



## **Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

9<sup>th</sup> December 2010

### **Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement**

## **Safety at the school gates task group follow up**

### **1.0 Summary**

1.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has asked for an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Safety at the school gates task group. The task group was carried out in 2009/10 by members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee and reported its findings to the Executive in March 2010.

1.2 The task group was set up because young people had concerns about personal safety as they travel on public transport to and from school. There is a wealth of data from surveys and crime statistics showing that robberies, bullying and anti-social behaviour are prevalent at the end of the school day in areas where young people congregate. School pupils are often the victims of crime, not just the perpetrators.

1.3 The aims of the task group were to:

- Review the partnerships in place to tackle safety on the journey to and from school
- Look at ways to support and encourage schools to implement initiatives to improve safety on the journey to and from schools
- Look at good practice from other local authorities on ways to improve safety on the journey to and from school.

1.4 Among its main findings were:

- The council has been proactive in tackling pupil safety on the journey to and from school. For example, in 2006, the council ran a project with a secondary school in Dollis Hill where dedicated youth workers were employed to travel with pupils on school buses which significantly reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Brent Children's Partnership has set up a 'Safety and Security in and around Schools working group'. The working group provides a multi-agency response to this issue and includes representation from the Police, Brent Head

Teachers Association, Transport for London, the youth service and community safety teams at the council.

- There are eight Safer Schools Officers in Brent. The officers run a number of projects to promote safer school journeys including providing property marking and running a 'keep your stuff safe' lesson during personal, health and social education (PHSE) at the school.
- Transport for London has developed a number of initiatives to promote good behaviour on buses amongst pupils such as a safety and citizenship programme for year six pupils to prepare them for independent travel before they move to secondary school.

1.5 Although these positive initiatives are taking place in Brent, the task group also found that there are specific areas of concern. Overcrowding on the 245 bus has led to anti-social behaviour and disruption to other passengers. There is a negative perception of young people, especially groups of young people travelling together on buses. Schools are also facing significant pressures which limit their ability to address this problem.

1.6 The task group has made 10 recommendations, which are set out in appendix 1 to this report. The initial responses to the recommendations from the service areas affected are also included, plus an update provided in November 2010 on their implementation.

1.7 As members will see, some of the recommendations have been implemented (for example, 1, 4 and 5), others are being implemented (2, 9 and 10) and others are still to be fully actioned. Members should use the committee time to comment on the progress to date and ask any questions that they have on this task group report.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the update on the Safety at the schools gates task group and questions officers on the progress made to date.

### **Background Papers:**

Safety at the school gates task group report – this is available on request.

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