



LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY
MEMBERS' ROOM, BROMLEY CIVIC CENTRE,
STOCKWELL CLOSE, BROMLEY BR1 3UH

7 February 2019

Dear Colleague,

Like the rest of the country, Bromley is facing increasing demand on services for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This is creating huge pressure on the funding we are allocated for high needs provision. To achieve our ambitions for our children, we have to address the gap in our funding by drawing on all the options available to us.

Recognising this pressure, Bromley Council has already committed £2m from council money to the High Needs Block. In addition, we have received an extra £788,000 for two years from central government which, of course, we welcome.

However, even this will not be enough to meet our responsibilities.

We believe that more money is needed. We therefore asked the Secretary of State for Education to allow us to transfer funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to match the demand.

To be clear, and to repeat what I said at the Education Select Committee, we did not expect to be granted permission for this transfer. However, we felt strongly that we should take every opportunity to make the case to Government that our funding allocation is simply not enough.

I appreciate that many Bromley head teachers did not support this course of action but we have a responsibility to make Bromley's case to Government.

As anticipated, the disapplication has not been granted.

Bromley Council is committed to good educational provision for our children with special needs. We recognise that they are some of the most vulnerable children in the borough and we are working hard to make the best provision we can to support them, their families and their schools.

As I previously set out, the Council is proposing to step in with £2m this year following a £1m contribution last year. This follows the course I set out at recent meetings.

We have sent a clear message to the DfE that the high needs funding is not enough. We will continue to lobby Government tirelessly for more funding for Bromley children and we will continue do the best we can to meet the needs of all children in the borough within the financial envelope we are afforded.

Bromley Council still has to manage a budget gap of £32m over the next few years and councillors must make very difficult decisions regarding our overall funding. Despite these incredible pressures, Bromley has a successful record of management of key services. This has been as demonstrated by our recent unprecedented turnaround of Children's Services.

We know very well, that improvement is built on partnership and we appreciate the support of our Head teachers, staff and governors. We will continue to ensure that our children have the very best start they can.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Fortune', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Cllr Peter Fortune
Deputy Leader of Bromley Council