

Local Authority maintained school model – overview

1 About

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is Labour-run local authority (42 Labour councillors and nine Conservative councillors). It is accountable to central government through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Education, and also to local people via its elected representatives.

The council has a Leader and Cabinet model, with Cabinet members taking responsibility for performance in key areas. The Deputy Leader of the council, Councillor David Gardner, leads on Children's Services and schools in the borough.

There is a mixture of education provision within the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Fifteen primary schools in the borough are academies (plus an additional one which is in the process of conversion), 61 are maintained. Ten secondary schools (plus one in the process of conversion) are academies, five are maintained. Two special schools are academies, three are maintained.

Most primary school academisation in the borough has happened in the last few years, and formation and growth of MATs may continue. The loss of the Education Services Grants is a further erosion of funding for Local Authority education services. The council retains overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in the borough (Children Act 1989 III (17))

There has been a significant journey over the last 15 years from Royal Borough of Greenwich being a low performing London borough (ranked 70th for KS2 and 124th for KS4 out of 152 LAs nationally), to being ranked 10th for KS2 headline measures, and 77th for KS4 in 2017. The London Challenge, a secondary school improvement programme that ran in the capital from 2003 to 2011, expanded in 2008 to include primary schools, with a budget of £40 million a year at its peak. During the period of the London Challenge, secondary school performance in London saw a dramatic improvement, and local authorities in inner London went from the worst performing to the best performing nationally.

The Governing Body met with Councillor Gardner; Florence Kroll, Director of Children's Services; Julie Taylor, Head of School Improvement; and Tracy Russell, Assistant Director Inclusion, Learning and Achievement Children's Services; on 11th October 2018.

2 Vision/Values

In this meeting council representatives expressed the borough's commitment to education and set out local performance, highlighting that 94% of primary schools in the borough are currently judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED.

As a Labour-led local authority, the council locally reflects the national policy commitment to oppose further academisation of schools at both primary and secondary level. The council's view is that if fewer schools remain part of the local authority this weakens the overall local education provision.

The shadow education secretary Angela Rayner announced 9 policies at the 2018 Labour conference which aim to add greater accountability for academy trusts, including the ability for Local Authority's to take back failing academies, ending related-party transactions (where schools or MATs buy services from a commercial company with links to staff or leaders), national pay rules across all schools and a cap on CEO salaries, and councils taking charge of admissions. Labour is not planning to immediately convert all existing academies and free schools back into local authority-maintained

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schools. (Ref <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/the-9-policies-in-angela-rayners-2018-labour-conference-speech>)

A Council Resolution was passed on 31 October 2018 “To resist further academisation”:

“We therefore resolve to resist further academisation, to promote the local authority framework and Greenwich Direct services to schools and to further develop the Greenwich family of schools working with existing academies to the benefit of all our children. Further, we call on the Government to delete the clause in the 2016 Education and Adoption Act that automatically triggers an Academy Order when OfSTED judge a school to be inadequate and to allow academies and free schools to revert to Community, Voluntary controlled or voluntary aided status to establish a level-playing field.”

The council’s ‘Greenwich and Proud’ document, published in November 2018, sets out some of the principles for working with, and supporting schools, from the council’s perspective. Key points include:

- The council believes there should be oversight of the way local schools are performing and spending public money and there needs to be some kind of body to challenge schools to drive up standards and make sure they work together effectively so all local children can fulfil their potential.
- The council aims to promote the ‘family of schools’ concept with children being at the heart of everything they do.
- It is vital there is an inclusive approach and the council states that it champions the needs of the most vulnerable.
- The council wants to emphasise the benefits of collaboration and partnership in raising attainment for all pupils and meeting the needs of disadvantaged children.
- Councils can be light touch and provide local knowledge and democratic legitimacy, while the head and governors actually run the school.
- The economies of scale that enable services to be continued at the current level to all schools can only be retained if council funding is not reduced further through academy conversions.

The document also states: “Retaining a family of maintained schools, where the authority has certain responsibilities and schools are not independent of each other has significant benefits for the children and young people of Royal Greenwich. The economies of scale that enable services to be continued at the current level to all schools can only be retained if council funding is not reduced further through academy conversions.”

At the meeting with Governors, council representatives acknowledged that they had been ‘hands off’ with Sherington in the recent past due to its excellent performance, however they identified several additional ways of providing support to the school which might address some of the issues raised as part of this process. The council has reiterated its desire to keep Sherington as a local authority-maintained school.

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3 Governance

3.1 Funding

Funds are delegated to the school according to the National Funding Formula, apart from de-delegated funds retained by the council, see 4.1. The school also receives funding related to High Needs, Pupil Premium, PE Grant and Universal Infant Free Meals. A Minimum Funding Guarantee payment is also in place for 2018/19 as part of the transition to the National Funding Formula.

The “Scheme for Financing Schools” sets out the financial relationship between the Royal Borough of Greenwich and maintained schools that they fund. It contains requirements for financial management and related issues, which are binding on both RBG and on schools. These requirements attempt to seek the right balance between giving schools the freedom necessary to exercise their delegated and devolved budget authority, while maintaining due regard for the proper accountability for and control over the expenditure of public funds. The Scheme is approved by the Schools Forum, following consultation with schools and governing bodies.

https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/download/442/schools_financing_scheme

3.2 Delegation of Authority – parent/staff voice

The Governing Body have a range of statutory responsibilities covering behaviour and exclusions, curriculum, finance, governance, pupil wellbeing, safeguarding, SEND, staff recruitment and pay & appraisal. Responsibilities are delegated to committees, and to the Head Teacher in accordance with the Delegation of Authority agreed annually by the Governing Body.

The Governing Body make-up is as per the Instrument of Government, a legal document agreed with RBG that records the constitution and term of office for each category of governor, based on statutory requirements. Sherington’s governing body consists of:

- 2 x parent governors
- 1 x Local Authority governor
- 2 x staff governors (including the Head Teacher)
- 7 co-opted governors

The council welcomes and recognises the importance of the parent voice and states: “We encourage parental and community involvement, for example by supporting governors and governors’ associations.”

3.3 Organisation structure

See attached top level organisation chart for RBG’s management structure.

Political leadership is provided by the Leader and Cabinet structure, with each Cabinet member leading on an area of responsibility.

3.4 School identity

Whilst the council is committed to its family of schools, there is no specific, over-arching RBG school identity. Each school has the freedom to set, develop and maintain its own identity. Within the local authority maintained model the curriculum is developed by each school, in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum. Uniform policy is set by each school. The GB has the authority to change the dates and times when school terms and holidays are the begin and end, and the times of the school sessions (Education Act 2002 32, amended by Deregulation Act 2015 Schedule 16).

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4 Finance

4.1 Financial Model

A proportion of funds is 'de-delegated' back to the local authority based on per pupil funding plus FSM. Overall as a local authority the council is allocated £132m for maintained schools. Of this they retain £1.092m for de-delegation which overall equates to 0.8%.

The percentage charged to each school varies slightly depending on the number of pupils and the level of free school meals in the school. The range can vary slightly from a maximum of 1.1% and the lowest at 0.4%. Sherington makes a contribution of £19,471 to the delegated services budget. This is 1% of the overall 2018/19 budget of £1,849,974.62. The de-delegation is agreed by the Schools Forum.

From the 1% de-delegated funds schools contribute to:

- The contingency funds (this can benefit all maintained schools where there are exceptional costs which are beyond anything a school could expect to pay)
- Historic pension costs, which again benefit all.

Schools receive a limited number of core services for this de-delegated sum, all other services are procured through annual Service Level Agreements (servicestoschools.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/)

The council is required to have reserves and to set a Medium Term Financial Strategy.

"Future capital funding from central government for local authorities is uncertain however the local authority can complement DfE funding allocations with other resources and benefits from efficiencies through packaging together similar works and has significant in-house expertise which may provide a safety net against any risks." [Greenwich and Proud, 2018]. The council believes uncertainty in future funding can be mitigated by the local authority 'safety net', refer to 4.4.

The council's accounts were independently audited and verified in July 2018. The council's financial risk analysis is as follows:

Risk	Impact
Changes to government funding mechanism	Adverse impact on the Council's financial position
Inflation	Increases could result in upward budget pressure and may not be matched by additional income
Market and economic developments	Market movements can affect service take up and income Homelessness and social care affected by supply and demand factors
New legislation	The Council could be assigned new responsibilities – not always with additional funding immediately available
Demographic and Population	Regeneration and demand shifts in services can have a significant impact on the budget Population is one of the key factors in the formula for funding mechanisms

Royal Borough of Greenwich – 2017/18 Statement of Accounts (p14)

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4.2 Financial Targets/Obligations

4.2.1 Spending

The school is currently accountable to the council for its budget. This would continue to be the case if Sherington remained a local authority maintained school. The school is responsible for setting its own spending priorities and targets, RBG do not impose any.

4.2.2 Reserves

The latest figures published by the council (Statement of Accounts 2017/8) show usable reserves of £371m (available on RBG's [website](#)).

RBG has no targets for individual school reserves.

4.3 Financial Autonomy

Within the local authority model the SLT and Governing body is responsible for the strategic allocation of the school's finances. The budget should align to the school's improvement plan and goals. It will be allocated to cover provision for a range of activities including staff training and development courses to spend on materials. The majority of budget is allocated to staff remuneration.

4.4 Financial Controls

"The Royal Borough may issue a notice of concern to the governing body of any school it maintains where, in the opinion of the Director of Finance and the Director of Children's Services, the school has failed to comply with any provisions of the scheme, or where actions need to be taken to safeguard the financial position of the local authority or the school. Such a notice will set out the reasons and evidence for it being made and may place on the governing body restrictions, limitations or prohibitions in relation to the management of funds delegated to it. The notice will clearly state what these requirements are and the way in which and the time by which such requirements must be complied with in order for the notice to be withdrawn. It will also state the actions that the authority may take where the governing body does not comply with the notice."

Local authorities have the ability to take control of a school and dismiss a governing body if a school falls into a deficit situation.

Deficit balances are brought forward at 31 March and deducted from the following year's budget share. Deficits incurred by Governing Bodies cannot be written off by the Royal Borough. Under the Framework for Managing Deficits Governing Bodies may plan for deficit budgets only in exceptional circumstances and require the express approval of the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Finance. This will be in the form of an agreement to a loan to cover the deficit. The maximum period for over which schools may repay the loan should not exceed three years, the loan may attract interest. The framework may be used to prevent a school going into deficit. The maximum size of the deficit covered by the framework should be 5% of the delegated budget share. Any deficit exceeding this threshold may be deducted from the budget share at the beginning of the next financial year.

5 Resources

5.1 Core Services

For the de-delegated contribution schools receive:

- Licenses, which enables photocopying/printing etc of published works
- Free school meal eligibility checker

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- Behaviour support services for FAP children and support for multi-agency work for children/families causing concern
- Named attendance advisory officer and support with Fast Track

All other services are bought into via Service Level Agreements on an annual basis.

The Royal Borough operates a loan scheme to all schools under local management backed by the collective net balances of these schools. The maximum repayment period for a loan shall be six years but shall not exceed the estimated life of the project / equipment acquired under the scheme.

5.2 Additional Services

All other services are provided as annual Service Level Agreements, for example payroll, HR & Legal, Occupational Health, Education psychology, speech and language support and performance analysis.

Representatives of the School Improvement Service have said they can support and broker additional school-to-school support. They offer support in the areas of pupil achievement, teaching quality improvement, behaviour for learning and the quality of leadership and management.

5.3 Resource Sharing

Maintained schools have the ability to create interschool, informal partnerships and explore ways to share and scale resources. This may include sharing training costs, or sharing staff.

6 Staff

6.1 Pay & Conditions

The council has the responsibility to ensure fair conditions for all staff and that the wellbeing of valued staff is supported.

6.1.1 Pay Policy

Sherington uses the RBG Model Pay Policy, which is based on the annual statutory “School teachers’ pay and conditions document and guidance on school teachers’ pay and conditions” which defines annual pay awards and pay scales. The pay scales issued to Greenwich Schools retain pay points, incorporate the statutory requirements and allow for the application of the relevant percentage uplift across all points.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740575/School_teachers_pay_and_conditions_document_2018.pdf

6.1.2 Changes to pay & conditions

RBG apply the principle of pay portability when making pay determinations for all new appointees, who will be paid in line with the reference points in the Pay Policy.

6.1.3 Targets/Incentives

There is the capacity for the SLT, Governing body to deploy incentive payments or provide other financial assistance, support or benefits to a teacher as it considers being necessary as an incentive for recruitment or retention of service. For example, a salary advance scheme for a rental deposit.

6.2 Organisation

The school can determine its organisational structure, aligned with the Model Pay Policy.

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6.3 Recruitment

The council states that it offers a clear career development pathway, excellent CPD opportunities and good support for teachers at all stages of their career.

The council operates an NQT vacancy website and attracts a high proportion of NQTs to work in the borough - 225 signed up during the last period. The council also operates an apprentice scheme that covers Teaching Assistant Apprenticeships and Business Administration Apprenticeships. In 2017 Royal Greenwich was one of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers.

The council works with partners like Greenwich University on apprenticeships for new teachers to help meet recruitment needs.

There is a central recruitment function for Head Teachers recruitment campaign as an additional service.

6.4 Retention

Retention of teachers in Sherington is currently good. In London generally retention of teachers within the profession is an issue.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/oct/04/teacher-crisis-hits-london-as-nearly-half-quit-within-five-years>

6.5 Development

The council says it is committed to CPD for all staff from NQTs to senior managers and brokers school-to-school support linking inexperienced staff with more experienced leaders where the other school (or in some cases) the council pays for the experienced teachers' time.

There are opportunities to work with other LA Maintained schools through approaches such as the 'consultant head' model, where an experienced head teacher works with another school.

Networking opportunities are provided including improving links between primary and secondary staff. There is a head teachers partnership and the council are happy to support the Sherington SLT with the development needs.

The council representatives stated that they want to work together more.

7 Pupil achievement, progress & wellbeing

Councils have a role in making sure that school admissions and exclusion policies are fair, that they deliver a place for all local children and young people and that all policies and procedures are fairly operated.

7.1 Outcomes

Outcomes for pupils under the current model (as a local authority-maintained school) are excellent, with pupils exceeding the national average in all aspects of learning and either exceeding or meeting the RBG average.

The following is set out by RBG in 'Greenwich and Proud':

- Results for primary schools confirm the Authority's top 10 ranking in London and nationally on all headline measures
- The % of pupils achieving the expected standard in RWN at Key Stage 2 was up from 64% to 71% year on year and above the national indicator of 61%

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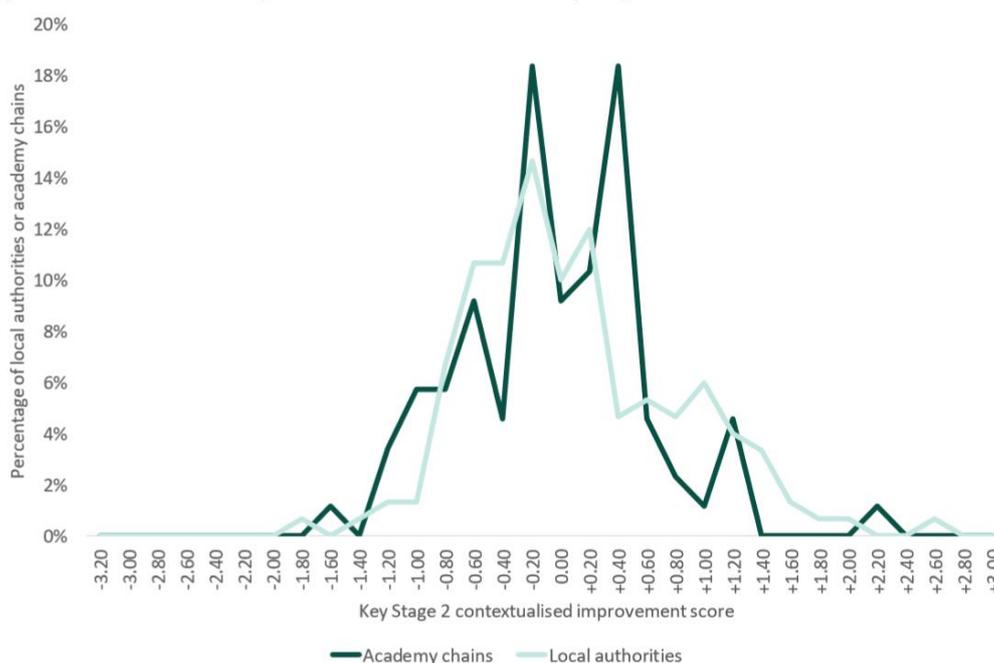
- The % of primary schools in the borough rated as Good or Outstanding was 98% compared to a national average of 94%
- All of the borough’s residents were offered a reception place for Sept 2018 on national offer day – with 86.5% offered their first preference school Royal Borough of Greenwich
- 79.2% of children have significantly improved their school attendance after interaction with the Families First programme

The relative performance of local authority schools versus academy trusts has been raised as a particular concern. The Education Policy Research Institute published a report in June 2018 “School performance in academy chains and local authorities – 2017” (https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/EPI-Academy-LA-Performance_.pdf) which examines this issue. Local authorities make up 15 of the top 20 academy chains and local authorities identified nationally for KS2 – the proportion would be expected to be 12 or 13 based on the relative numbers of local authorities and MATs. MATs are disproportionately represented among the lowest performing groups, 12 MATs are in the bottom 20 local authorities and MATs, whereas this would be expected to be 7 or 8. According to this study methodology RBG is ranked 3rd out of the top 20 local authorities and MATs (Harris Federation is 2nd) for KS2. RBG is in the bottom 20 of all MATs/Local authorities for KS4.

“The distribution of scores for all academy chains and local authorities ... suggests that, on average, there is no real difference between the performance of academy chains and local authorities on this new contextualised improvement measure – though it also illustrates the slightly higher proportion of academy chains amongst the very lowest performing school groups.”

“The score for any individual academy chain or local authority is the average performance within them. But there is also variation within most chains and local authorities. Even in high performing chains and local authorities there can be schools that are not improving at such a rate.”

Figure 3.3: Distribution of improvement measure scores at Key Stage 2



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7.2 OFSTED

Sherington is currently rated as an Outstanding school by OFSTED, last inspected in 2011.

98% of primary schools in Royal Greenwich are judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' (compared to National average of 94%), one is judged as "Requires Improvement".

7.3 Pupil wellbeing

Core services include primary behaviour support service, Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PSHE), spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), sex and relationship education (SRE) and Drug Education services. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) support is available as an additional service.

7.4 Special educational needs and disability (SEND)

Written response to public question at last council meeting on 31st October: "For children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), the local authority is responsible for maintaining this and ensuring that the support that is quantified and specified on the plan, is delivered – this is irrespective of whether a school is an academy or not.

The SEND Assessment and Review team work with all schools and settings in the borough, regardless of their designation. As do the SEND outreach services – ASD, Sensory, STEPs (dyslexia and complex case support e.g. children with Downs) and the Early Years Inclusion team."

(ref <http://committees.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=70011>)

Core services include Integrated Support for Children and Young People with SEND, SEND Outreach Support Services, Support Team for Education in Primary Schools (STEPS), Sensory Service for Deaf and Vision Impaired Children.

7.5 Safeguarding

The LA has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them, this includes in particular a duty to promote the child's educational achievement. Every local authority shall make such provision as they consider appropriate for the advice, guidance and counselling and occupational, social, cultural or recreational activities to be available with respect to children in need within their area while they are living with their families (The Children Act 1989 17, 22(3A) and Schedule II).

8 Business plan / Strategy

8.1 Future Expansion – number of schools

Refer to 2. The council is keen to retain schools under local authority oversight.

8.2 Future Expansion of School Capacity

Local Authorities have overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient places to meet demand locally. LA would both propose and approve any proposal to expand school capacity to meet local demand, in line with statutory processes, and would need to ensure that the changes do not have a negative impact on the education of pupils in the area.

8.3 Vision & associated strategic objectives

The LA do not have specific strategic objectives or a 3-5 year plan, beyond the vision and commitment to education outlined in 2.

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8.4 Risk/Opportunities Overview

As a local authority, the council has a duty to balance its budget. Councils have seen a significant decrease in funding in recent years and there is uncertainty about the future. While councils can find themselves in financial difficulty (see Northamptonshire CC for example) this is relatively rare and due to their size, scale and reserves, councils present relative security.

One unknown is the national political landscape, however locally at least this is again relatively secure with a significant Labour-majority and no prospect of imminent change to the council's current vision, values and outlook.

An increasing number of schools in Greenwich are moving into structured relationships, with financial/organisational commitments and an increasing emphasis on supporting their members rather than “associates”.

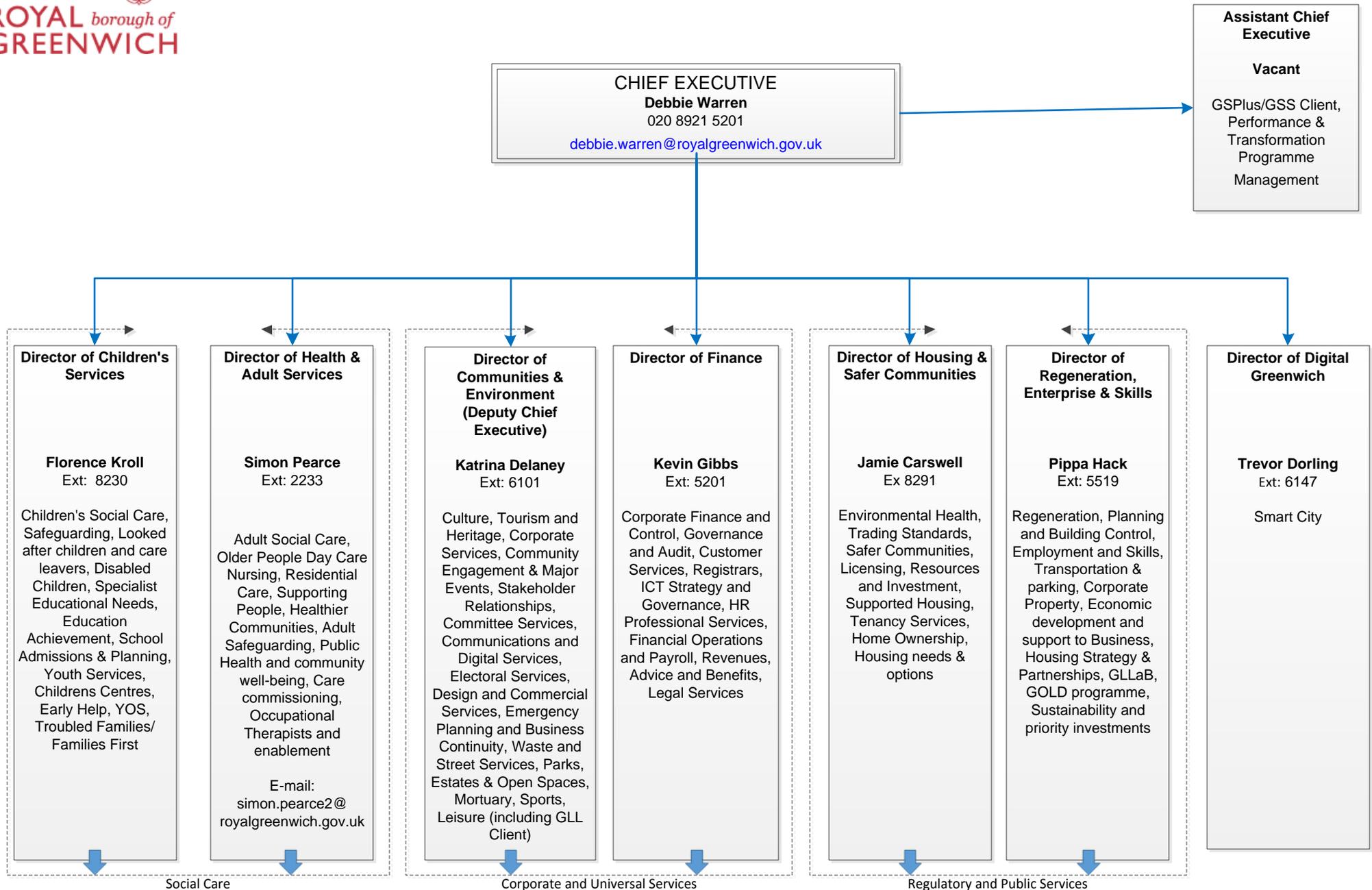
Looser working relationships are increasingly likely to become harder to maintain and develop in this environment.

It will be a challenge for Sherington to avoid becoming isolated, although there are a large number of maintained primary schools at present which presents opportunities for new relationships.

There are opportunities to work more closely with local secondary schools, cross-phase working can provide benefits for staff in terms of training and development across both settings and for pupils and parents in terms of providing a smoother transition, in particular for more vulnerable children. The LA are also keen to promote cross-phase working and relationships.

There are opportunities to explore how to better access support, development and peer-mentoring opportunities within RBG that would benefit Sherington staff.

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