

Details of Leadership Team meeting or (in the case of individual Lead Member or Executive Director decisions) by whom and the <u>earliest</u> date the decision will be taken	Leadership Team Meeting <i>Date of report:</i> 5 th March 2021 <i>Date of decision (i.e. not before):</i> 17 th March 2021	 THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
Forward Plan ref:	KD05856/21/K/A Bi-Borough School Inclusion Strategy	
Report title	BI-BOROUGH SCHOOL INCLUSION STRATEGY	
Reporting officer	Sarah Newman, Executive Director of Bi-borough Children's Services	
Key decision	Yes	
Access to information classification	Public	
Wards	All	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Council is committed to reducing exclusion rates, particularly in secondary schools. In order to support this aim, officers have prepared a new bi-borough inclusion strategy (appendix A, B & C). The inclusion strategy highlights best practice and sets out how we will work together as a local area to promote positive engagement in education, reduce rates of exclusion and improve outcomes for young people who have been or at risk of exclusion.

1.2. The aims of the strategy are to:

- Reduce the number of children and young people being removed from mainstream education as a result of their behaviour.
- Address factors that lead to specific groups of children and young people being disproportionately affected by exclusion.
- Drive a whole system commitment to work with children and young people at risk of exclusion in a trauma informed way.
- Improve outcomes for children and young people who are excluded.
- Improve reintegration rates from alternative provision back into mainstream education

- 1.3. The development of the strategy and the commitments it outlines have been informed by engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, detailed data analysis, a review of published research and learning from examples of good practice nationally and locally.
- 1.4. The strategy should be seen in the context of Kensington and Chelsea's [‘Our Council Plan’](#) particularly the focus on taking care of the vulnerable and creating a great place to live, work and learn. It also compliments the [SEND Strategy](#), the RBKC Early Help strategy, the [Local Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) priorities and the [Bi-Borough Children and Young People’s Plan](#) commitment to do more to avoid children and young people being excluded from school.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Leadership Team is recommended to approve the publication of the Bi-Borough inclusion strategy.

3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1. The publication of the Bi-Borough inclusion strategy will support the council’s commitment to reduce exclusion rates across the borough and to ensure those that have been or who are at risk of exclusion are well supported.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. The standard of education across the Bi-borough is very high, schools are good or outstanding and exam results are some of the best in the country. However, the rates of exclusion from our secondary schools are higher than the national and London averages and we know that the impact of exclusion on young people’s academic and lifelong outcomes is significant.
- 4.2. Over the last few years there has been significant attention on school inclusion, both locally and nationally. Published research has highlighted that our most vulnerable children and young people are at the greatest risk of being removed from mainstream education as a result of their behaviour. Such occurrences often have an immediate and longer-term negative impact on a child or young person’s health and wellbeing.
- 4.3. In Summer 2019 the RBKC Family Services Select Committee Working Group looked in detail at exclusions across RBKC and collated a broad evidence base detailing some of the opportunities and challenges we face locally.
- 4.4. The national and local focus, engagement with stakeholders and detailed analysis of local data present a compelling argument supporting the need for a local strategy focused on working collectively to promote inclusive practice and reduce exclusions.

5. OPTIONS, ANALYSIS AND PROPOSALS

5.1. While there is a lot to be celebrated about education provision across RBKC, and there are lots of examples of inclusive practice which supports children and young people to remain in school, there are also several challenges relating to the level of exclusions locally. The challenges are outlined in detail in the inclusion strategy, with some key areas summarised here:

There are too many students being removed from mainstream education due to their behaviour

- 5.2. While exclusion rates in primary schools have come down since 2017/18, the rates of fixed-term and permanent exclusions from RBKC secondary schools have risen above the inner London and national rates. In addition to these formal exclusions, over half of students placed into alternative provision as a result of their behaviour are on managed moves (56 per cent at Latimer AP Academy) pending their reintegration where possible back into mainstream education.
- 5.3. Exclusion rates vary significantly between schools - over the last three years, 45 per cent of primary fixed term exclusions in Kensington and Chelsea were from just two schools, whilst 12 primary schools had no fixed term exclusions at all during this period.
- 5.4. There are significant spikes in exclusions around transition points; there are significant spikes in permanent exclusions from Kensington and Chelsea schools in year 7 (5.6 times the inner London rate) and Year 9 (2.4 times the inner London rate).
- 5.5. Early indications from data not yet published by the DfE comparing data from Autumn Term 18/19 and Autumn Term 19/20 (detailed below) suggest that the levels of exclusions across the borough are reducing, but there is of course still a great deal more to be done.

Number of Fixed term exclusions in RBKC Secondary Schools						
Sept 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Total for period
60	77	94	101	68	60	460
Sept 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	
53	77	77	53	70	53	383

Certain groups are disproportionately affected by exclusions

- 5.6. We know that boys, children who have SEN or are from certain ethnic minorities, are disproportionately excluded from schools.
- The rate of students in alternative provision with SEN support is much higher locally than in other areas. The proportion of pupils in the excluded population with SEN support stands at 93.8% in RBKC, this is above the London average of 64.9 per cent. This trend suggests that some children

and young people in RBKC are being placed into AP with unidentified or unmet specialist needs.

- Across the bi-borough children and young people from certain ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately affected by exclusions. Children and young people from BAME backgrounds are more likely to receive a fixed term exclusion standing at 8.0 per cent in RBKC, compared to the national average of 3.9 per cent. The proportion of children and young people from black Caribbean backgrounds is around 2.5 times higher in alternative provision than in our mainstream secondary population and are therefore over-represented in the excluded cohort.
- Boys are overrepresented in the excluded cohort, making up over 70%. This is replicated across London, as well as nationally.

The impact of Covid19

- 5.7. The complexities of school exclusions have increased further due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many schools will have amended behaviour policies to incorporate government guidelines around social distancing, the 'digital divide' will have been greater than ever as many students received their education remotely, and an extended period of time without going into school will have exacerbated vulnerabilities including emotional wellbeing and social anxiety and will have made it harder for some children and young people to return to school this year. Careful recovery planning has and continues to support those children and young people who may be struggling to manage the return to school following lockdown.
- 5.8. During this time there is an even greater need to recognise and explore the impact exclusion has on lives and learning and to understand how we can support young people not only to stay, but also to thrive, in school.

The need for an inclusion strategy

- 5.9. The circumstances leading to a child being removed from mainstream education are complex and no one agency is responsible or able to solve this challenge alone
- 5.10. Responding to this challenge requires strong partnership working and as such the inclusion strategy sets out an ambitious vision and set of commitments for schools and services to work together by intervening early and taking collective responsibility for ensuring that no child or young person is left behind.
- 5.11. It is proposed that following the publication of the Bi-Borough inclusion strategy, officers will work to develop an action plan to drive forward the delivery of the commitments that have been made.

6. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 The development of the strategy and the commitments it outlines have been informed by detailed data analysis, a review of published research and learning

from examples of good practice nationally and locally. We have also drawn on the findings of the Family Services Select Committee Working Group.

- 6.2 We have engaged with a range of individuals and groups to inform the strategy. We have spoken to parents and a small number of children, engaged extensively with local primary and secondary schools, with SEN and Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and with Latimer Alternative Provision Academy and the Golborne Centre, which educates pupils on temporary placements. We have also engaged with local voluntary and community sector organisations particularly those working in North Kensington to get their views on the best way to promote inclusion and reduce exclusion from school. We also established an internal working group comprising key Children's Services teams to inform the development of the strategy.
- 6.3 The strategy includes a section detailing themes that emerged from the engagement undertaken and this information, alongside an analysis of national and local drivers has been used to inform the commitments detailed in the strategy
- 6.4 It is acknowledged that more extensive engagement with children and young people is needed and we want to take some very tangible ideas for children and young people to comment on, working with our local mainstream schools. It is anticipated that this would be undertaken as the detailed action plan which will underpin the strategy is developed.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Local Authorities have a legal duty to ensure that every child fulfils their educational potential and to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. The policy sets out the Bi-Borough Council's strategy for ensuring education is inclusive for all."

8. FINANCIAL, PROPERTY, IT AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no specific financial implications at this stage. There may be some implications that arise through the development of action plans that result from the strategy, particularly in relation to commissioning arrangements and financial responsibilities. These will be kept under review.
- 8.2. There are no specific Property, IT or other resource implications outlined in the Bi-Borough inclusion strategy. However, it should be noted that the Council has invested considerably in Alternative Provision (AP) building stock in order to ensure that the facilities provided support the delivery of education to pupils not in mainstream school. In 2017 it spent £1 million upgrading the Latimer AP building, and a similar amount in 2020. In the region of £800k will be spent on condition works in the summer of this year. The Council has also ensured that provision for children excluded for six days is also of a good standard, first refurbishing, as a temporary measure, premises in Kensal Road and then supporting the service's transfer to the Rugby Portobello building nearby.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are no Human Resource implications expected to arise for the publication of the Bi-Borough inclusion strategy.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1. No negative or adverse consequences are expected to result from the publication of the Bi-Borough inclusion strategy. It is anticipated that the publication of the strategy and the associated work to achieve its ambitions will have a positive impact on cohorts vulnerable to exclusion.

8.2. A full EqIA has been completed for the Bi-Borough inclusion strategy (see appendix D).

Ian Heggs
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Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – Background papers used in the preparation of this report

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Mandatory clearance requirements for all Key and Executive Decision reports

Cleared by <u>Corporate</u> Finance (officer's initials)	AM
Cleared by Director of Law (officer's initials)	HB
Cleared by Communications (officer's initials)	AR