



# Leader of the Council Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Tony Newman April 2016

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## Latest News

Since my last update, we have had two Cabinet meetings. At the Cabinet meeting in February, we recommended a budget to Council that keeps council tax affordable for residents while we protect front line services in Croydon. Both February and March's Cabinet agendas considered reports that had a strong focus on protecting our services and supporting our residents. From a completely new Credit Union offer to hearing the recommendations of the opportunity and fairness commission, we continue to match our ambitious programme for Croydon with ensuring that we deliver high quality public services in the Borough for all of our residents.

We have also had the fantastic news that we have reached a final agreement with Fairfield (Croydon) Ltd to work together on a managed programme that will see the venue temporarily close on 15 July 2016 in preparation for a £30m transformation. The agreement means that as we take this once-in-a-generation opportunity to totally transform Fairfield Halls into one of the most prestigious arts and entertainment venues in the country, we have also ensured that the Board is able to ensure everyone who works there is treated fairly and properly.

Having put arts and culture at the heart of Croydon's regeneration, I'm delighted to report that the second Croydon Beer Festival, hosted in the Town Hall and Clocktower complex, was a fantastic success with every night sold out. I am also delighted that Boxpark will be partnering the Council in delivering this year's ambition festival and that the rooftop cinema will also be returning to Croydon this summer. We continue to deliver our ambitious agenda for Croydon and this past month has seen the opening of an opinion survey on a second 20mph zone in north east Croydon, the Council winning a national award for leading a regional programme to innovate services for children with special educational needs, two more fly-tipping vehicles seized and fly-tippers arrested and Croydon achieving its growth zone deal with the GLA and the Government – a deal that will deliver a £350m programme of investment in the metropolitan centre.

As I write, I would also like to place on record my thanks to two people leaving Croydon. I'm hugely grateful to Councillor Emily Benn for all her hard work in so ably representing the residents of West Thornton and for her work supporting the armed forces in Croydon. I'm sure that everyone will join me in wishing her well as her career now takes her overseas.

Likewise, after twelve years at Croydon, Nathan Elvery has announced his intention to resign and to move onto pastures new in West Sussex. I thank Nathan for everything that he has

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done for Croydon in all of his roles for the council in helping shape, transform and improve our public services and wish him all the best as he takes up his new role – I'm certain we will have several good opportunities to thank him more fully over the coming weeks.

## Delivering our Ambitions

The Cabinet meeting on 29 February primarily focussed on recommending a budget to Council. I've been clear that we are working hard to ensure that this Council is on the side of Croydon residents, so I'm delighted that before we recommended a budget, we first gave consideration to the recommendations of the Opportunity and Fairness Commission and also to the second phase of our Gateway programme.

The final report of the Commission highlighted the key inequality and fairness challenges for the borough and presented recommendations on how these can be addressed by the Council and our statutory, voluntary and community sector partners.

Building on the success of our Gateway programme in improving outcomes for vulnerable households, the phase two report detailed plans for how we will further improve outcomes for residents by broadening the "gateway" whole family, holistic, early intervention and prevention focused approaches across a range of services within adult social care, supported housing and early intervention and children's social care services.

Both of these reports look at how we deliver services to those residents most in need and I'm glad that the budget was considered in the context of not just the savings that the Council needs to make, but also in the context of the aspirations we have for the services we deliver.

In that context, the Cabinet recommended a budget to Council that reflects the clear priorities of the administration. This was particularly clear on reducing back office costs and protecting the front line and those services that matter most to residents.

The February meeting also considered a report on the 9th meeting of Croydon Congress held on 26 November 2015, 'Child Sexual Exploitation: Can you see it? Can you help stop it?' This very powerful meeting of the congress helped raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviours of people and organisations in the borough and looked to better equip the community to take an active role with the issue.

The March meeting of Cabinet also focussed on how the Council can do more with less to support our residents.



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The first report Cabinet detailed how the council is working with Croydon Credit Union to help tackle the cost of living crisis and, very specifically, to support Croydon's Credit Union as a people's bank and a financial co-operative open to all. Under this administration, the Council has actively worked with and supported Croydon's Credit Union as a people's bank and an independent financial co-operative open to all. This initiative expands the Credit Union's services, providing sustainable loans linked to membership of the Union and a commitment to save in the longer term. The work will assist to provide an alternative to payday loan companies, which are causing great harm in our communities.

The Cabinet then agreed to consult on a new Housing Allocations scheme. This administration is determined to continue to tackle homelessness in Croydon and this report set out our strategy to tackle the number of households in temporary accommodation, and how we will consult on some proposed amendments to Croydon's Housing Allocations Scheme to support this approach.

The next two reports looked at how we can make better use of valued community services in the context of both diminishing resources but, perhaps more significantly, a changing world.

The first report agreed to undertake an engagement exercise with residents on how the Borough's libraries can best serve them and their communities in the future. Our libraries are much loved, and I know that different communities may want different things from their libraries in the future. This engagement exercise is to hear what role local residents feel the library in their area should play as we put together a strategy for Croydon's libraries that is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Please do have your say by visiting <https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/KMS/DMart.aspx>.

The second report takes a similar approach to Croydon's parks and open spaces. The Cabinet agreed to engage with residents to hear more about how residents feel they can get more enjoyment and benefit from their parks and green spaces in their local areas. The big conversation on our parks will begin in the summer, so please do take the chance to have your say.

The March meeting of Cabinet also agreed a paper that set out a different strategy for how the Council commissions contracts for services. Our new strategy is aligned with the recommendations of the opportunity and fairness commission, helping to ensure that not only the services we commission but also how we commission them, will deliver greater value to Croydon overall.



# Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming April 2016

## Latest News

Croydon Council's work helping young people with special educational needs (SEN) has been recognised with a win at a national awards ceremony.

The LGC Awards were held on Wednesday 16 March recognising innovation in local government, Croydon Council officers were among the South London SEN Commissioning Programme's team that collected the Efficiency Award.

The programme, which includes specialist officers from across 10 London boroughs commissioning SEN placements for young people, beat off eight other finalist councils from across the country to scoop the award.

Launched in September 2013 by Croydon Council with three other London boroughs, the South London SEN Commissioning Programme is now the largest group of its kind in the country. As well as aiming to give the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEN, its efficiency drive has saved the participating London boroughs over £3m by working together to shape and manage the independent sector market.

Wednesday's award was handed over by actor Stephen Mangan, who hosted the event at the Grosvenor House Hotel in central London. Croydon Council was also a finalist for four other awards.

I agree with the Council leader Councillor Tony Newman who said:

“Getting the right support for young people with special educational needs is one of the most important things this council does, so I'm delighted for our officers whose SEN commissioning work with colleagues across south London got the credit they deserved.”

The South London SEN Commissioning Programme's win is its second in a year after receiving the Innovation or Initiative of the Year in Local Government Award at the GO Procurement Awards in Manchester in February 2015.



Croydon Council's head of service for inclusion and SEN, Linda Wright, collected the Efficiency Award with colleagues from the South London SEN Commissioning Programme.



# Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming April 2016

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## Secondary transfer 2016

Monday 2 March was national offer day. All parents of children in year 6 in the borough (who applied by 31 October 2016) received the outcome of their application for a secondary school place for September.

It has been another successful year in Croydon.

## Online applications – 100% applied online

This year (again) 100% of our parents/carers applied for online for a place. All online applicants received their outcome via email we sent paper letters to those who did not get their first preference school. The letters set out how to accept a place and full details of waiting list and appeals processes.

Offers will continue to be made from waiting list lists throughout the summer term.

## Preference offers 2016

The table below shows the number and percentage of preference offers made to Croydon residents. This information relates to applicants who applied on time only.

Total applications 2016	First preference offers	Second preference offers	Third preference offers	Fourth preference offers	Fifth preference offers	Sixth preference offers	Alternative offers*
4256	2856	685	287	140	58	27	203
%	67	16	7	3	1	1	5

\*An alternative offer means that we were unable to offer a school listed on the application form so we offered the nearest school with an available place.

First preference offers increased by 1% compared to last year and the percentage of alternative offers decreased by 1%. This is in the context of a slightly larger cohort.

Reception and Junior national offer day is on 18 April.

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

### Croydon's Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Project

The work of Croydon CCG FGM Project has recently been highlighted as an

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example of good practice in working together to address FGM at local level.

At the national FGM Conference attended by over 300 people International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2016, Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists, Monday 8 February 2016, the newly developed Croydon FGM Risk Assessment Tool was showcased as an example of how effective multi agency partnership working can be used to effect change within professional practice and improve the quality of service that people affected by FGM receive.

The FGM Risk Assessment Tool was launched at the Croydon wide FGM Conference held on March 24 2016. It is also now a key part of all multi agency training on FGM delivered through the project/Croydon Safeguarding Children Board.

If you would like to find out more about the FGM Project please contact Beth Kelly FGM Project Consultant [Beth.Kelly@croydonpct.nhs.uk](mailto:Beth.Kelly@croydonpct.nhs.uk)

## **National Child Protection Campaign – 2016**

### ***Together, we can tackle child abuse***

A national campaign organised by the DfE was launched on 3 March 2016. The campaign aims to encourage the public to report their concerns in order to get help to children more quickly. The campaign's aims are to create a new social norm around reporting and to tackle the barriers that stop people taking action.

Research for this campaign has shown that if people feel they are part of their community's response to child abuse and neglect this reduces their fear of reporting and encourages them to report. The campaign's messaging will encourage people to report any concern, no matter how small, to help the authorities build up a full picture of each case and decide what best to do.

Research also indicates, when it comes to child welfare, people want and expect to engage with their local authority's children's services. As such, the campaign encourages concerned members of the public to report child abuse locally to Children Social Care. Members of the public will be directed to [www.gov.uk/reportchildabuse](http://www.gov.uk/reportchildabuse) and will be able to search for the telephone number for their local children's social care team using their postcode.

The DfE has announced they are investing in advertising in two pilot areas. Croydon is one of the pilot areas in outer London. In preparation local authorities will receive a campaign toolkit and other information during early 2016. The campaign launches 3





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March 2016 with advertising, public relations and digital activity being phased out by late summer 2016.

For further details on the Croydon campaign contact:

Dr Gavin Swann  
Head of Service, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Croydon Council  
Email: [gavin.swann@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.swann@croydon.gov.uk)

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# Culture, Leisure and Sport Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Timothy Godfrey April 2016

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## Delivering our Ambitions

### **Paula Murray, Creative Director**

I am delighted to report that we have appointed Paula Murray to the role of Creative Director for Croydon.



Currently Assistant Chief Executive at Brighton & Hove City Council, Ms Murray will have the key role of boosting Croydon's position as a cultural hub for London and the South East in an initial six-month secondment.

She will also work with partner organisations such as Arts Council England, developers and landowners to embed culture in the borough's regeneration. Paula starts with us from the beginning of April and I urge our cultural sector to get in touch with her with thoughts and ideas on the future of culture in the Borough.

### **Big Conversation in our Parks**

The Council proposes to launch a multi-channel 'big conversation' with residents, community groups and stakeholders about parks.

The big conversation will ask residents and organisations about how they use parks now, and will ask if they want to become involved in managing and improving services in the future, how can the Council help enable and work together to do things differently.

The big parks conversation will be launched in summer 2016 and will continue until the winter of 2016.





# Culture, Leisure and Sport Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Timothy Godfrey April 2016

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## Working Together

Croydon libraries  
Engagement survey



Croydon residents are being urged to contribute their ideas to improve the borough's libraries for decades to come.

Libraries need to change with the times and I look forward to this important conversation with our residents, community groups and businesses and to hear their ideas.

Croydon's libraries review is designed to maintain and improve the resources available, including the use of volunteers, against the backdrop of substantial Government funding cuts to local authorities over the next eight years.

Started 22 March and running until 2 May, the engagement is designed to get as many people as possible – from people who have never used a Croydon library to regulars, community groups and businesses – to give their views on the future of the service.

Be sure to have your say go to [www.croydon.gov.uk/ambitious4libraries](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/ambitious4libraries) and complete the survey.

### **Volunteers Week, 1 – 12 June**

Interested in volunteering opportunities available at Croydon libraries? Whether you're hoping to gain experience or are interested in giving back to your local community; the perfect volunteering opportunity could be waiting for you. Pick up and complete an application form and hand it into your local library to start your volunteering journey!

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## Culture, Leisure and Sport Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Timothy Godfrey April 2016

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### Museum of Croydon Exhibitions for spring 2016

The Museum of Croydon's exhibition programme for spring 2016 features



'Blasts from the past' a retrospective of 21 years of exhibitions at Croydon Clocktower, including favourites such as 'Cock and Bull Stories: A Picasso Bestiary' (1995), Monster Creepy Crawlies (1999), Egypt: Digging for Dreams (2000-01), Frames of Mind (2008-09) and Scene Unseen (2009-10). 'Blasts from the past' will be displayed in the Museum of Croydon, Croydon NOW gallery at Croydon Clocktower.

Tuesday 19 April 2016 to Saturday 15 April 2017, Tuesday – Saturday, 10.30am – 5pm (except public holidays). Entrance to the exhibition is free. [Exhibition logo attached].

This year's programme also includes 'Your paintings, our favourites', a selection of favourite works from the Croydon art collection, curated by our Front of house volunteer team. The exhibition will be exhibited in the Museum of Croydon Exhibition Gallery from Tuesday 17 May to Saturday 1 October 2016. [Exhibition logo attached].

Prior to the opening of 'Your paintings, our favourites', the Exhibition Gallery will again be hosting the Croydon Art Society from Tuesday 19 April - Saturday 7 May.

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# Culture, Leisure and Sport

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Timothy Godfrey

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### **Fairfield Halls Project**

Following a local campaign to ‘email the Cabinet Member’ about the Fairfield Halls closure for a £30million restoration and refurbishment, I received a number of emails, all of which I replied to including the following information and FAQ.

The option of phasing the works was considered but would have added to the overall project risk and would not have avoided the need to close for a considerable time to remove the Asbestos, install new heating system etc. It would have added approximately £4.8million to the build costs (temporary works and increased labour costs). The Fairfield relies on public funding to remain open, in this current financial year the council has made a grant to the Fairfield Halls of £750k. During a phased refurbishment it would have necessitated a revenue grant to cover operating costs over the 3 – 5 years of considerable disruption. Because of government cuts to our Council we have to look at every single penny of expenditure. That means that we simply can’t take the additional project risks nor are we able to justify spending in the region of £8million over the next 3 to 5 years of a phased refurbishment. Completing the works in the shortest possible time is therefore, on balance, a good outcome for our borough, the Halls themselves and for the project finances.

The project also has its own web site which is in the process of being updated, but already has some key project information on it and links to a gallery of what the scheme looks like.

[www.Croydon.gov.uk/Fairfield](http://www.Croydon.gov.uk/Fairfield)

The Planning application for the works to the Fairfield and the wider site was submitted on the 24<sup>th</sup> February.



# Culture, Leisure and Sport Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Timothy Godfrey April 2016

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## **Bereavement & registrars**

Within our bereavement service from the 1 April 2016 we will offer residents a new ashes to glass service. This is a new memorial scheme where the deceased's ashes are incorporated onto hand crafted jewellery, including rings, pendants, cufflinks etc. and/or a paperweight; making each a very personal bespoke memorial. Our role is to display the products and provide promotional material to prospective clients. For any orders placed by clients referred by us we receive a commission payment based upon the total retail value. Memorials are very personal items and by adding these items to our range it increases choice for the bereaved whilst providing a new income stream for the service.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **What is the Council planning to do to the Fairfield as part of the £30million refurbishment?**

The two-year closure will allow for the £30m transformation of the ageing building into a spectacular arts and cultural centre, which will include comprehensive refurbishment including the box office, the 1,800-seat concert hall and improvements to the Arnhem Gallery.

Plans for technical improvements will open the way for more contemporary productions to be staged and fresh experiences for audiences. The venue will also gain new bar areas, a roof-top seating and dining space, and the outside of the building will reconfigured with improved integration into the surrounding public areas, which will be landscaped, with spaces for public art, cafes and shops.

### **In addition to the £30million refurbishment, what else is going to be built in the area?**

The Fairfield Halls refurbishment is the anchor for a wider regeneration. 2,000 sq. metres of gallery space in a brand new underground venue will offer opportunities for large-scale contemporary exhibitions to be displayed.

Behind Fairfield Halls, Croydon College will move to a brand new purpose-built educational complex ensuring that it can offer students the benefits of a state-of-the-art learning environment. The college will continue to operate from its existing premises until construction is completed.

The wider regeneration, which takes place over three phases, will see over 2,000 new homes, with significant numbers of those affordable, and major improvements along George Street, with new offices and shops planned and proposals to make pedestrian-friendly, step-free through routes from East Croydon into town and the wider borough.

### **Who has carried out the work on the project so far?**

The project is led by the Development Department within the council. They have commissioned a professional team who are developing the planning application for the scheme. This includes Rick Mather Architects, a practice known for its work on the refurbishment of the Royal Festival Hall along with the overhaul of the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith. Local consultants Mott MacDonald are the lead consultants for the project and planning practitioners Turley Associates are the planning consultants. Acoustic consultancy services by Simon Kahn. Anne Minors Performance Consultants are providing the Theatre Consultancy.

### **What is the timeline for the project?**

The overall development of the area is a 10 - 15 year programme and will take place over three phases.

Phase 1 includes the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls, new homes on the site of the multi-storey car park, the enhancement of the public realm and the new Croydon College facility and this will commence July 2016. The revitalised Fairfield Halls, new homes and public realm works are due to be completed by September 2018 and it is anticipated that the development of the new College building will be complete by Mid-2020.

In order to ensure the College can continue to operate from its existing premises until construction is completed, development of more homes on the College site will commence towards the end of 2020 to kickstart the remaining phases of the development including homes, shops and offices along across the remainder of the area including George Street and College Road.

### **When will Fairfield Close for refurbishment?**

It is planned that Fairfield will close down on 15 July 2016

### **When will Fairfield re-open following refurbishment?**

Fairfield should reopen in September 2018

### **Why isn't the council phasing the £30million refurbishment?**

The council considered a phased refurbishment but decided it was a) too risky and b) would cost much more.

A phased approach would involve a number of key risks:

- Programme risk – a phased approach would take longer, potentially adding at least a year to the construction programme (from 2 years to 3 years) which has additional cost implications.
- Complexity Risk – working in phases adds a significant degree of complexity to both the works themselves and the associated contractual arrangements. This is likely to limit the number of contractors willing to bid for this work and creates a significant procurement risk.
- Health and Safety Risk – delivering major construction works within a publicly accessible building creates risks around safety.
- Quality of Service risk – delivering major construction works within a working cultural building creates risks around customer experience which could lead to negative public and performer perceptions of the building.

A phased approach would also incur significant additional development costs:

- Programme Cost – a longer programme incurs significant additional costs around site set up costs, prelims, insurances, construction cost inflation and diseconomies of scale.
- Management and Administration – administering a phased construction contract within an operational building will incur additional management and monitoring costs.
- Abortive works – much of the works, especially mechanical and electrical related works, would require costly temporary solutions to be put in place in order to enable completion of the areas in a phased manner.
- Out of hours working – it is likely that a phased approach would involve significant period of out of hours working which would incur additional cost.

### **Would phasing mean the building could be kept open during the refurbishment with no closure?**

No. because the project is so big, the whole building would need to close at certain points to enable the removal of asbestos, electrical and heating systems. The new heating and electrical systems would then need to be installed before other works could be done, to enable a phased opening.

This would mean that during a phased project, the initial full closure would take at least 9 months, with risks of over runs, it is safe to assume that the building would be fully closed for 12 months prior to partial reopening of parts of the building on a rolling basis.

### **Why aren't other funders helping to fund this refurbishment?**

In the current funding climate, cultural organisations do not have the funds necessary to invest at scale in a building such as Fairfield Halls.

For example, the Arts Council has made it clear that they can't fund capital costs of the refurbishment. They are keen to have applications made by Croydon organisations for project funding. The Arts Council currently fund Croydon Music and Arts, a youth based organisation that includes the boroughs 'Music Hub'.

Fairfield (Croydon) Ltd, the operator of the Fairfield, requires a large annual grant from the council and has also been able to raise charitable contributions totalling £100,000 in the past year. This is great progress, but Fairfield hasn't been able to access any funds surplus to those required to operate the building that could contribute to the proposed £30m refurbishment.

### **What will happen to the community organisations that currently use Fairfield?**

This is a primary concern for Croydon Council. This is why we are keeping disruption to a minimum and ensuring the works are completed in just two years. Clearly the loss of the two main stages can not be temporarily replicated elsewhere in the borough, however many of the smaller spaces in the borough can be used such as Stanley Halls etc. The council will also use the Clocktower complex and Town Hall complex to host events.





# Transport and Environment

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Kathy Bee

#### April 2016

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### Latest News

#### Storm Katie

Easter Sunday into Monday saw Storm Katie batter large parts of England with heavy and torrential rain across the region. Strong to gale force winds with gusts of over 70 mph led to disruption in the borough with a number of calls received regarding structural damage to buildings and many trees being blown over on our streets and in parks and open spaces. The forestry team alongside our contractor, City Suburban, had been monitoring forecasts and so were on standby. They therefore mobilised very quickly once the storm arrived to minimise disruption to the borough. Since the early hours of Monday morning we have responded to nearly 100 fallen trees. These have been a combination of highway trees, trees in our parks, and privately owned trees falling onto the highway. The teams have had to prioritise things based on which incidents posed the greatest risk to the public. In the first instance they have worked to clear obstructed roads and footpaths and they are now tackling the remaining trees that have fallen in other public open spaces. We are still receiving a large number of calls regarding damage caused by the storm and our teams continue to work tirelessly to address all of these incidents. Situations like this are a testament to our staff and contractors, showing how they always go the extra mile when duty calls.

#### 2015/16 Winter Maintenance

Croydon's 2015/16 winter service operations ended on 27 March 2016. Over the season we used up approximately 850Tonnes of salt (25 gritting runs). The past winter in England was the warmest since records began in 1910, according to provisional data from the Met Office. Abnormally high temperatures were more pronounced in the south of England where the mean temperature was over two degrees higher than the 1981-2010 average. It was also the second-wettest winter for the UK as a whole just behind the winter of 2013/2014.

Plans are on the way to renew our salt barn to increase its capacity and make the council more resilient during extreme snow and ice events. This demolishing and reconstruction of the new barn is expected to start early summer and be completed before the winter season.



# Transport and Environment Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Kathy Bee April 2016

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## Definitive Map

On the 06<sup>th</sup> April 2016 the Council published its latest Definitive Map and Statement of public paths for the whole borough. The previous Definitive map was prepared in 1975 and printed in 1980 and only covered the former Coulsdon and Purley Urban District Council area.

The Definitive Map and Statement are legal documents being conclusive evidence of the existence of a public right of way. Copies of the documents are available for viewing in all Croydon Libraries and Access Croydon. In addition the Maps and Statements can be viewed on the Council's web site via the link below;

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/transportandstreets/rhps/definitive-map-and-statement-2015>

## Working Together

### Safe Drive Stay Alive

Over a four day period from 01<sup>st</sup> – 04<sup>th</sup> March 2016, approximately 2,300 students from 6<sup>th</sup> Forms and Colleges across the borough attended Croydon's first Safe Drive Stay Alive event at Fairfield Halls. The programme of events is organised by Croydon Council Road Safety team in partnership with representatives from the three emergency services, NHS and Transport for London. It is a powerful stage production lasting 90 minutes which aims to help reduce the disproportionate number of road casualties among young road users. It is intended that the audience should leave knowing more about the risks involved as drivers and passengers and be able to identify the common causes of crashes and prevention strategies. I can honestly say that I truly believe this was achieved.

The event is opened by music, a DJ, an on stage quiz. This is followed by a video tour of Croydon and then another tour showing local car crash scenes and local newspaper articles of young fatalities. A filmed reconstruction of a crash involving five young people begins and is stopped at relevant points by a police traffic officer, a paramedic and a fire-fighter who come on stage to give an account of their personal experiences and how it has affected them and not just the victims. It also features volunteer victim speakers whose lives have been permanently changed through the testament of a bereaved family member and a seriously injured survivor.

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# Transport and Environment Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Kathy Bee April 2016

The event was attended by The Worshipful the Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice, Councillor Robert Canning and I.

The Road Safety Team have worked with the 6<sup>th</sup> Forms and colleges since the event to obtain feedback from the students and have found that the very vast majority have said that they would make positive changes to their behaviour as not only a driver but also as a passenger.



## Delivering our Ambitions

### 20mph Limit Proposals for Area 2 'North-East Croydon'

We are now ready to seek the opinion of residents/businesses and organisations in the second of the five areas which will eventually cover the full Croydon borough.

Residents are reminded that, if they want traffic to travel at a maximum 20mph in their residential roads, (main roads will remain at 30mph) then they are going to have to show their support by completing the council questionnaire by 20 May 2016. All properties in north-east Croydon will receive a newsletter by 6 April 2016 explaining how to take part. On 4<sup>th</sup> April, the 'Area 2' proposals page will be made available online and can be accessed from [www.croydon.gov.uk/20mph](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/20mph).

**Download the free app | 020 8604 7000**

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# Safety and Justice Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Mark Watson April 2016

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## Latest News

### Surrey Street Market

The council is investing £500k in to Surrey Street and wants to use this unique opportunity to create a vibrant public space. We are considering the possibility of introducing evening and Sunday trading, while at the same time making sure that the market's unique character and history are protected. As well as new lighting, paved areas, archways and signage, possible improvements could include public art and the creation of spaces where people can enjoy a meal from the growing number of street food traders operating from the market. A project team has been established to draw up plans and consultation will take place with local businesses and residents so that people with an interest can input their ideas.

### Street trading fees

The Council is responsible for issuing street trading licences across the borough to businesses that wish to use the public highway to display goods for sale, like fruit and vegetables or provide services, like placing tables and chairs outside a café. We also issue temporary licences for things like one day markets and festivals etc.

Once a licence is issued, the Council is responsible for making sure the licence is operated within its conditions – for example that the trader only sells or displays what they are supposed to and that they stay within their permitted area etc.

The Council is entitled to charge fees for licences that cover the cost of providing the service and following a recent review, it was considered that current income falls well below current costs. Accordingly, in January this year, the Council wrote to all street trading licence holders in the borough setting out a proposed new fee setting structure for street trading and invited comments on those proposals. A number of comments were received on the proposals and many raised concerns about the possible effect of the proposals on business and also that the proposals didn't reflect the often seasonal nature of some street trading.

As a result of the responses received to the original letter, the Council is intending to take a revised proposed fee setting structure for street trading to the licensing committee for their consideration in late April.

### Hate Crime

We are running a different banner each month on the council website to help raise the profile against hate crime, and to give people further information as well as ways to report it.



# Safety and Justice

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Mark Watson

#### April 2016

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The current banner is about disability hate crime – for details visit <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community/safercroydon/advice-information/hatecrime>

The True Vision website also offers information on what hate crimes are, how to report online and find information about people that can help and support you if have been a victim. You can also download a PDF book detailing all the above.

[http://www.report-it.org.uk/disability\\_hate\\_crime1?home=banner](http://www.report-it.org.uk/disability_hate_crime1?home=banner)

#### **Once bitten, conned householder is twice shy**

Repeated scam attempts have been made on a householder after he was conned out of £15,000 for shoddy roof repairs.

The 60-year-old Waddon resident was initially called upon in 2014 by somebody claiming to be a roofer and offering to repair tiles that he said were loose. Fearing a scam, the householder called the council's trading standards team. Officers arranged for a legitimate inspection of the roof, which was found to be in overall good repair, and confirmed the visit had been an attempted scam.

#### **Delivering our Ambitions**

##### **Council shuts drugs den**

A Croydon house known for drug-taking, harassment and antisocial behaviour has been boarded up by council enforcement officers.

In December, the council's antisocial behaviour enforcement team shut 70 Alford Green in New Addington – just hours after Croydon magistrates agreed a formal closure order.

#### **Working Together**

##### **Test your knowledge of crime in Croydon**

Think you have a fair idea about crime in Croydon? Take our quiz to find out the facts about antisocial behaviour, theft, graffiti and more.

<https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/kms/elab.aspx?noip=1&CampaignId=69&CampaignStepTestId=-1&CampaignStepQuestionTestId=-1&CampaignUserRole=test>



# Safety and Justice Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Mark Watson April 2016

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## **Safer Croydon Partnership**

Good news for crime reduction.

As at 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016, we have seen are significant reductions in the following crimes compared to the same period last year:

- Burglary down 40.5%
- Robbery 60.5%
- Theft from person down 33.1%
- Anti-social behaviour is also down 10.4% with repeat ASB callers down 28.3%



# Economy and Jobs Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Toni Letts April 2016

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## Latest News

### **Croydon BID**

Croydon BID continues to provide the Town Centre, levy payers and businesses as a whole with excellent services. Following the launch of the [checkoutcroydon.com](http://checkoutcroydon.com) updating and expansion of the information about events, where to go and offers available through the Check Out Croydon card continue to deliver. Social media is being used extensively by both the BID team and by the Ambassadors to raise awareness and help to drive traffic to the site. There are now approximately 1000 Twitter followers of CheckOutCroydon which in turn assists in bringing shoppers and visitors to Croydon for shopping and events.

The BID's "Our Street Live" busking initiative, managed jointly with local licensed music venues, Croydon Council and support from the street ambassadors, will continue throughout the summer with musical entertainment and roving street performers.

## Delivering our Ambitions

### **Croydon Works – Croydon's Transformation**

The announcement that Croydon's Growth Zone which is set to deliver 5.25billion regeneration programme will ensure that the Council's plans for the regeneration of Croydon will transform the physical and economic profile of the Borough.

In order to ensure that residents are mobilised and ready to benefit from the economic growth and job opportunities that will arise from this investment we will deliver a Job Brokerage Scheme to maximise benefits from regeneration and growth, delivering preferential routes into sustainable work for our residents.

The scheme will support residents with multiple and complex barriers to employment through targeted interventions and training which not only fulfils the needs of the individual, but also the employers.

The service will operate as a free recruitment service by a partnership response to provide employers with a seamless service and a single point of contact.

This will also be an efficient mechanism to discharge Value Croydon, S106 duties and Corporate Social Responsibility requirements.





## **Working Together**

### **Apprenticeship week 14<sup>th</sup> March – 19<sup>th</sup> March**

The National Apprenticeship week highlights not only the benefits of apprenticeships, but also, in spite of the recent economic recovery; youth unemployment in London is still three times higher than the rest of the population. Unemployment is particularly prominent among disadvantaged groups including those who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness, have not completed their education and as a result, these young people require more time to become “work ready” with support to the transition into work.

I spoke at the Centerpoint conference held during Apprenticeship Week at Portcullis House and also spoke of the work that our Colleges provide in apprenticeships. I sited the fact that small employers constantly state that the lack of funding prevents them from providing more opportunities to disadvantaged young people. I suggested that targeting financial incentives or grant funding at SME’s would be an effective way of increasing opportunities for disadvantaged young people.

The principal speaker at the Centerpoint event, Jonathan Buzzeo, a Research Fellow at the Institute for Employment Studies talked about the new Youth Obligation that comes into place next year. From April 2017, all 18 – 21 year olds on Universal Credit will participate in an intensive period of support at the start of their benefit claim. After six months, they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship, traineeship, gain work place skills or go on a work placement.

### **YMCA Training Awards event at The House of Commons**

I attended the YMCA annual awards for apprentices and employers at the House of Commons during the Apprenticeship week.

There were employers from all over the country at the reception and in talking to some employers stated that giving vocational and academic qualifications equal recognition does provide greater inclusiveness for young people who have followed atypical learning journey. Others talked about the benefits traineeships, which allows 16 year olds to prepare for entry into work or as an apprenticeship within a work environment and often ensures the young people’s attainment in Maths and English.



# Economy and Jobs Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Toni Letts April 2016

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The photograph below shows, Daniel < Me, Professor Jude Kalase, The Mayor and Mayoress of Lambeth.



## **Croydon Business Excellence Awards 2016**

I had the great pleasure of opening the Croydon Excellence Business Awards at a reception held on the top floor of Impact House, gifted to Whitelabel by Mr Martin Skinner, Managing Director of Inspired Homes.

This year's awards have as a main sponsor Gatwick Airport and at the launch many of last year's winners were present as well as some of our newer businesses. With a community of over 14,000 thousand businesses operating in our borough, I do hope that many will want to enter these awards.

There is so much to celebrate with our thriving business communities which can tell many a success stories from Tech startups and solo traders to companies that have developed from humble roots to international businesses.



# Economy and Jobs Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Toni Letts April 2016

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Entries can be made on the Whitelabel website and entry closes on the 6<sup>th</sup> May at 5.00pm.



**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Clean Green Croydon

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Stuart Collins

#### April 2016

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## Latest News

### Green Garden Waste

Croydon Council will follow other London boroughs in starting to charge for garden waste collection from April after thousands of local residents said they wanted it to continue. Tight finances led to the council engaging with residents last autumn asking for their input on the future of the service, which is currently funded by all 147,000 Croydon households but used by less than a quarter.

In reply, over 10,000 residents said they wanted to keep the fortnightly service with an annual fee rather than end it. So a green garden waste service that served only residents with gardens but was paid for by all our households had to change. Making the service paid-for will save Croydon taxpayers £1.5m per year amid growing budget pressures and less Government funding. Croydon Council's decision, announced at last Full Council meeting, comes after other London boroughs introduced similar paid-for green waste collection schemes, including Sutton, Bexley and Merton.

We're really pleased we can continue this green garden waste service for those who want it while saving Croydon taxpayers £1.5m a year and therefore protecting more crucial frontline services. .

Householders can register through their login for My Account by visiting [www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk). Those without a computer can either register at their local library or with help from council staff at Access Croydon. Once you have paid for the new service you will receive a garden waste wheeled bin and will be able to view your collection day online in My Account. For more information, visit the council's website.

## Working Together

### Educational Programme

The Waste Management Team is currently working to improve their current educational programme, which is broken down into two parts. This first part is looking at areas with lower recycling rates and working with residents in the area to engage with them about methods of recycling and encouraging them to increase recycling. The second part of this programme is to adapt the work that the waste management team do with local schools. The team plan to design talks and presentation package to be aimed specifically for pupils of various ages, create a program of activities to schools, provide educational resources to Schools and Nurseries, consider providing competitions which encourage positive action by pupils



# Clean Green Croydon

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

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particularly at home and also advise schools on how they can best provide their own waste education to pupils. This is all planned to be in place for roll out at the start of the next school year.

### Delivering our Ambitions

#### Time Banded Waste Collections

From 01<sup>st</sup> March 16 the enforcement and waste management teams rolled out time banded waste collections (TBWC) in Thornton Heath High Street. This means that trade and household waste must not be left on Thornton Heath High Street between 09:00-18:00 daily.

There has been a vast increase in the recycling rate since the co-mingled bins placed on the High Street are being used by residents to dispose of recyclable waste.

Enforcement notices have been issued to all businesses to stop them presenting waste at the busier times of 9am to 6pm and since these were issued, obstructions which were common in the area are no longer there. Bins, Pallets, recycling awaiting collection are now confined to the businesses boundary until collection time or until the private contractor comes to collect.

For the first time in Croydon Council history, we have 100% compliance to business waste contract, where all businesses either have a waste contract (council / private) or hold the lower tier waste carriers license.

There has been a decrease of approximately 1.5 tonne of waste per day which would otherwise have been placed on the footway and designated as fly tip. This is potentially a daily saving of £200 in disposal costs. Over the course of a year this totals £70000 / £75000.

The next road where TBWC will be introduced is London Road in June 2016.

**Download the free app | 020 8604 7000**



**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Finance and Treasury

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Simon Hall

#### April 2016

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## Budget Implementation

The Council approved the budget in February. Work was already going on regarding a lot of the initiatives in the budget. That work has accelerated since and there is good progress on implementing those plans.

There are still risks associated with the budget. I would highlight two areas. First, the Council has yet to receive confirmation of the rates that the Home Office will pay for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children for the current financial year. Second, there are risks on demand pressures for services, notably given government action on benefits and housing.

I would add that, in terms of medium-term pressures, there are additional potential pressures coming from government policy/ decisions. This includes that it appears that the DfE is not proposing to put any further capital funding into for school places in Croydon despite the continuing need for school places.

## 2015/16 Financial Outturn

The hard work to manage in-year budget pressures and forecast overspend has dramatically improved the likely outturn for the year. I would want to pay tribute to the officers who have worked so hard to deliver this. I am also proud that this has been achieved without the previous practice of knee-jerk short-termist actions.

This work, which has included looking at how demand can be managed in new ways and looking at innovation, gives a good basis for looking at future years.

## Service Innovation

In order to deal with all the pressures that the Council is facing, by a combination of massive government funding cuts and demographic pressures, the Council is actively looking at how services can be delivered differently. Some of the initiatives on this are:

- Digital and Enabling programme, to shift to online methods, including the GoOn Digital programme to ensure that an even higher proportion of our residents are online.
- The development of the groundbreaking Gateway, Think Family and Top 50 Family work, with their focus on prevention and empowerment.
- The reviews of Libraries and Parks
- The implementation of our Asset strategy
- The new Commissioning principles



## Commissioning Principles

The March Cabinet approved the new commissioning principles. This imbedded and formalised the shift in approach that the Administration has implemented since 2014. This has included:

- Make-or-buy assessment to decide how services are delivered and by whom
- Incorporating the London Living Wage
- Putting quality and social value at the heart of procurement
- Much greater focus on and professionalization of contract management.





# Families, Health and Social Care Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Louisa Woodley April 2016

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## LATEST NEWS

We were looking for a way to engage with our customers living in emergency accommodation in a better and more effective way. Many of our customers living in Sycamore, Concorde and Windsor House have young children and so the idea of 'Stay and Play' was born. These blocks have recently been leased by the council for temporary use to accommodate households where a homelessness duty has been accepted.



An initial half term holiday fun event at Concord House last autumn and weekly stay and play activities, in the community room, were really well received by the families, so a further Christmas event was held. A number of services came together and engaged with the residents identifying what families needed in terms of help, advice and services.

Services including Sustainable Communities, Housing Initiatives and Mobility, Early Intervention and Support Services, Children's Centre, Gateway and the Toy library came together in an organised way and held 'stay and play' events over the February half term holidays..

The idea of these sessions was to engage informally with our residents but at the same time provide useful information and support. It enabled us to provide clearer messaging, delivered face to face around the reality of their housing journey and the likelihood of any offers made to be in the private sector and possibly out of the borough. Ultimately, we had an opportunity to manage customers' expectations and offer alternatives such as financial support for a rent in advance and deposit in a home and area of their choice. It also provided opportunities to increase sign up to nursery places, make referrals for further support and build up relationships with our customers.

The event enabled us to work with 84 families in total. Our headline outcomes included:

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**

- 78 customers requested information on housing initiatives and renting in the private sector
- 54 referrals for money management and debt advice
- 16 referrals for welfare and benefits advice
- 51 given information about children's centres in areas of low take up
- Children's Centre will be running weekly Kitchen Kids (healthy cooking) and Book Start/Rhyme time sessions at Concord House after Easter.

Parents are also keen to get involved in setting up a resident group and have asked for regular activities to be held in the blocks. 35 residents have expressed an interest and we will meet with them after Easter to discuss how to progress this, possibly user group/ peer mentors who can support new families when they move in.

Following the success of these events further are planned at these and other locations. We are also looking at providing a weekly presence at our key temporary accommodation blocks and linking with community and faith groups to help with messaging and providing essential support for these families.

## Croydon Heart Town school song competition

More than 200 local school children entered a competition to get their self-composed song recorded at a Croydon-based music studio and played on Croydon Radio.

The Healthy Heart song competition was launched to celebrate National Heart Month in February and aimed to get Croydon primary and secondary school pupils to write a song that celebrates what we can all do to keep our hearts young and healthy. The experience got the children thinking in a fun and creative way about what they can do to stay healthy as they grow up. We also wanted parents and teachers to benefit from hearing the healthy heart messages.



The competition was organised as part of the council's Heart Town initiative with the British Heart Foundation, which works with councils and communities in more than 50 towns to fight heart disease and raise funds for lifesaving research.

The song entries were judged by Julia Biel, recently nominated for a Moby award in the best jazz act category and songwriter Idris Rahman, of the band Soothsayers, who has also produced Mercury Prize and Moby Award-nominated artists.

The winners will be announced in April and their songs and jingles will be available to download and played on Croydon Radio."

# DELIVERING AMBITIONS



## Key Projects:

### 1. Making Good Food the Easy Choice

#### Community Food Learning Centre

- 119 residents have joined a catering course, horticultural course, healthy family meals course and attend other food or growing related courses.

#### Healthy Businesses

- 6 residents have successfully completed the first course, with established businesses ready to trade. The next course is due to commence in April.

#### Community Gardening

- 22 master gardeners have been trained, 4 food buddies and 17 referrals have been made to date.

#### Community Grants

- £21,000 has been awarded to 6 projects

#### Eat Well Croydon

- 40 businesses signed up



### 2. School Food Plan

- Fairchildes Primary School is one of 3 Food Flagship Schools
- Flagship schools have delivered 11 parent/carers healthy eating workshops
- 175 staff members (from 75 schools) have received food training
- All 11 caterers signed to agree to meeting School Food Standards in all schools

Fairchildes Primary – one of 3 Food Flagship schools



Improving lunchtimes

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

### Carers in Croydon

Carers are paramount to our health and social care economy; they help to support our vulnerable groups and they know the person they support best. Croydon Council are dedicated to providing support to carers to enable them to continue caring. Carers are people who provide unpaid support to a family member, neighbour or friend who would be unable to manage without that help.

In Croydon, we offer a free counselling service for anyone over 18 who is a carer. Run by Mind in Croydon, the service provides carers with up to six free counselling sessions with a trained counsellor. During this financial year, this service has delivered 612 sessions to 136 carers in Croydon. Call Mind on 020 8763 2064 if you would be interested in this support.

Croydon Council works in partnership with The Whitgift Foundation to run the Carers' Support Centre on George Street. This drop in centre holds a number of activity groups for carers, provides them with a place to relax in a friendly environment, information and advice, a carer assessment and sign posting to other services. So far in this financial year, the centre has provided 19,062 support sessions to carers.

If you are a carer and would like more information to support your role, call the Carers' Support Centre on 020 8649 9339, and select option 1. Alternatively, you can email [info@carersinfo.org.uk](mailto:info@carersinfo.org.uk) or visit [www.carersinfo.org.uk](http://www.carersinfo.org.uk)

### Latest News - Regeneration

#### Tech Hub

The works to transform the ground and first floor of Davis House into the new Tech Hub 'Tomorrow' are now complete. The £2m project backed by the council and the GLA has been on site since November last year, and completed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The space was designed by Area Squared, a creative office design firm who have transformed the council-owned office building into a state of the art co-working hub. The hub includes a public café and events space on the ground floor, with flexible office and working areas on the first floor. Over 200 desk spaces will be available.

Tech Leaders Capital, a leading specialist tech property firm who have taken on the lease to operate the hub, is now focusing on the operational set up before opening the space to tech businesses in April. A launch event is being planned for 27<sup>th</sup> April, with details to follow.

Tech Hub will offer training, courses and events alongside investor and demo days where budding businesses can meet potential investors, industrial partners and growth specialists. Tech Hub will reaffirm Croydon's position as London's most significant new tech cluster.

#### Meanwhile Uses

The Meanwhile Uses project on a vacant council-owned site at Reeves Corner started on site on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. This will site two new enterprises to help improve the vibrancy of the area. This includes a bike recycling enterprise, repairing disused bikes to sell on or give away to low income families, and a mushroom growing enterprise, collecting used coffee grounds to grow oyster mushrooms to sell on to businesses and residents locally.

The new workshops will be made from three recycled shipping containers which will be modified to provide two workshops, an office space and facilities. Four local NEET young people have been recruited to support the construction phase providing traineeship opportunities. The site will be ready for the new occupiers to move in by mid-June.

The Meanwhile Uses project is GLA MRF funded, with the aim to provide opportunities to local people in the way of jobs, training and volunteering, to improve community cohesion and to change perceptions locally.

#### Update on Local Plan

The consultation responses received in November and December are being considered now. I am grateful for the level of interest in this important document. Any changes required are being made now to Local Plan (both the Strategic Policies: Partial Review and the Detailed Policies and Proposals). Contact is also being made with representors where further



# Clr Alison Butler - Homes and Regeneration

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clarification is being made. Both the Strategic Policies: Partial Review and the Detailed Policies and Proposals will be reported to Cabinet in July.

## **New Addington Drop in**

The council is committed to delivering a new combined leisure and community centre in Central Parade, New Addington in the summer of 2018. This scheme offers a significant opportunity to provide a valuable new community facility, regenerate the area and improve the local economy

The new combined facility is currently designed to be over three floors with the proposed leisure element on the ground and first floors. This would offer the following facilities: 25m swimming pool, a learner pool, café, crèche, 4 court hall (with viewing gallery) offering the room to play badminton, basketball, five a side football, volleyball and other sports, a fitness suite, changing space, office space and storage. The community centre element, which would be located entirely on the second floor, would offer the following facilities: two large halls suitable for community events (such as the annual panto, a dance school, children's clubs and shows, wedding receptions etc.), or sports such as judo or zumba etc. This space would hold a demountable stage and have the ability to be formed into one large room capable of seating at least 300 people. The community area also provides for a series of smaller rooms which could be used for meeting and/or training space on a flexible basis. These multi-functional rooms could also be used as changing space.

Finally, consideration is being given to activating the rear elevation of the new centre with up to 8 single aspect 3 bedroom family homes. This aims to provide a residential frontage onto Chertsey Crescent and enables a small amount of family housing to be provided in area of high demand for family homes.

Local residents and businesses attended events on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Each event attracted about 80 people. The boards were left in the ex library until Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March. The questionnaire was also placed on line both for download and on line completion. It is thought that the proposals were well received and that residents were supportive of both the new facilities and their content.

Analysis of the questionnaires showed that 62% of attendees were from New Addington or Fieldway, with 32% of them using the current leisure centre each week and [49%] using the community centre each week. 64% of respondents either supported or strongly supported the proposed leisure facilities and 60% supported or strongly supported the new community element. This was matched with [55%] supporting or strongly supporting the potential new family housing. There were questions of detail around which sports and activities could occur within the centre, what prices would be and whether there would be performance style lighting and curtains in the main community hall. A few people were concerned about housing to the rear of the proposed scheme. However many appeared to consider this was a positive treatment for the flank wall. Some residents were concerned about the new

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building being surrounded by older buildings and hadn't understood that this would be the result of the Town and Village Green status.

There will be further community events on April 22nd and April 23<sup>rd</sup>, to enable residents and businesses to see how their comments have been addressed and to review the potential architectural treatment of the new facility. The project plan envisages consideration of a planning application for Phase 1 on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016 with a pre application visit to Planning Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

## Thornton Heath Regeneration Drop-in Events



On Saturday 27 February and Wednesday 2 March, the council held all day and evening drop in events at Thornton Heath Leisure Centre, focusing on the regeneration of Thornton Heath High Street and Brigstock Road.

Over 120 people attended the events to view, discuss and comment on design proposals for improving the Highs street and input into artists' initial ideas for wall art on a number of prominent flank walls.



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The improvements are part of the £2.7 million programme of investment in Thornton Heath to improve the High Street for residents, businesses and visitors.

If you were unable to attend the event but want to know more, plans and information displayed at the events are available to view online on the Council's web site, [www.croydon.gov.uk/thorntonheath](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/thorntonheath)

## Latest News - Homes

### TA to permanent event

The housing service recently held an event "TA to Perm" on 10 March 2016 in the BWH community space. The event was organised to encourage those households in the council's own property as temporary accommodation who are eligible in accordance with the allocation scheme to sign up to new tenancies for the properties. The council provides suitable accommodation from within its own housing stock to meet its obligation to accommodate households that are in priority need, in the first instance in temporary accommodation until these households reach their turn on the housing register for more secure long term tenancies.

The event by every measure was a success – despite the cold and wet weather, officers estimate that as many as 300 temporary accommodation tenants attended and the queue was nearly wrapped around BWH. 62 households were signed up to new secure tenancies on the day. Follow-up appointments were made for a further 100 who had arrived without the required full documentation, such as, forms of identification, copies of children's birth certificates, etc. Payments of £12,509.92 were received from these tenants who signed for their tenancy on the day to clear arrears of rent. Additional payments of £15,583 were also received from others, making a total payments received from the event £28,092.92. Many also agreed new payment plans to reduce their arrears of rent. All of these payments make an improvement to the income position of the housing revenue account.

Officers plan a formal debriefing session in April to pick up lessons learnt on the day and how future such events can be better organised. The event has demonstrated itself as a good way to achieve reductions in the number of households in council property as temporary accommodation and encourage rent payment. For many tenants the uncertainty of temporary accommodation is ended. It is therefore planned to repeat the event quarterly.

I also want to use this opportunity to say a big thank you to the officers in the various teams who worked hard together to make the event a success.

### Allocations scheme

Under the Housing Act 1996 a local authority must set out a housing allocations scheme explaining how it will assess housing applications and determine priority for the allocation of

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social housing. If we wish to make major changes to our allocations scheme we must consult on any proposed changes to anyone who is likely to be affected by the changes within a reasonable period.

We will therefore in April carry out consultation with housing applicants on the housing register, homeless households, Registered Providers with which the Council has nominations agreements, and other stakeholders to obtain their comments and feedback on the proposed changes.

Some of the main proposals include giving greater priority to homelessness prevention, increasing the current one year residency qualification to go on the housing register to three years and to introduce a choice-based lettings system to shift the onus of finding a home from the council onto the tenant.

In making these changes we want to empower applicants, by offering re-housing amidst a range of alternative housing options, choice and information which will enable them to make realistic decisions in relation to their future housing prospects

We want to encourage households to work with our Gateway and Housing Needs Service to prevent homelessness and to remove perverse incentives that may reward or incentivise homelessness thereby making the Scheme fairer for everyone.

We want to give priority to households who work with the Council to prevent their homelessness by accepting a prevention offer of alternative PRS accommodation, or are prepared to remain in their current accommodation (following negotiation) with their landlord. This will act to change behaviour, reduce demand from statutory homeless households and align the Council's policy to the outcomes it wants to achieve.

We plan to introduce a choice based lettings system where the Council will allocate social housing through an online bidding system. Applicants will have different levels of priority (i.e. currency to bid with), but everyone will be able to choose to make a bid on the properties available. This will enable all housing applicants to exercise choice about the property, area, community they want to live in, and thereby reduce the rate of refusals, reduce appeals and challenges, and help boost community cohesion.

We also plan to introduce the current residency qualification for social housing from 1 to 3 years. Current exceptions to this criterion will be retained including members of the armed and reserve forces, older people applying for sheltered housing, existing social housing tenant applying to live in Croydon through housing moves, and homeless households placed outside the borough in temporary accommodation.

Consultation will be carried out over 12 weeks period with a wide range of stakeholders and will include:

- A survey of applicants on the housing register.

- A mail shot to all tenants
- Public consultation meetings
- Choice based lettings demonstration sessions
- A stakeholders' consultation seminars and focus groups
- Display and information stands in Access Croydon
- Meetings with Voluntary Sector organisations and representatives.

### **Croydon launches a ground breaking housing fraud database**

The council's landlord licensing team is set up to raise standards in the local private rented sector. Croydon Council will become the first local authority to develop a council database that tracks housing fraud in both private and social rented housing.

From 31 March 2016, the council will start implementing the i-Latch system (3 year licence) to provide protection to prospective tenants and lettings agents. This new database will enable people to check the address of a property they have been offered to ensure that a) it is not a social housing property that is being offered as an illegal sub-let and b) that the property is licensed under the council's selective licensing scheme for all privately rented properties.

Any property searches flagged as unlicensed or illegally sublet will be sent automatically to council officers to start enquiries. Estate agents and prospective tenants will also know immediately to avoid using the property.

I recently spoke about this new initiative on national BBC radio saying: "Our landlord licensing scheme is already raising standards in the local property market, and this database will help give househunters and lettings agents extra peace of mind.

"This database will be a valuable addition to our work to highlight the many good landlords in Croydon and tackle the rogue ones, and we're very grateful for this Government grant." We expect that this database will prevent the illegal sub-letting of up to 12 social rented properties per year and help us to track down a significant number of the estimated 7,000 privately rented properties in Croydon for which we have not received a property licence application.

The council takes tackling housing tenancy fraud very seriously, including illegal sub-letting in our social housing stock, fraudulent right to buy and housing waiting list applications. The corporate anti-fraud team (CAFT) has two dedicated tenancy fraud officers who work very closely with housing needs teams to stop fraud in the housing sector. Since April 2015, they have recovered 15 properties, removed 8 families from our housing waiting list, removed 2 families from temporary accommodation and stopped 8 right to buy applications. Since August 2015, the housing standards team has been delivering a pilot project to check all temporary accommodation units for possible fraud or non-occupation. To date 48 rooms have been identified as either fraudulently occupied or empty.

### HOME SAFETY CHALLENGE VICTORY



A team representing the 1<sup>st</sup> New Addington Girl Guides have walked away as winners at Croydon's fourth annual all ages Family Safety Challenge quiz finals.

The challenge is run jointly with the council's housing department and was designed by the London Fire Brigade's 'Crossfire' team. It makes learning about all aspects of household safety both interesting and fun and covers a variety of topics including fire safety and first aid. Alongside the quiz, which includes questions on everything from fire escape plans and the recovery position, to internet safety and protecting against arson, there was also an emergency fire race, with competitors working against the clock to dress as fast as they could as if they had been woken by a fire alarm.

The challenge is growing in popularity every year, and the guides beat off stiff competition from 35 other teams in a packed Braithwaite Hall in the council's Clocktower arts complex. In total some 1,300 people of all ages have this year taken part in 60 community events as part of the project.

Fire safety is a serious matter – but we've managed to show how learning about it can be fun. It's been brilliant to see how many people have taken part in the challenge this year, and congratulations to the guides for walking away with the first prize.

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April 2016

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David Gill from London Fire Brigade said: “Having a plan for what to do in the case of a fire and knowing some basic first aid are all life-saving skills, and this challenge helps us to teach hundreds of people every year how to stay safe in their homes. It’s a great project and has undoubtedly helped prevent some potential tragedies.

“The aim of this is to illustrate that the awareness of safety in households is not always just the responsibility of the adults and that the whole family can work together to improve their awareness of safety issues.

The challenge is open to community groups based in or near any of Croydon’s larger council housing developments and it is planned to run again next year.