, the deplorable and callous removal of 113 trees in Cator Park and the wrongful destruction of ULEZ cameras. Both items the committee strongly condemns. It is hoped that the protagonists are apprehended and face the consequences of their ill judged actions.

The Portfolio Holders and I were fortunate enough to be invited by Veolia for a tour of their recycling facilities where Bromley waste is taken. We first visited the incinerator in Bermondsey where none recyclable refuse is burned and produces power and hot water to the surrounding housing estates. We went on to see the new fleet of electric bin lorries that are being used in and around Westminster. Its hoped we will be able to trail one to assess how they perform on Bromleys expansive road network. Finally we saw the integrated waste management centre in Southwark. This state of the art facility is responsible for sorting and collating all the material that is sent from Bromley to be recycled. It is worth highlighting that Bromley sends virtually zero waste to landfill. I have agreed with officers and the Portfolio Holder that this tour will be made available to committee members as I believe it is vital to see the scale of the operation that exists. Upon writing this report all members on the committee have agreed to attend.

We have also seen the completion of the Council's switch over to LED street lighting saving around £1m per year.

## June Committee Scrutiny Comprehensive Review of Road Safety

As part of June's PDS the Committee looked at a report that reflected on our current approach to road safety. The borough has finite resources and it is imperative that resources are directed to sites where the impact of schemes will achieve best value. From the 2005/09 baseline Bromley has seen a 50% reduction in serious and fatal road casualties. Bromley has set an ambitious target of 65% in the LIP3 document and continues to work hard to achieve this figure through the implementation of data lead road safety improvement schemes.

## September Committee Scrutiny of Glendale Contract

Glendale began their contract in 2019 for an 8 year term. The Portfolio Holder and officers have worked extremely hard to improve the performance levels of the contractor. It is fair to say that the contractor has had significant performance issues in relation to completion of jobs resulting in a backlog. Performance over the year averaged 50% with a target of 75%.

A corrective action plan was scrutinised in June 2023 and implemented in August. A strategic partnership board was also set up that included senior managers from both LBB and Glendale to meet bi-annually to oversee the contract management.

The executive agreed procurement of additional suppliers to help clear existing backlogs and to provide additional on-going resilience. Glendale also provided a service improvement plan to improve their capacity for future years. This plan included additional recruitment, investment, training, and development.

## September Committee Scrutiny of Veolia - Environmental Services Contract

The Veolia contract was awarded in April 2019. The contract covers disposal of residual waste and management of closed landfill, management of recyclable materials, collection of household and bulky waste, management of recyclable materials, collection of household and business waste, administration of functions with regard to collections of trade, bulky and garden waste, management of recycling centres and waste transfer stations. In addition Veolia are also responsible for street cleaning, graffiti removal, abandoned and surrendered vehicle removal and park security.

This is year four of the eight-year environmental services contract held by Veolia. The contract sees around 138,000 tonnes of material collected from 143,000 properties and also s responsible for 500 miles of carriageway and 850 miles of footway.

The Veolia contract continues to perform strongly with expert oversight from officers and the portfolio holder. Surveys have been undertaken with 88% of respondents being satisfied with their non-recyclable refuse and 85% being satisfied with recycling collections.

For the first time ever 0% of residual black sack waste went to land fill. Veolia saw a 10% reduction in residual waste - this was put down to effects of the cost of living and residents returning to their workplaces following the pandemic. Bromley had no paper rejected for being wet and non-recyclable following the repair works to central depot. Per 100,000 collections Veolia were targeted with missed collection rate of 120, however the actual

amount was 140, this shows how high the bar is set and shows the outstanding performance by Veolia and Bromley officers who manage the contract.

Over the 12-month period Veolia serviced footway and carriageway assets 340,000 times. Veolia supported 23 litter pick events and we have seen a 25% increase in street friend activity. In a borough with over 64,000 trees leafing poses a significant challenge. Despite this favourable responses were received and resident satisfaction stands at 73%.

### September Committee Scrutiny of Tremendous Scheme

In July 2021 the Executive approved a four-year program to plant an additional 5000 street trees. The committee reviewed the progress of the “tremendous” tree planting program which entered its second year. 2500 of the proposed 5000 trees have now been planted and the QR codes were now live. The contractor that was approved was Gristwood & Toms. In May 2023 the aftercare program commenced with new trees receiving 50 litres of water on a weekly basis for 15 weeks.

The Council also undertook a communications campaign to encourage residents to supplement the watering of the newly planted trees. Of the trees that have been planted the mortality rate is around 10% however the Forestry Commission states the national average is closer to 30% and the report highlighted the promising statistics in Bromley. In the third year there are to be a further 1486 trees to be planted and which will be of high resilience. The council continue to welcome suggestions for new tree locations.

### November PDS Committee Scrutiny of APCOA

The Committee scrutinised the APCOA contract as part of the November PDS. The contract is a fixed term of 10 years and was awarded for ten years. At the time of the report APCOA employed 44 CEO (Civil Enforcement Officers). The work undertaken is demanding and which results in high turnover of CEOs. Over the year over 69,000 PCNs were issued. The highest since the contract began. This equates to an issue rate of 1.34. The error rate in PCN issue is extremely low at 0.8% with a target of 2%. The error rate has come down over the last few years with a peak in year 1 at 2.31%.

The Council has invested in 18 cameras to aid in enforcement outside of schools with 1020 PCNs being issued. In 2021 the council began enforcing yellow box stopping traffic violations. Officers have worked with APCOA to re-configure the cameras to ensure efficiency. As a result over 30,000 PCNs have been issued. It is important to note that the stopping in yellow boxes does cause problems with traffic flow and therefore the high rate is justifiable. Following the decision taken in November 2023 Bromley became a cashless only parking provider. The decision whilst difficult has saved the council just under £1m and given the financial challenges ahead savings on this scale are much needed. APCOA worked with the council to facilitate the change to Ringo with removal of the machines, installation of new signage and took feedback from motorists. The Council continues to monitor the long term trends as a result of swapping to Ringo but on the data available the statistics show parking figures were higher than in the previous year.

### November PDS Committee Scrutiny of Fly Tipping Action Plan

As part of the Council’s Public Protection and Enforcement Portfolio Plan, targets have been set to reduce the number of fly tipping incidents to less than 3000. This is to be achieved by targeting hotspots and utilization of CCTV at seven locations to secure vital evidence. Officers have as a result of their hard work secured 22 successful prosecutions, 8 vehicle seizures, and 88 fixed penalty notices.

### November PDS Committee Scrutiny of Chinese Round about Road Safety Scheme

Officers work tirelessly to ensure that all that can be done is done with regards to making the road network as safe as possible. Schemes that are put forward are data lead. One of the road safety schemes proposed was at the Chinese Roundabout which sees 30,000 vehicle entries per day. The data showed a higher than expected number of casualties particularly with regard to cyclists who represented 42% of the 21 serious collisions reported. The scheme proposed to narrow the flow onto the roundabout and increase deflection to discourage speeding into the roundabout.

### November PDS Committee Scrutiny of Idverde Contract

Bromley is London's greenest borough with 121 parks, 45 heathlands, meadows, or woodland sites, it also has 52 allotments, and 17 cemeteries. These sites are managed by Idverde who were awarded an 8 year contract in 2019. The contract performs relatively well with KPIs in excess of the 75% target.

Idverde undertook a parks survey as part of the contract to assess user satisfaction. The survey had 1024 respondents with 65% indicating satisfaction within the boroughs parks and green spaces. This is down from 77% in the 2022 survey. There is much room for improvement especially around cleanliness (30% satisfaction) and facilities (47% satisfaction) with Kelsey Park management featuring heavily with poor playground equipment and toilets.

The Council understands the value of the parks and green spaces to residents and has committed spending £2.4m on projects to improve Kelsey Park. The Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund has awarded £252k to playground implement schemes and a further £400k from the Parks & Infrastructure Fund. Idverde are also reviewing the management plan for Kelsey park and we hope to see improvements over the next year.

### January PDS Committee Scrutiny of EV Charging update

In the last year 14% of all new car sales were electric, this is a significant increase from 9% in 2021 and less than 5% in 2020. Bromley as a borough is fortunate in that approximately 65% of residents have off road parking and are able to install chargers should they decide to purchase an electric vehicle. The Committee reviewed a report following the successful pilot scheme for both Gul-E and on street EV charge points to continue with the scheme with Connected Kerb who was approved as the preferred supplier and for charging points to be installed at the locations set out within the report.

### March PDS Committee Scrutiny of Anerley Hill Road Safety Improvement Scheme

The Committee were presented with a report outlining a scheme to improve the road layout for pedestrians and bus priority. The Committee is especially concerned with matters that contribute to net zero. The bus action plan aims to deliver 25km of new bus lanes by 2025 and the Anerley Hill scheme contributes to that. A public consultation took place with overall support for the new bus lanes (56%) and continuous pavements (73%). It is hoped the scheme will be implemented by the end of 2024.

### March PDS Committee Scrutiny of Vehicle Crossover Policy

The Committee voted unanimously to create a working group to review the current policies that pertain to the construction of new vehicle crossovers. Cllr Bennett will be arraigning a

date for the working group to meet.

In conclusion the Committee has performed well and the commitment of members to ensure that Bromley is getting value for money has been excellent.

Some of the upcoming items for the next year include the scrutiny of:

- Future highway maintenance contracts (June 2024)
- Veolia contract extension (June 2024)
- Annual air quality status report (Sept 2024)
- Riney Contract performance (Nov 2024)
- Nature friendly verges and sustainable planting trail update (Jan 2025)

Finally I would like to thank all the officers and committee members for all their tireless work and look forward to working with them in the coming year.

**Councillor Adam Grant**  
**Chairman, Environment and Community Services PDS Committee**

# 8. Report from Public Protection and Enforcement PDS Committee

**Chairman: Cllr David Cartwright**  
**Vice-Chairman: Cllr Kim Botting**

The PP&E PDS has had a busy year scrutinising both the local authority and its partners' work in "Making Bromley Even Better". It has worked closely with council officers, the police, fire brigade and other partners within the Safer Bromley Partnership, to keep Bromley safe by protecting consumers and residents, supporting, and regulating businesses, and protecting and improving our environment. By utilising an approach of support for our businesses and residents, along with assertive enforcement where necessary, Bromley continues to be one of the safest London Boroughs in which to live, work and visit. The breadth of the Committee's scrutiny work over the last year is wide and includes:

**Safer Bromley Partnership (SBP) & Community Safety:** It has been a demanding but exciting year for our community and the different partners within the SBP. Crime increased across London, including Bromley in 2023 when compared to 2022, however, at 5.5% this was lower than the London increase of 6.5%. However, it's important to highlight that with an offence rate of 82.4 offences per 1,000 population in Bromley, compared to the 115.4 rate across London, people are over 28% less likely to be a victim of crime in Bromley. The PDS has worked closely with Bromley's new Superintendent for Neighbourhood Policing, continuing to scrutinise the Police with particular emphasis around the reporting of their performance and priorities. Further, the London Fire Brigade provided its Annual Update which enables members to discuss their key priorities and consider the LFB's Risk Management Strategy and how it applies to Bromley. The PP&E PDS has scrutinised other specific partners including 'Change Grow Live', Bromley's drug and alcohol service. The PDS also scrutinised the MOPAC spending plan for projects which support community safety in the borough. Over the past year there have been 12 successful Community Impact Days which have been well attended by a range of partners, including relevant Council departments, The Police, the Fire Brigade, Clarion, Veolia, IdVerde, DVLA and Living Well. As well as providing valuable community engagement opportunities, where property has been marked and crime prevention has been shared, they have also facilitated the removal of waste and graffiti, dealt with unlawful vehicles, and checked areas for hidden weapons.

**Statutory Noise Nuisance Out of Hours Service:** This project was successfully launched and refocused to cover times of most need. Since then, over 905 site inspections have been conducted made up of 156 response complaints, 77 inspections of events licensed by Temporary Events Notices, and 616 programmed inspections to check compliance on those where notices have already been served. This activity has resulted in 26 formal warnings and 2 enforcement notices.

**Emergency Planning & Corporate Resilience.** Another busy year for the team, who recently organised the Local Authority's response during London's annual Counter Terrorism exercise for the blue light services, which was based upon a terrorist attack in the Glades Shopping Centre. From an incident perspective, the team dealt with 29 emergencies affecting our residents over the year. The largest being a response at 3AM to a flat fire in Orchard Grove Penge that saw all the occupants of 10 flats displaced. The team also assisted Environment colleagues in the planning and delivery of the response to Storms Ciaran and Henk. A full range of training was delivered to staff and volunteers, resulting in a significant increase in our emergency response capability. The team oversaw the update of the Council's business Continuity plans during the year and delivered a full testing and exercising programme across all Directorates, better preparing us for any disruption to the provision of our services. Finally, the team were successful in a joint funding bid to the GLA to deliver a project to co-produce new approaches to local community resilience in Bromley.

**Food Safety & Hygiene Programme:** With over 1,283 food rating inspections completed last year the number of outstanding inspections in 22/23 has fallen from 2,450 to 1,877 in 23/24 and now to 825 for next year. There is a new contract and programme in place to address the last covid related backlog within the Food Inspection Programme. Bromley is responsible for ensuring appropriate and safe food provision of these establishments. The problems associated with the Covid Pandemic caused the cessation of food safety inspections of food businesses. The resulting backlog of existing food businesses requiring inspection

and the number of new food businesses registering during this period grew significantly, as it did across London and indeed the country. Bromley's food safety officers have worked closely with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to develop an achievable and acceptable plan to reduce this backlog. This has been particularly difficult as there is, currently, a national shortage of available accredited and experienced food safety officers and recruitment to overcome this backlog has been a serious problem. The FSA are fully aware of, and acknowledge, this continuing issue.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):** With an increasing demand over recent years for HMOs in Bromley, the PDS fully supported the recent strengthening of planning control for HMOs. Further assessment of HMO's was scrutinised by the PDS ensuring the most robust measures are in place and in full use. This has continued to improve the Council's ability to ensure HMOs are of satisfactory quality and not a nuisance to their neighbours. There are 312 licenced HMOs in Bromley, with a further 33 applications currently being processed. HMOs operating before the recent changes in planning regulations do not require retrospective planning permission.

**Trading Standards:** This is an important area of the Council's responsibility. Trading Standards Officers have continued their highly regarded work over the past year. Through regular updates to local residents, warning of ongoing 'scams' such as cold calling, telephone and doorstep sales etc., they continue to support all Bromley residents and in particular the elderly and most vulnerable. The end of February saw the outcome of prosecutions against two doorstep traders, with one receiving a 21 month imprisonment (suspended for 2 years) with unpaid work and rehabilitation activity, and the other imprisoned for 12 months; [Rogue traders receive prison sentences in Trading Standards prosecutions – London Borough of Bromley](#). Trading standards work is wide and varied and, by way of example, nearly 5000 illicit vapes were seized in 2023 and 1800 already in 2024.

**Environmental Enforcement & the Fly tipping Action Plan:** The Committee has continued to support the Neighbourhood Management Team's commitment to keep the borough's streets clean and green, to reduce litter, fly tipping and dog fouling. In the past 12 months funds have been utilised to procure Artificial Intelligence CCTV, which has aided the team by capturing evidence of fly tipping at two sites within the Borough. Further resource has also been added via expansion of the contract held by Parking Services with APCOA. The contract amendment, of January 2024, provides three dedicated Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers whose role is to patrol the borough engaging with residents and issuing fixed penalty notices for low level environmental crimes.

**Parking Enforcement:** Parking enforcement activities are undertaken in accordance with the Bromley Parking Strategy. This covers the management of public car parks, on-street parking, and civil parking enforcement. It also includes Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued by CCTV for school zigzag lines, bus stops and moving traffic contraventions, as well as enforcing 'blue badge' fraud. When a PCN is issued, the registered keeper has a minimum of 2 chances to appeal and a formal representation can be made directly to the Council. In 22/23 112,750 PCNs were issued, 30,478 appeals were processed by the Council with only 226 cases heard by an independent adjudicator, of which only 45 were upheld.

This is but a small sample of the work of the PP&E PDS. Other areas of scrutiny undertaken over the past year include planning enforcement, extension of the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) for ASB and Dog Control & Fouling Enforcement Power, the valuable work of the Bromley Youth Council and the performance of the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust in respect of public and community safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to, firstly, thank the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement for all her support and guidance over the past year. Secondly, I would thank all members who have served on the PP&E PDS for their enthusiastic and positive contribution and wise counsel, which has ensured the continued safety of Bromley borough, its communities, and its local residents. Finally, I would like to place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation for the sterling work of all Council officers who have not only supported the PP&E PDS in carrying out its scrutiny function, but who continue to serve and support all those who live, work and visit our borough.

**Councillor David Cartwright**  
**Chairman, Public Protection & Enforcement PDS Committee**

# 9. Report from Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee

**Chairman: Cllr Tony Owen**

**Vice-Chairman: Cllr Thomas Turrell**

The Renewal, Recreation & Housing Portfolio is one of the most wide ranging in the Council and is one of the major cost drivers. Temporary Housing demand is increasing as accommodation costs rocket, but supply is limited. Staff continue to be innovative in controlling costs and finding grant funding for various projects.

A new Local Plan is in the pipeline.

Subjects that have been scrutinised in the last year are listed below in (mainly) chronological order. Detail is available in committee papers and minutes.

- Refurbishment of St Paul's Cray library
- Bromley North housing
- Crystal Palace Trust
- Full fibre roll out
- Coronation street parties
- Housing Information Technology
- Asset Management Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy and Management
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Building Control Service
- Housing - Meadowship scheme and building own
- Housing revenue account
- Lawn Tennis Association grant for tennis court renovation
- Orpington supplementary planning document
- Urban design guide
- Homelessness prevention grant
- Ex offenders programme
- Rough sleeping initiative
- England & Wales cricket board grant for non turf pitches
- More homes Bromley (Mears group)
- Leisure centre redevelopment
- Walnuts (Orpington) and West Wickham leisure centres
- Changing places (specialist toilets for complex needs)
- York Rise development
- Crofton Roman Villa (external building)
- Local parades
- Bromley supplementary planning document
- Housing allocation scheme
- Star Lane works
- Temporary accommodation costs
- Supply problems with homelessness accommodation
- Loss of private rental accommodation
- Mottingham Community Support Centre

- Crystal Palace regeneration
- Crystal Palace subway
- Network Rail land availability
- Carbon management within contracts
- Homelessness prevention funds
- Bellegrove housing development
- Library repair works
- Extra affordable housing in West Wickham
- Local London sub regional partnership

Monitoring of budgets, capital programme, contracts and key performance indicators (KPIs) takes place regularly.

**Councillor Tony Owen**  
**Chairman, Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee**