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Council

15 July 2024

Questions from Members of the Council for Written Reply

1. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Leader of the Council

Bromley Council organise several annual service events for example, Armed Forces Day. Why is there a restriction on the number of attendees at these services, particularly the outdoor events?

Reply:

Guests for the Civic Services are restricted in number to enable us to plan for the use of facilities, seating, accessibility requirements, first aiders and fire marshalls, Order of Service printing and catering requirements. The Council Chamber is always booked to accommodate outdoor Civic events in case the weather prevents it taking place outside. Therefore, the number of guests are limited to the number which can be accommodated indoors e.g. the Council Chamber, whether the event is indoors or outside.

2. From Cllr Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Traffic, Highways and Road Safety

At full Council 29/06/23 I was told that (a) APCOA, responsible for running and maintaining our car parks, and (b) the Council's Property Division, did not use Fix My Street. If this is still the case, please explain why, especially as Bromley Council heavily promotes FMS use to our residents.

Reply:

FixMyStreet was developed to enable the easy online reporting of issues in the street and green scene areas and reported issues are pushed via a 2-way integration into the CONFIRM system used by those services. Parking and Property sit outside of those service areas and utilise different back-office systems. Where reports for those teams are received, they are referred on internally. We have not pursued a direct integration with Parking and Property's back-office systems as the relatively small number of reports concerning car park or LBB Estate management in comparison with the volume of reports received overall would not offer value for money against the cost of such development. Recent updates to FMS include a redirection for Parking enforcement issues, which are often submitted on FMS, to steer the customer to the correct channel and further such redirects could be considered where an alternative public reporting channel exists. Please note, management of LBB assets by Property Services is primarily driven from internally raised works requests rather than from public reporting.

3. From Cllr Mark Smith to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, and Families

How many times has the Council failed to meet the statutory timeframe of six weeks within which ECHNA requests have to be dealt with - and the results communicated to parents/carers - in the last 12 months?

Reply:

Whilst the local authority has a statutory duty to respond to all new requests of EHC Needs Assessments within 6 weeks from the date of receipt, it is not required to maintain data on the number of written responses to parents. This data is not captured on statutory returns.

Currently our performance for completion of EHC plans in time is at 80% (June 2024). This places us performing at above both the national and London average. However, we agree that a timely notification to all parents about the outcome of assessments is good practice. Recognising that this is an important factor in communication with parents, and to improve the experience of families within the SEND system, reporting tools are being made over the summer to allow for timely tracking and reporting of this for and from the 2024/25 academic year.

4. From Cllr Mark Smith to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, and Families

How soon before the start of term in September will the parents/carers of SEN children be advised of the transport arrangements for their children for the 2024/25 education year?

Reply:

Pupils who have their placement confirmed as of the start of July 2024 should now have their transport arrangements confirmed. Those whose EHCPs have only recently been issued, and for whom the LA is currently making arrangements for their Transport, should receive this information before the end of the month. Transport allocations are processed for assessment within 20 working days.

Where a pupil has an EHCP issued in the coming weeks and where SEN Transport may be required, those applications will still be processed for assessment within the usual 20 working days. However, due to the summer close of schools, those eligible pupils will not be guaranteed a route for the start of the new term, though SEN Transport operations will make arrangements as soon as possible. This information is published on the LBB website Travel Assistance Application page.