

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:**      **General Purposes and Licensing Committee**

**Date:**                      **16 February 2011**

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

**Title:**                      **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS: ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

**Contact Officer:**      Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager  
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**Chief Officer:**              Mark Bowen, Director of Legal, Democratic and Customer Services

**Ward:**                      N/A

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1.    Reason for report

- 1.1    As part of this Committee's decisions in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme 2008/09, it was agreed that the February meeting of this Committee should receive an annual report from each of the Executive Assistants outlining the work they have undertaken over the past year in justification of the receipt of their allowance. This decision was reaffirmed by the Committee at its meetings in February 2009 and 2010. Reports from the current Executive Assistants are attached as **Appendix 1**.
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2.    **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1    **The Committee is requested to consider and, if appropriate, comment on the submissions received from the Executive Assistants relating to the work they have undertaken during 2010/11.**

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy. Payments to Executive Assistants are made under the London Borough of Bromley Members' Allowances Scheme.
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council.
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost In 2010/11, four Executive Assistants were appointed at an annual cost of £14,293.
  2. Ongoing costs: Recurring cost.
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Democratic Representation - Members' Allowances.
  4. Total current budget for this head: £1,093,190; up to five Executive Assistants each receive an allowance of £3,573.22.
  5. Source of funding: 2010/11 budget
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement. Members Allowances' Scheme - Sections 18 and 19 of Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 100 of Local Government Act 2000 and The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
  2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Currently 4 Councillors.
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 Following a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme 2008/09 which had been carried out by a Member Working Group, this Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 recommended, and the full Council subsequently adopted, various amendments to the Scheme.
- 3.2 As part of the Committee's decisions in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme 2008/09, it was agreed that an annual report should be submitted to this Committee's February meeting from each of the Executive Assistants outlining the work they had undertaken over the past year in justification of the receipt of their allowance, which currently amounts to £3,573.22. That decision has been reaffirmed by this Committee in subsequent years.
- 3.3 In 2010/11, four Executive Assistants were appointed –
- Cllr Peter Fortune (Environment)
  - Cllr Brian Humphrys (Children and Young People)
  - Cllr Gordon Norrie (Renewal and Recreation)
  - Cllr Catherine Rideout (Adult and Community)

Submissions from these Councillors are attached in **Appendix 1**.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Policy, Financial, Legal and Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Previous reports to General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

**Cllr Peter Fortune**  
**Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment**

I have held the position of Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, under Councillor Colin Smith, for eight months. It has been, and I very much hope will continue to be, a demanding and fulfilling role.

The Environment department often deals with what is considered to be the 'face' of Bromley. Green spaces, the new recycling collections and the recent inclement weather give just a snapshot of what this dynamic department has recently tackled. Members will also appreciate how much of their ward correspondence is related to Environment matters; pot holes, tree pruning and parking being all too familiar topics of conversation. The Environment department is everywhere.

Councillor Smith does a remarkable job in his role as Portfolio Holder, managing this spectrum of responsibility incredibly admirably – which is where the executive assistant comes in. Often behind the scenes, the 'EA' provides constant assistance to the elected head of department. I have, for example, attended all environment PDS meetings noting down members' concerns and recommendations and then followed it up with the Portfolio Holder and relevant officers afterwards. I have acted as a point of contact for numerous members, taking responsibility for some of their residents' requests. The EA also steps in during times of departmental stress. The recent snowy weather forced the department into Herculean efforts to keep the Borough operating for the benefit of residents. I played a key role in helping to coordinate the 'Snow Friends' – working with officers and members to help roll-out an incredibly popular and useful scheme. The work on that project has not stopped. I continue, under Councillor Smith's guidance, to play a leading part in fashioning this project into an efficient model ready for 2011.

I have also been tasked with other responsibilities. I recently led discussions which investigated the economic design of road resurfacing, a project which could save the borough's tax payers a considerable sum and speed up the process of road repairs. I have attended transport meetings in London – representing the borough at City Hall and with London Councils. All of the time operating closely with the Portfolio Holder, staying in constant contact with him – both face-to-face and on the telephone – ensuring that residents continue to receive an excellent service from Bromley.

The next few months see some real challenges – the rebuilding of the busy Chislehurst road bridge being just one of them. Whilst the Portfolio Holder is, quite rightly, the leading light of the department - a conscientious and hard working EA is just as important to ensure that our residents can continue to be proud of the service they receive.

**Councillor Brian Humphrys,**  
**Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People**

Attend all Council meetings of the CYP Portfolio Holder and his Callover meetings.

Attend all Council CYP PDS meetings as an observer.

Appointed to be a Member of the CYP Trust Board, a member of the Executive Board for YOT, a member of the School Admission Forum and also attend the Secondary Head Teachers' termly meeting with senior officers and the Portfolio Holder.

Attend the Schools Forum meetings as an observer.

Visit, with the Portfolio Holder, schools, CYP social service facilities, youth clubs and partners such as Bromley Y as well as voluntary groups.

Attend the Portfolio Holder's weekly meeting with the Director of CYP and also the annual Budget meeting with Chairmen of Governors.

Am present at award ceremonies for Governors and other groups.

I attended the Safeguarding Board conference.

Prior to my appointment, I have been for many years, and still am, on the Officer/Member Working Party for Primary and Secondary School Development as well as the Executive Working Party for SEN. I am now also a member of the Children's Safeguarding Executive Working Party.

**Cllr Gordon Norrie,  
Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation**

I attend All PDS Meetings of the Renewal and Recreation Committee and Portfolio Holder.

I attend briefings of the Portfolio Holder with The Director of Renewal and Recreation and with the various senior officers within that Department.

I attend Boost your Business and other events, acting for Portfolio Holder in his absence.

I am overseeing a project to devise days out locally encompassing local attractions and places of interest, particularly aimed at local people as well as visitors.

I visit the Field Centre and various outlying staff to take an interest in their work and encourage them.

I visit Schemes eg. Branching Out, visit some work projects and attend their Achievement Certificate Presentations.

**Cllr Catherine Rideout  
Executive Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Community**

Since the Portfolio Holder's meeting is now a joint meeting with the ACS PDS meeting I now attend just that meeting and listen to any presentations given to it and questions from members of the public.

The Portfolio Holder and I attend a meeting, every alternate Monday, with Terry Rich to discuss various aspects of the portfolio and to approve any contracts which cost over £40,000 to familiarise ourselves with both the service offered by providers and the extent of the need of some of our most vulnerable residents. We often get briefings from assistant directors on housing, commissioning, brokerage, mental health etc. The last six months have been especially busy as we have been working on direct payments and handing over home visits to the voluntary sector. We have had to look at every aspect of our budget to make savings without harming vulnerable people.

In view of the size and complexity of the Portfolio, we have a Road Show on alternate Thursdays to visit residential homes for old people, and look at the services provided at Yeoman House in Penge, and the offices in Orpington. We have attended the offices of the Housing Options and Assessment Dept, and the Learning Disabilities Transition Team. I have been involved in discussions on the Extra Care Housing development being built at Crown Meadow Court and have visited the site twice. The first 60 units are nearing completion and we have just received funding for a second phase of 60 units. This has generated a lot of interest in my ward and people are very keen to know more about it and the eligibility criteria as we are endeavouring to keep people out of residential care and look after them either in their own homes with help, or in special units, e.g. Extra Care Housing. One of our tasks is to look at contracts where a voluntary organisation delivers the service on behalf of the Council., e.g., Kent Association for the Blind, Age Concern, Mind, Mencap, Jobmatch etc.

As well as the above responsibilities, I sit on various Committees to gain more knowledge and experience in order to be of more assistance to the Portfolio Holder:

**Social Care Health & Housing Partnership Board** - the portfolio holder and I attend these meetings together.

**Disability & Sensory Impairment Partnership Board** – I attend these meeting on behalf of the Portfolio.

**Management Committee of the Kent Association for the Blind.** These meetings start at 1.30pm in College Road, Maidstone. I also visit the Sight Centre in Blythe Road and attend their AGMs where I am usually asked to “say a few words”.

The Council pays the Kent Association for the Blind to deliver the service on our behalf and up to now in addition to the assessments they carry out for us they also provide a service called talking books, and provide white sticks and various equipment. Again because of budget constraints we need to look at charging for equipment and with this in mind we have extended the contract for one year so that we can look at the whole question of funding of equipment. The local library provide talking books and we have directed them to that service.

### **Talking Newspaper**

The organisation sends out tapes or discs to the blind and partially sighted people every week with all the local news. I attend the AGM at the Crofton Halls in Orpington and have in the past chaired the meeting when they have not been able to get the Mayor or Deputy Mayor. I attend one or two meetings in a year.

The whole ACS department holds a Portfolio Planning day once a year in December commencing with presentations and followed by a workshop. I am usually in the workshop for mental health.

### **Mental Health Partnership Board (formerly the Mental Health Board)**

I attend meetings and have been made the Mental Health Champion to put forward the needs of people suffering from mental health. Bearing in mind that 1 in 4 adults suffer a mental health episode in their lives it is quite a large task to be sure that they are not excluded from living as normal a life as possible. We have seen an increase in people suffering mental health problems due to the fact that they find it impossible to find work due to the recession.

## **Mental Health Forum**

This is a user group and it gives me an opportunity to listen to the problems that people with mental health problems encounter. This is held every two months at Community House and I try to get to as many meetings as I can.

I have now become a Trustee of the Mental Health Forum and this meets every two months.

I chair the **Sports Consultative Panel**.

I am a member of the **London Youth Games** which meets once a quarter.