

For General Release

REPORT TO:	FULL COUNCIL 26th JANUARY 2015
AGENDA ITEM NO:	13
SUBJECT:	BUSINESS REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
LEAD OFFICER:	Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Director of Democratic & Legal Services
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Sean Fitzsimons Chair, Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	The constitutional requirement that Council receive a Scrutiny Business Report.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Council is asked to note the Scrutiny work programme for 2014/15 (attached) and scrutiny activity since 2nd December 2014.
- 1.2 All Members are asked to consider the opportunities offered by Local Action Mini Reviews and what contribution they or their constituents can make to these or to the topics selected for Scrutiny as part of the 2014-15 scrutiny work programme.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the report of Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee, covering the period from 2nd December 2014 to 23rd January 2015 as required by the Constitution. The Constitution allows 10 minutes for this item, which includes up to 2 minutes for announcements

3. DETAILS

This report provides an account of Scrutiny activity carried out between 2nd December 2014 and 23rd January 2015.

4. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

5. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

The Council’s Constitution (Part 4a Council Procedure Rules 3.05) states that the purpose of the Scrutiny Business Report is “To update the Council on Scrutiny activity since the previous Council meeting. Also to advise on any major issues that needs to be considered by Scrutiny. Incorporating (1) written questions and (2) oral questions on the items contained in the Business Report”.

The Constitution allows 10 minutes for this item, which includes up to 2 minutes for announcements.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER: Solomon Agutu, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer, 020 8726 6000 X 62920

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

- ATTACHMENTS:**
- Report from the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee
 - Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

2nd December 2014 to 23rd January 2015



Councillor Sean Fitzsimons
Chair, Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

In the relatively short time since our last report to full Council, scrutiny has continued to cover considerable ground.

On 17th December the main scrutiny committee considered the performance of the council and the proposed 2015/16 Budget. During the course of questioning, Members learnt about the challenges and opportunities ahead and heard that the council will need to work harder and differently to protect and deliver frontline services to our vulnerable residents in the face of swinging funding cuts from central government. Tough choices will have to be made but the Committee was keen that these be fully informed, transparent and in consultation with residents who may be affected. An example discussed in great detail at the meeting was in relation to the proposed closure of Purley Pool. We heard that this much loved, though neglected facility was important to pool users, that they believed that it could be kept open at relatively little cost and that they were suspicious of proposals to redevelop the site. Of course scrutiny cannot make decisions but it can, and has, asked Cabinet to consider a report on the proposed closure before a final decision is made.

Also at our meeting on 17th December it was reported that an email sent by a Committee member during the course of the previous meeting on 11th November (when we considered the Cultural Landscape of Croydon) had resulted in an arts and theatre group being invited to participate in the Summer Festival 2015. Members were delighted to hear about this example of information shared in the Council Chamber turning in to positive action which is of benefit to a community group.

The Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered a pre-decision item on Cycling in Croydon at its meeting on 2nd December and were

enthusiastic in its support for a Cycling Strategy for the Borough. I am sure that Members of the Committee will be pleased to have seen that on 16th December the Traffic Management Advisory Committee received a report on cycle route improvements with the aim of creating a connected and sustainable town centre and improving the environment.

The Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee continues to go out into the community for its meetings and is attracting small groups of interested residents wherever it goes. It also continues to tackle important topics such as adult safeguarding, immunisation rates and the quality of life for people with chronic conditions. At its last meeting it heard about the challenges ahead in relation to delivering the Care Act and Committee Members are aware that this will be a topic for on-going scrutiny and review in the coming months and years.

2. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS

2.1 Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee

The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee meeting on 17th December 2014 heard about the **Performance** of the council from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tony Newman and the Chief Executive, Nathan Elvery.

The Leader introduced the item stating that the current administration had made considerable progress since the election in May 2014 on delivering front-line services, focusing on fly-tipping as a priority and delivering a balanced budget in the face of a disproportionate level of funding cuts to local government by central government. He confirmed that council tax in Croydon would be frozen until 2016 and provided more information about the potential impact the Fairness Commission could have on service delivery across the borough.

The Leader added that there was a clear commitment by the administration to be ambitious for Croydon and that extra funding had been allocated to looked after children and fly-tipping but that tough decisions needed to be made, one of which was the proposal to close Purley Pool. Encouragingly however, he stated that Croydon had been allocated growth zone status and would see new businesses, new homes and new jobs come to the borough and that the Westfield Hammerson retail development of the town centre would help drive this.

Members asked questions and sought information from the Leader on matters as diverse as cuts to the funding award from central government, partnership working, joint commissioning and shared budgets, safeguarding, progress in renting out part of Bernard Weatherill House, funding support for lollipop people and the development of academy playing fields.

There was considerable interest in the proposal to close Purley Pool and a number of residents and pool users were present to express their concerns. These related to the lack of consultation, the condition of the fabric of the

building which they did not believe to be critical, difficulties in getting to the alternative facility at Waddon and the loss of a facility that is used by a considerable number of people of all ages.

The Leader aimed to address these concerns stating that a surveyors report concluded that the building was in a critical state as a result of years of underinvestment, that it would absorb millions of pounds (£) to bring it up to standard and that redeveloping the site would unlock the potential to revitalise the centre of Purley with new homes and new facilities. He accepted an invitation from Purley residents to visit the pool with an open mind and he offered to make the surveyors report available.

The Leader welcomed the opportunity to participate in the scrutiny process, added that he would be happy to attend meetings of the scrutiny Sub-Committees if invited and that further work on encouraging community engagement in the scrutiny process through web-casting and the potential to accept questions through social media would be pursued.

The Leader was supportive of the idea of devolving a budget allocation to ward level decision-making as a means of empowering local communities and ward Councillors. He added that this idea would be looked at by a cross-party group in the New Year and that there were governance issues which would need to be resolved.

The Committee also received a pre-decision report on the council **Budget 2015/16**. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury and Director of Finance and Assets introduced the item stating that these were draft Budget proposals and that they were intended to preserve the delivery of frontline services by focusing on back-office costs, by doing things differently and by making hard choices where necessary.

Members of the Committee sought further information on the Capital Budget, levels of borrowing, the level of risk attached to the need for housing in the borough and empty properties, aspects of the Pension Fund, the Council Tax base, safeguarding and the recruitment and retention of social workers.

The Committee then asked questions and sought information about the Budget proposals as they related to each portfolio ie:

- Culture Leisure and Sport
 - Finance and Treasury
 - Transport and Environment
 - Homes and Regeneration
 - Green Clean Croydon
 - Economic Development
-
- Children Families and Learning
 - Communities, Safety and Justice
 - People and Communities

The Committee concluded that the council would need to make difficult decisions as a result of declining central government funding and that these would impact on residents and staff.

Members noted that good progress have been made to reduce the level of debt being carried by the council.

The Committee also noted that a key element in the proposed delivery of necessary cuts to the budget was the 'digital by design' project but Members felt that these proposals needed to be developed further and that it would be crucial to ensure that residents without access to computers were not disadvantaged.

The Committee was pleased to hear from the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury and the Chief Executive that safeguarding would remain a top priority, that budgets would be protected and risks relating to the safeguarding of adults and children would be minimised. Members of the Committee were also concerned about the council's capacity to recruit social workers for work with adults and children against the need to keep costs down and reduce the number of agency staff.

The Committee resolved to ask Cabinet to consider a full report on the proposed closure of the Purley Pool before a final decision is taken and that this should seek to address the concerns of pool users and take into account the practicalities of the effective use of Waddon pool as an alternative (including access by public transport, parking and capacity) and health implications arising from the closure.

Members welcomed the positive approach to transparency shown by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury, indicated by their undertaking to consider a request to share un-redacted copies of the contracts relating to Bernard Weatherill House and the incinerator.

However, they were concerned at the proposal to limit further member referrals to the Planning Committee to major applications only (as referrals from MPs and GLA Member had already been limited) and resolved that more information relating to the implications of this proposal should be considered by Cabinet before any decision is taken.

The Committee noted that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee would consider an item on the Budget 2015/16 as it relates to schools funding and other aspects which impact on children and young people at its meeting on 3rd February 2015.

2.2 Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee met on 9th December 2014 for the third in a series of five meetings scheduled to take place in the community. The meeting was well attended by local residents,

Councillors and those interested in the health agenda for Croydon.

The Committee received the **Annual Report of the Adult Safeguarding Board** from Chair, Mrs Jane Lawson. The annual report detailed a number of successes and highlighted areas of learning which would enhance future delivery of adult safeguarding responsibilities. When the Care Act comes into force in April 2015, it will be a statutory requirement for all local authorities to establish an adult safeguarding board. Croydon has had this structure in place for several years so can therefore use the legislation to consolidate this work rather than spend time on devising the architecture. The Major concern was funding for the Board as, to date, the Council has funded the Board and in this statutory setting would be looking to see what funding would be made available by the Partners

The Committee was keen to see examples of positive outcomes. Evidence of success was said to be demonstrated by the outcome of audit of files commissioned by the Board. The Committee questioned the small sample size asking for confirmation of its statistical validity. Officers reported that of the 800 cases, 30 files had been randomly selected for inspection; the usual number selected by OFSTED was around 10 files. It was accepted that maybe more multi agency files could have been audited but this had been limited by resources. Committee was concerned about how confident adults felt about speaking out about the outcome of an intervention and whether a survey of their views meant anything at all since it is well known that some people are anxious about speaking out. It was reported that in addition to the independently delivered survey there was also a programme of talking to adults at the start, middle and end of the established relationship

Members referenced learning outcomes from Rotherham and suggested that Board members should perhaps seek to develop a two way relationship with the Children's Safeguarding Board to share best practice.

.Members made the case for earlier involvement by the Committee in the process as the finished report could not be supported, influenced or amended in any way. Officers were not keen to support this approach. The Committee noted that the report had been agreed by the Partners who make up the Board and it was not clear that the report was addressed to anyone partner in neither particular nor what was their response to the contents of the report.

Members raised concerns that there appeared to be no budget in place to support the work of the adult safeguarding board. The absence of a budget for the Board, for instance, did not seem to concern the report authors.

NHS England's Immunisation update was on the agenda for the meeting. Committee was extremely concerned that NHS England officers were unable to attend this meeting but Dr Mike Robinson, Croydon's Director of Public Health was in attendance to respond to questions and provide feedback to NHS England colleagues.

The local NHS England officers has met with Dr Robinson prior to the Committee meeting and had stated that immunisation figures were moving in the right direction. The overall picture in Croydon appeared to be below the national average and this was attributed to under reporting and estimation. GPs that lagged behind were incentivised to submit figures in a timely way by changing the payment structure, peer pressure and engagement through GP networks. Members were concerned that there was a change in the NHS to incentivise GPs to carry out standard tasks such as the identification of dementia and subsequent signposting.

Committee was very concerned about the trajectory of the figures and remained unconvinced that NHS England had this problem under control. Consequently NHS England would be requested to attend a future meeting to responds to the Committee concerns.

The **Better Care Fund** (BCF) was considered at this meeting. The Fund should enhance partnership working to enable better care closer to home enabling people to stay in their homes for longer thereby reducing acute care costs.

Committee looked behind the figures and explored how the BCF Plans would be implemented. Skills gaps identified by the Committee included the number of different professionals required to complete initial adult assessments and provide adequate signposting. It was clear that recruitment and retention of key staff remained an issue and would be a major constraint to the successful delivery of the BCF. The role of primary care and GP's in particular was seen to be key to the success of the plan but committee was sceptical about how well GP practices were in meeting this challenge.

The Committee requested progress reports on the implementation of the BCF Plan and resolved to add this as a regular item on the Committee agenda.

Members considered an item on the **Quality of Life for People with Chronic Conditions** and welcomed the huge range of conditions referenced in the report. The Committee was encouraged to note that the essence of the care for this group was multi-agency and that the main focus was outcome-based commissioning to address the needs of the person as a whole rather than as a condition.

The report concentrated on the 60 plus age group, although officers reported that the age group below this was viewed from a prevention and self-care perspective. The Committee was concerned about the apparent lack of provision for those who were not frail or elderly, nor young but disabled and were living with long term conditions and whose contact with care and health services was episodic.

Concerns were raised regarding the level of GP support and how well they are or would be equipped in performing their role of coordinating, supporting and signposting. It was noted that there was variations in performance by GP practices. The Committee asked what the CCG was doing to transform GP services and to address the variations in performance.

2.3 Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee has not met in the period since the last report to Council.

2.4 Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting on 2nd December 2014 considered a pre-decision report on **Cycling in Croydon**. Members heard from Councillor Kathy Bee as Cabinet Member, council officers, Transport for London, cycling groups and members of the public.

It was clear from the information received how important it was to develop a cycling strategy for the borough, that there was a lot to do to put it into action and that it would take time to deliver. Committee members had visited Hackney before the meeting and had undertaken a walkabout in Croydon to see the challenges ahead for themselves. The Committee heard that Hackney had made cycling a priority in 2000 as part of its holistic approach to creating liveable neighbourhoods, reducing inequalities between road users and had seen huge increases in cycling as a result. Members heard that by taking an evolutionary approach and making changes incrementally, encouraging cross-departmental co-operation and sharing of 'pots' of money had helped deliver better neighbourhood solutions for all residents in Hackney.

The Committee focused its inquiry and questions on a number of areas including the current situation in the borough, the benefits of cycling and active travel, the barriers to cycling, opportunities and 'quick wins' to encourage cycling and funding choices available to the council.

The Committee reached a number of conclusions including that current levels of cycling participation in the Borough are poor and there are considerable opportunities to increase cycling participation as a means of travel and for leisure. Members of the Committee were enthusiastic that a modal shift towards cycling should be encouraged and that cycling imagery should be inclusive of disabled cyclists.

The Committee resolved to recommend to the Cabinet that a Cycling Strategy for Croydon be adopted and that it shows evidence of a disability focused Equality Impact Assessment. The Committee also asked that consideration be given to increasing the funding allocation from the Local Implementation Plan (provided by Transport for London) and other 'pots' in order to implement the rolling delivery plan outlined in the draft Cycling Strategy. The Committee also felt that it was important that cross-department co-operation should be encouraged help remove impediments such as the need for planning permission for cycle storage and lockers.

The outcomes of the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 20th January 2015 will be reported to full Council at its meeting on 20th April. It received information about **Transport Infrastructure in**

Croydon in a joint report from council officers and Transport for London and a report on the Connected Croydon project. The transport infrastructure report focused on information about future infrastructure plans for Croydon including plans relating to buses, trains, future tram line extensions and roads, particularly the A23 corridor. Senior representatives from Transport for London were present to provide information to the Committee.

The Committee also considered an update item on the **Connected Croydon** project with the aim of reviewing the progress made to date and challenges ahead and to consider opportunities arising from the 3-year LIP funding programme.

2.5 South West London Standing Joint Health Overview Committee (JHOSC)

The Sub-Committee of the Standing JHOSC reviewing the South West London Mental Health Trust delivery of **inpatient mental health services** met on Wednesday 17th December 2014. The Committee discussed and commented on the CCG community services plans for each borough. The meeting noted responses to the consultation as presented by sector Healthwatches and the Wandsworth Police.

Concerns around the relocation of the CAMHs Service which currently is based in Wandsworth to Kingston. This would create a range of variations in the service which were considered and discussed by the Committee.

The Sub-Committee is due to meet again in March 2015.

2.6 Forthcoming meetings:

- **Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee**, Tuesday 27th January 2015, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, BR3 3BX
- **Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee**, Tuesday 3rd February at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, the Town Hall, Croydon.
- **Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee**, Tuesday 3rd March 2015 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Croydon.

- **Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee**, Tuesday 10th March 2015, John Ruskin College, Selsdon Park Road, South Croydon CR2 8JJ.
- **Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee**, Tuesday 17th March at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, the Town Hall, Croydon.
- **Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee**, Tuesday 24th March 2015 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Croydon.

3. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15 and 2015/16

The 2014/15 scrutiny work programme is on track and the “at a glance” summary is **attached**. Scrutiny Chairs continue to discuss how the 2015/16 programme is to be developed and welcome any suggestions.

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014-15 (as at 16 January 2015)

This schedule provides an overview of Scrutiny meetings in 2014/15 and outlines an indicative (but not final or complete) list of topics for discussion.

SCRUTINY & STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE (SSOC)	1 July 14 - Work Programme - Confirmation of Chair, Deputy Chair & Vice Chair - Establishment Streets & Environment Sub-Committee	9 September 14 - Cabinet Member Finance & Treasury (Simon Hall) - 4-year Budget overview & resources - FM Procurement	11 November 14 - Cabinet Member Culture, Leisure & Sport (Timothy Godfrey) - Culture in Croydon - CALAT update	17 December 14 - Leader of the Council & the Chief Executive - Budget and performance	10 February 15 - Cabinet Member Economic Development (Toni Letts) - Stronger Communities Partnership + Voluntary Sector Strategy	3 March 15 - Cabinet Member Safety & Justice (Mark Watson) - Safer Croydon Partnership - Domestic Violence	14 April 15 - Review of the Work Programme - Transparency Agenda - Data and Fol
HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE (HSCH)	8 July 14 - Work Programme - Confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair - Healthwatch Co-option - SW London JHOSC Update	21 October 14 - Cabinet Member Homes and Regeneration (Alison Butler) - Homelessness Strategy/ Tenancy Strategy - Annual Report (DoPH) - Health Inequalities	12 November 14 - Croydon Health Services NHS Trust - QIPP, LIA, End of Life Care	9 December 14 - Better Care Fund - Adult Safeguarding - NHS England Immunisation (6mth update) - Quality of Life for people with chronic conditions	27 January 15 - Cabinet Member People & Communities (Louisa Woodley) - Mental Health - Public Health Annual Report potential themes for 2015	10 March 15 - Health & Wellbeing Board - Housing Repairs	12 May 15 - Quality Accounts - Housing Strategy - Review the Work Programme
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUB-COMMITTEE (CYP)	22 July 14 - Confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair - Work Programme - School Places and Estates Strategy	14 October 14 - Partnership work on safeguarding (LSCB Children's Board) - Implications for Croydon of Rotherham child sexual exploitation report	25 November 14 - Academies - evaluation/monitoring of effectiveness and standards of education provided	3 February 15 - Cabinet Member Children, Families & Learning (Alisa Flemming) - School standards and inclusion (including attendances) - Budget	17 March 15 - Review of the Work Programme - Children's Social care (council services) - Follow-up on scrutiny recommendations		
STREETS AND ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (S&E)	23 July 14 - Work Programme - Confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair - My Croydon App - Street Lighting PFI	16 September 14 - Cabinet Member Transport & Environment (Kathy Bee) - 20mph speed limits	18 November 14 - Cabinet Member Clean & Green (Stuart Collins) - SWL waste Partnership - Veolia contract - Fly-tipping	2 December 14 - Cycling in Croydon inc. outcomes of 'Cycling day' (held on 19 November) - Street Lighting PFI Update following Walkabout (held on 4 November)	20 January 15 - TfL – roads inc. A23 corridor - Connected Croydon	24 March 15 - Review of the Work Programme - Flooding (update item) - Sustainability	