



**COUNCIL
AGENDA**
for the meeting
on
11 October 2021 at
6.30 pm

To: To All Members of the Council

Date: 1 October 2021

A meeting of the **COUNCIL** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Monday, 11 October 2021** at **6.30 pm** in **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

KATHERINE KERSWELL
Chief Executive
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Cliona May
Cliona.May@croydon.gov.uk
www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
1 October 2021

Residents are able to attend this meeting in person, however we recommend that you watch the meeting remotely via the following link:

<https://webcasting.croydon.gov.uk/croydon/meetings/13352>

If you would like to attend in person please note that spaces are extremely limited and are allocated on a first come first served basis. If you would like to attend in person please email democratic.services@croydon.gov.uk by 5pm the day prior to the meeting to register your interest.

The agenda papers for all Council meetings are available on the Council website www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

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AGENDA – PART A

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any Members.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 74)

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on the following dates as accurate records:

- (i) 25 January 2021
- (ii) 8 February 2021
- (iii) 8 March 2021

3. Disclosure of Interests

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality to the value of which exceeds £50 or multiple gifts and/or instances of hospitality with a cumulative value of £50 or more when received from a single donor within a rolling twelve month period. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Democratic Services representative at the start of the meeting. The Chair will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

4. Urgent Business (if any)

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. Appointments of Interim Statutory Chief Officers (Pages 75 - 78)

To consider the report of the Chief Executive.

6. Announcements

To receive Announcements, if any, from the Mayor, the Leader, Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer.

7. **Croydon Question Time** (Pages 79 - 82)
- a) **Public Questions (30 minutes)**
To receive questions from the public gallery and questions submitted by residents in advance of the meeting.
- b) **Leader and Cabinet Member Questions (105 minutes)**
To receive questions from Councillors.
8. **Member Petitions** (Pages 83 - 84)
To receive notice of petitions presented by Members on behalf of local residents.
9. **Maiden Speeches**
To hear maiden speeches from Councillors newly elected at the by election held on 6 May 2021. These will be heard in the following order:
- (i) Councillor Kola Agboola
 - (ii) Councillor Jade Appleton
 - (iii) Councillor Mike Bonello
 - (iv) Councillor Ola Kolade
 - (v) Councillor Louis Carserides
10. **Council Debate Motions**
To debate any motions submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.
11. **Recommendations of Cabinet or Committees to Council for decision- Part One**
To consider the recommendation made by Cabinet or Committees since the last ordinary Council meeting relating to the following matter:
- (i) *Members' Code of Conduct* – These reports are “to follow”.
- Please note:** This recommendation has been listed earlier in the agenda than the standard order outlined in Part 4A of the Constitution, as these recommendation needs to be considered prior to the subsequent item on the agenda, Revisions to the Council's Constitution.
12. **Revisions to the Council's Constitution**
To consider the report regarding the proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution. (*Report to follow*)
13. **Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report** (Pages 85 - 106)
To receive the annual report of Corporate Parenting Panel for 2020-2021.

14. Recommendations of Cabinet or Committees to Council for decision- Part Two (Pages 107 - 226)

To consider the recommendations made by Cabinet or Committees since the last ordinary Council meeting relating to the following matters:

- (i) *Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company*
- (ii) *Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Results*
- (iii) *Temporary appointments to the roles of Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education*
- (iv) *Recruitment and appointment of independent Chair of General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC)*

15. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

“That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.”

PART B

16. Recommendations of Cabinet or Committees to Council for decision - Part Two (Pages 227 - 232)

The Part B agenda contains one restricted appendix to the Recommendations in relation to the “*Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company*”. The substantive report is listed in the Recommendations from Cabinet on 12 July 2021 at Item 14 in the Part A agenda.

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Council

Meeting held on Monday, 25 January 2021 at 6.30 pm.
This meeting was held remotely; to view the meeting, please click [here](#).

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Maddie Henson (Chair);
Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Hamida Ali, Muhammad Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Leila Ben-Hassel, Sue Bennett, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttinger, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Luke Clancy, Chris Clark, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Mary Croos, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Mario Creatura, Nina Degrads, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Felicity Flynn, Clive Fraser, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Simon Hoar, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Stuart Millson, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Steve O'Connell, Oni Oviri, Ian Parker, Andrew Pelling, Jason Perry, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Helen Redfern, Scott Roche, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Andy Stranack, Gareth Streeter, Robert Ward, David Wood, Louisa Woodley and Callton Young

Apologies: Councillor Janet Campbell

PART A

1/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

2/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

3/21 **Announcements**

Madame Mayor

Madam Mayor, Councillor Maddie Henson, wished everyone present a happy New Year. Since the Council had last met, she had been working on three new fundraisers. One of which being Lighten up you Lockdown. This would be a one-hour session to teach techniques for coping with stress, finishing with a 10-15 minute hypnotherapy session. She said hypnotherapy helped her and her husband greatly during the early stages of giving birth. Secondly, as her last event as Mayor, she would be organising free online taster sessions working with Musical Bumps and Legacy. This was aimed at families with

young children and urged anyone to pass contact details of a group who may be interested in taking part.

In relation to Covid guidance, Madame Mayor urged everyone to obey the lockdown rules. A turning of the tide was beginning to be seen against the terrible pandemic, however still, too many people were becoming ill and tragically losing their life. She encouraged everyone to stay safe for the sake of their family, friends and neighbours and to stay at home.

The Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council echoed the reminder that everyone should follow the national lockdown restrictions. Infection rates were gradually seen to be reducing in London, but still remained high. There had recently been Members of the Council who had fallen ill during this time and she wished them a full and speedy recovery.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hamida Ali, reported a positive and constructive first meeting with Tony McArdle, Chair of the Improvement Panel introduced by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). She stated that Tony McArdle expected the Panel to be confirmed and formally announced by government shortly and they were preparing for their work with the council; the first piece of work being to review the council's submission request for a capitalisation direction. The Panel's terms of reference would be confirmed shortly, however it would function as non-statutory and advisory to the Secretary of State to provide assurance on Croydon's capacity to deliver.

4/21

Croydon Question Time

Public Questions

Madam Mayor explained that Croydon Question Time would commence with 30 minutes of public questions to the Leader and Cabinet Members. In accordance with advice from the Government and Public Health England, it was not possible to hold public meetings in the Town Hall. As a result, members of the public were unable to ask questions from the public gallery in the Council Chamber. Questions had been received by email up until 12 noon on Friday 22 January 2021. Public questions that were received of a purely factual or of a detailed nature would be given a written response within three weeks of the meeting.

Madam Mayor noted that there was a public question received from Jane Tucker relating to the reduction of social care packages, which could not be answered during this meeting due to Councillor Campbell's absence. Jane Tucker would be sent a full written response and the answer would be published on the council website.

Madam Mayor noted that there were a number of questions in relation to libraries which were currently subject to ongoing consultation and ensured

residents that those questions would be fed into the consultation.

Madam Mayor read a question from H. Lindsay:

“The total number of visits to Croydon libraries in 2015/16 was 1,951,000 and by 2019/20 had fallen to 1,465,000 a decrease of approximately 25% over the whole of Croydon. For Sanderstead library, the visits were 35,230 in 2015/16 and 35,222 in 2019/20, the only Croydon library with no decrease whatsoever.

Why is this factor being ignored?”

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration, Councillor Oliver Lewis, thanked H. Lindsay for his question and stated that they were currently in a statutory libraries consultation and he encouraged anyone with an interest in the matter to participate. In answer to the question, he said that factor was not being ignored and the number of visits to the libraries was a factor taken into account during the consultation. The figures for Sanderstead library in 2019/20 reflected an additional day of opening in June and July 2019 and additional visits could also be attributed due to Selsdon Library being closed for a period of refurbishment. Even accounting for the additional visits, visits to Sanderstead Library remained consistently low. He noted there were many other factors, as well as number of visits that were taken into account during the consultation.

Madam Mayor read a question from J. N. Gibbons:

“The library has space for other than the current activities and, is therefore capable, without extensive work of absorbing Library Plan proposals.

Why has this not been factored in?”

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that they were looking at the potential of the community running libraries at zero cost to the council. He encouraged communities to submit any plans or ideas for absorbing additional council services or activities into library buildings.

Madam Mayor read a question from M. Leach:

"Sanderstead library is on the Local List of buildings and structures within Croydon considered to have special local architectural or historic interest by the public and the Council. The garden has a preservation ordered tree and a memorial rose bed as well as a community wild flower garden.

Will any future proposal honour the commitment in the Conservation and Heritage Policy?"

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that heritage issues would be properly considered as part of the consultation as proposals were developed.

Madam Mayor read a question from J. Kempsall:

"The existing location occupies a central position in Sanderstead Ward and is served by a frequent [5/hour in each direction] service with stops right outside as well as being in walkable distance for much of the community.

Has this consideration been factored into the evaluation?"

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that accessibility and accessibility via public transport was being considered and would be taken into account in shaping the future proposals.

Madam Mayor read a question from A. Kennedy:

"The alternative library is given as Selsdon, 1.3 miles away. This is in fact 2 miles away with no direct bus service and will, therefore require a change of bus. Because of this, closure will encourage car use to access it as the only viable alternative transport option.

If Selsdon is considered an acceptable alternative, what assessment of transport modal change has been made and with what effect on traffic congestion and exhaust pollution?"

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that Selsdon Library was an alternative to Sanderstead Library. Throughout the consultation they were looking for proposals of community run models, in which case there would be no increase of travel if such a model was implemented. In the occurrence of an alternative model not being found, residents had the choice to access either Selsdon Library or any other library in the borough. The council encouraged residents to use public transport, practice active travel wherever possible and to minimise car journeys.

Madam Mayor read a question from A. Bell:

"The library has step free access for disabled and young mothers etc. which would make it impossible for these residents to access other library facilities easily.

What assessment has been made to ensure such groups are not disadvantaged?"

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that whilst much of Sanderstead Library was accessible, it was important to consider that the toilets and baby changing facilities were only accessible using the stairways. It was important that public facilities, and all facilities within those buildings in use by the public, were accessible to all members of the public. Selsdon Library, and all other libraries in the borough, were compliant with disability legislation. As part of the consultation the survey asked residents for information on accessibility, transport and their potential impact from the proposals. He encouraged anyone impacted to take part in the survey and

responses would be reviewed.

Madam Mayor read a question from C. Hibberd:

“The library is of community value because it is the direct provider of a number of services, which have social, and community value, such as access to information and literacy support, promoting social cohesion residents need, closer to where they live.

To maintain these key objectives of the Library Plan what alternative facilities are proposed for Sanderstead residents?”

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that they were consulting on a range of options, including potential future use of Sanderstead Library, and encouraged residents to put forward any ideas of community models of ownership and operation that may continue some of those services. The financial challenges the council faced meant that they had to reduce spending across services. If no alternative model was found, important services would be maintained in other libraries across the borough. He encouraged anyone who had an interest in the library service to participate in the consultation and make their views known.

Madam Mayor read a question from J. Simpson:

“It is the only publicly owned community facility in Sanderstead and could form a library hub and be a centre for more services thereby reducing costs as set out by the council’s own policy regarding hubs.

Has this been considered and if not, why?”

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that the challenge for the council at this time was to drastically reduce spending across a range of council services. The consultation was seeking to identify ways in which libraries could be run at zero cost to the council. They encouraged any residents to submit ideas on how that could potentially be achieved.

Madam Mayor read a question from D. King:

“Sanderstead Ward has a higher rate of people over the age of 65 than Croydon as a whole, so residents should not be further inconvenienced by its closure. Elderly & Vulnerable residents are already socially isolated and this would impact on their health and wellbeing.

Has this been taken into consideration and with what conclusion?”

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that there would be an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the consultation. There were many older residents who were actively engaged and connected in Croydon and the council would encourage them to take part in the consultation. In a situation where no viable or cost neutral options were put

forward for Sanderstead Library, residents would continue to have access to library services elsewhere in the borough. Croydon would continue to provide an adequate and statutory library service going forward and the council would ensure they provided the best service they were able to provide given the financial resources available.

Madam Mayor read a question from J. Newberry:

“Six local schools and four local nurseries have made regular use of the library. If Selsdon is considered an acceptable alternative:

- a] what investigations have been made as to whether these organisations will be willing to travel further or not,
- b] how their journeys will be made, and
- c] what effect the additional journeys will have on traffic congestion and exhaust pollution?”

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration encouraged all users of Sanderstead Library to participate in the consultation and make their views known. Residents should continue to make use of a continued provision at Sanderstead Library if a cost neutral option was brought forward as part of the consultation, or they should make use of other library services in the borough. In the latter case, he encouraged residents to make that journey in environmentally friendly modes of transport.

Madam Mayor read a question from Michael Seabrook:

“What is the situation with Broad Green library. Are you going to close it, are you going to propose involvement with the community and are you going to sell the building?”

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration stated that the consultation on the future of library services was currently live, including Broad Green Library. Through that process, they hoped that residents would come forward with community run models of ownership and operation that were cost neutral to the council. If that was not possible, the council would have to review the next steps which could result in a library closure.

Madam Mayor read a question from Sean Creighton:

“In view of your administration’s renewed commitment to openness, transparency, listening and engagement, please explain why several Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs are not responding to emails and detailed submissions for consideration in relation to papers being considered by Cabinet and Committees, In particular please explain why I have received no replies to the following:

- (1) An email to you and Stuart King sent on 19 January in relation to concerns about the ‘Savings’ Consultation.

(2) An email sent to Jane Avis on 16 January in relation to the Revised Selective Licensing Scheme, HMOs, PRS and Planning, PRS and COVID, PRS and Refuse and Fly-tipping.

(3) Emails sent to the Chair and members of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 3 December and emails sent to the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 9 December in relation to the Scrutiny Review of Report In the Public Interest and PWC review of Brick by Brick and other companies.

(4) An email sent to Debbie Jones on 13 January, on the suggestion of Councillor Stuart King, in relation to schools and COVID.”

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Mr. Creighton for his question and for raising the issue of transparency and how important it was for people to have access to information. She apologised that he had not received a response to his emails referenced in the question and she would alert colleagues. Next month there would be more information for Council to consider, following the Cabinet meeting on 18 February 2021. This would bring reports on the future of Brick by Brick and the matters of the council's assets, and looking ahead further to March 2021, Budget Cabinet. The Leader encouraged Mr. Creighton, and any other residents who were interested, to read the reports published as part of the agendas to those meetings which would provide detailed information on the matters of the council.

Questions to the Leader

Councillor Jason Perry, Leader of the Opposition, welcomed Tony McArdle to Croydon Council and hoped he would contribute a greater sense of direction for the organisation. On 22 February 2021, My London published an article in which Councillors Newman and Hall gave their views on the bankruptcy of the council. Councillor Jason Perry stated that the article failed to mention that it was the Labour Administration's Cabinet who stacked up £1.5 billion of council debt, equating to: £15,000 per hour since the Administration took office, the loan of £200 million to the council's failing developer, the reduction of reserves to £7 million and the bankruptcy of the borough seen by the issuing of two Section 114 (S114) notices. Instead of taking responsibility, the Administration chose to blame the government and Covid, despite the unfavourable Report in the Public Interest (RIPI) from the independent auditor which concluded otherwise. Councillor Jason Perry asked the Leader why she endorsed the disingenuous venture of Councillors Newman and Hall into the public arena.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the information given by Councillor Jason Perry was either inaccurate or lacking context. The Labour Administration inherited £720 million of council debt from the outgoing Conservative Administration in 2014. Secondly, she highlighted that two-thirds of the total borrowing was based on capital programmes such as infrastructure, which included schools and housing.

In his supplementary, Councillor Jason Perry stated that the RIPI clearly referred to corporate blindness and failed transformation projects, whilst the Administration complained of the government and Covid. He said that the council could not move forward whilst it allowed disgraced councillors to publically brief against the Administration and he asked the Leader why she allowed that to happen. In response, the Leader stated that the Administration had acted swiftly and decisively to address the issues raised in the RIPI, which was published in the first formal day in her position. Since publication, action plans had been developed; there had been consultation with the non-executive committees; an updated comprehensive improvement plan had been developed which included over 400 recommendations; and a comprehensive submission to government requesting the important capitalisation direction to stabilise the budget had been written. She stated that Councillor Jason Perry was not focussing challenge on the relevant tasks at hand for the council.

Councillor Jamie Audsley asked what the strategy was for negotiating with central government to ensure the success of the Croydon Renewal Plan.

In response, the Leader stated that the success of improvement, particularly the bid for the capitalisation direction, was the priority of Administration and to tackle the challenges ahead directly in an open manner. This tasking had been supported by other organisations advising and assisting Croydon, including the Local Government Association (LGA) and Camden Council. As the Leader of the Administration, she approved and would present the submission to the Secretary of State. The renewal plan incorporated cultural, behavioural and organisational change where the council was undergoing continued engagement with staff as part of the broader work ahead.

In his supplementary, Councillor Jamie Audsley commended the strong set of relationships displayed. He asked the Leader what she thought the Opposition's role was in the process, bearing in mind that it was that party who held the majority in central government. He noted that the Leader of the Opposition had been a member of Croydon Council since 1994 and his political tactics were dated and unconstructive. The Leader replied that she believed and expected the Leader of the Opposition to join in their call for financial assistance in the interests of the residents of Croydon.

In reference to a scrutiny meeting held in February 2020, **Councillor Robert Ward** stated that the CEO of Brick by Brick said that he could not recall an example where the company had been asked a question by the sole shareholder, the council, which had not been answered. The former Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services, Councillor Alison Butler, at the time had indicated agreement with those comments. Councillor Robert Ward secondly stated that the original £30 million cost of Fairfield Halls appeared to have doubled. He asked whether Councillor Alison Butler had been asking the right questions in her former role, or if her questions were not being answered and no subsequent further action was taken. He asked the Leader if any of those cases should result in the removal of the whip from Councillor Alison Butler and that she be advised to resign as a councillor.

In response, the Leader stated that the Administration was focussed on securing the assistance needed to stabilise the budget, part of which was responding to the recommendations to the RIPI. Some of which alluded to how assertive the council was as the sole shareholder in some of the company structures. Speaking as the Chair of the Shareholder and Investment Board, she said that the focus of the Board was on the future of Brick by Brick. She noted that some of the issues Councillor Robert Ward mentioned were being addressed through discrete pieces of work, including members having received information on a value for money review looking at the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls.

In his supplementary, Councillor Robert Ward referenced an occasion during a scrutiny committee where he said that Councillor Oliver Lewis stated that the cost of Fairfield Halls was £42.6 million. He said that Councillor Oliver Lewis claimed this was because it was a cost through Brick by Brick and bared no cost to the council or the Croydon taxpayer because the money was found by releasing the value of development potential of the land. Councillor Robert Ward asked if in light of those past comments, if Councillor Oliver Lewis should be removed from his Cabinet position. In response, the Leader said that the reviews surrounding the issues raised would answer a number of the questions asked. The RIPI raised questions about how the council had ensured it was discharging its stakeholder responsibilities in relation to its company interests, and as a result of the specific work of the strategic review of Brick by Brick and other council companies, there were external auditors conducting the value for money review. The council would reflect on that work, once completed, to understand what needed to be done and learnt going forward.

Councillor Clive Fraser asked the Leader to reflect on the Administration's ongoing commitments to the Governance Review implementation, and the associated implementation panel, in the context of her prior involvement in the cross party working group.

In response, the Leader said that both groups were committed to looking at the council's governance in their 2018 manifestos. It was important work to look at the experience of all councillors in discharging their role, particularly following the survey conducted which brought to light issues experienced by backbench councillors. A paper on the agenda would address the pace of the implementation, affected by the financial challenges of the council with the range of work taking place at the time, which would be concerning to some councillors. They were keen to make progress on the Governance Review recommendations, but it was noted that it was also important that the review was being seen together in the context of the range of improvement work the council was undergoing. The recommendations from the governance review would be rigorously monitored in their delivery and it was important the improvements were achieved.

Questions to Cabinet Members

Pool 1

Madame Mayor opened the first pool of questions to Cabinet Members. Cabinet Members Councillors Stuart King, Muhammad Ali and Callton Young were invited to make their announcements, to which there were none.

In reference to the forward strategy for capital, **Councillor Jason Cummings** said that the Administration had made it clear that the council intended to continue to lend money to Brick by Brick despite its poor financial performance. He said that in previous reports to Council it had been stated that the company was in default on its current loans and Councillor Jason Cummings asked if this was still the case. Councillor Stuart King, Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal, responded that the matter of Brick by Brick's future support and situation in relation to the loans would be reported to February Cabinet which would provide detailed information.

In his supplementary, Councillor Jason Cummings stated that the loans to Brick by Brick he was referring to were of the value of around £200 million and he asked if they were still in default of those. In response, the Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal confirmed they were in default on some of the loans. He stated that the important element to answer was the details of active management being undertaken by the council through the newly appointed directors to the Board, through work by both Members and officers, to protect the taxpayers of Croydon. The report to Cabinet would be subject to scrutiny and an appropriate forum to respond to concerns about the complex matters.

Councillor Robert Canning described the excellent work of the council's graffiti removal team in the past. In light of the financial challenges for the council, he asked what arrangements were now in place for the removal of graffiti in Waddon and across the borough.

Councillor Muhammad Ali, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon, replied that last year the council streamlined its graffiti removal service and since December 2020 that service has been undertaken by the council's highway contractor FM Conway. The council priority was the removal of offensive graffiti on council land, including inflammatory words or images, any forms of attack on an individual group of people, graffiti containing swear words and graffiti containing sexually explicit obscene words or images.

In his supplementary, Councillor Canning asked what advice he would give to residents who saw graffiti in their street that was not racist or offensive and wanted it removed, and secondly, if they were able to clean it themselves if it was on council property. In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon stated that if the graffiti fitted the description of offensive graffiti, it should be reported to the Love Clean Streets smartphone app, attaching a photo, which would be forwarded to the council contractor. For offensive graffiti on private land, the council's enforcement team would work to contact the landowner to ensure the removal of the graffiti as quickly as possible. Councillor Muhammad Ali stated that under the new service, they would not be able to prioritise removal of non-offensive graffiti at this time.

Councillor Gareth Streeter asked what proactive measure had been taken to engage with Cypress Primary School during the recent Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN) consultation.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon stated that all relevant local stakeholders were informed of the consultation. The Traffic Management Advisory Committee had made a commitment to continually engage with all local stakeholders and a decision about the future of the scheme would be made in due course.

In his supplementary, Councillor Gareth Streeter referred to a Sunday Telegraph article which described the stress and pain that staff of Cypress Primary School were experiencing within the LTN in their area, to the point of considering resigning. Croydon needed good teachers and they should not be driven away. It was well documented that the LTN scheme had made life unbearable for many residents and had impacted business at an already difficult time. He asked for reassurance that the Cabinet Member would listen, support residents and scrap the LTN scheme. In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon told Council the record on the School Streets scheme for Croydon. The council had implemented 26 School Streets, one of the top boroughs in London, which ensured children had safer access and cleaner streets and council had always engaged with schools in the borough. The decision of the LTN in question would be made in due course and the comments of Councillor Gareth Street would be noted and taken into consideration.

Councillor Leila Ben- Hassel stated that local government had experienced chronic underfunding from central government over the past 10 years which had particularly affected the council's ability to manage the growing demand on adult's and children's social care services. As a result, many local authorities had turned to develop a portfolio of investments to generate revenue. She asked whether any of Croydon Council's investments over this period returned any revenue to the general fund. Considering the known areas of growth the council would face in the coming years, she secondly asked if the council would consider an investment portfolio going forward as a tangible course of action if the council were to take a most robust approach whilst learning lessons from the RIPI.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal stated that the council's investments directly secured £1.7 million from Croydon Park Hotel; £2.5 million from the Colonnades Leisure Park; and £400,000 each from Vulcan Way and Purely Way, which in one year delivered approximately £5 million for the council. However since those gains, the Croydon Park Hotel had gone into administration and as a result were unable to make their rent payments to the council. The RIPI clearly identified the need for the council to better manage its corporate investments, where past failings were evident in the issues the council faced following the hotel's collapse, which the council would address. The Cabinet Member confirmed there were no plans for any further investment portfolios. He further highlighted that recent changes to the

Public Work Loans Board (PWLB) meant that it was less likely that local authorities were likely to use the PWLB for investment for yield purposes.

In her supplementary, Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel raised concern over the growing number of households in temporary accommodation and asked the Cabinet Member to provide an update on whether it would be possible to repurpose the Croydon Park Hotel to temporary and emergency accommodation. In response, the Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal explained that after the Croydon Park Hotel went into administration, the council began to explore what alternative means were available to put the asset into productive use. An option considered was whether the hotel could be repurposed to provide emergency and temporary accommodation. A business case had been developed by officers in the council, however following a detailed review it was confirmed that it was not affordable given the further capital investment and lead in period required. The Cabinet Member advised that a paper would report to Cabinet in February 2021 detailing alternative proposals for the future of that site.

Councillor Andy Stranack made a Point of Order in relation to comments made in the press by the former Leader and former Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources in regard to investment yields. The Monitoring Officer advised this did not qualify as a Point of Order. The Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal agreed to respond to the comment and stated that the Colonnades Leisure Park continued to generate a net surplus return to the council, along with Vulcan Way and Purley Way. He went on to clarify that Croydon Park Hotel was making an annual net return to the council when the rental income was being paid, but over the past 12 months, that rental income had not been paid which lost the net contribution and was costing the council money due to securing and insuring the site.

Councillor Luke Clancy asked how much revenue the council was expecting to generate from the Automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR) cameras planned to operate at the Crystal Palace and South Norwood Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN), and secondly, whether that figure was included in the borough wide projection 2021/22 budget for expected revenue from ANPR of just over £5 million.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon replied that it was his opinion that the specific part of this question would not be appropriate to answer as it was based on a decision that had not yet been made.

In his supplementary, Councillor Luke Clancy stated that the sum generated from the LTN in question was over £1.9 million per year and noted that in some calculations this could almost be doubled. He went on to say that the council could expect to generate several millions of pounds in the coming year on ANPR, recognising that the revenue generated would be used in accordance with relevant spending regulations, and he asked how the public would believe this scheme was more than just a money-maker for the council. He stated that this would result in general funds being removed from the department to help balance the budget because additional ring-fenced money

generated would allow such process. In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon stated that the money generated would be automatically be assigned on road traffic management spending. He added that further detail on these issues had previously been answered at past Cabinet and scrutiny meetings and it was difficult to comment on a scheme which was yet to be agreed.

Councillor Karen Jewitt asked for an update on recycling statistics in the borough. In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon firstly thanked frontline workers within the council and Veolia for their excellent job maintaining essential waste and recycling services in the face of many challenges through the pandemic, particularly staff affected by Covid. The Cabinet Member went on to explain that in terms of recycling waste, according to the most recent data from the financial year 2019/20, Croydon had achieved a recycling rate of 49.22%. Since the service change in September 2018, landfill waste had reduced and recycling rates had increased making Croydon one of the top six performing boroughs in London and above the national average for recycling rates. This had contributed to the service being shortlisted for two national awards and the Cabinet Member noted that the credit must go to the residents of Croydon.

In her supplementary, Councillor Karen Jewitt stated that residents were active and involved in reporting fly tipping and missed bin collections to ward councillors and the council. She asked what more could residents do to help address the fly tipping problem and how could the council do more to support that effort. In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon agreed that the community had a role to play in improving services and reporting issues to quickly rectify issues and help the council better manage contractor performance. Over 95% of fly tips were removed within one working day of notification, which was greatly supported by resident reporting through the Love Clean Streets smartphone app. The Cabinet Member explained that the council was serious about enforcement and reassured that the efforts were not only towards the removal of fly tipping, but identifying the minority of people who were involved in the criminal act.

Councillor Michael Neal asked if there had been any evidence gathered to show that the introduction of low emission parking permits had improved the local air quality.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon stated that it was important to take into account the various policy measures in relation to addressing air pollution and climate change, to which this was just one. It should be noted that the positive impact of those policies would not be seen overnight, but there was constant review on how the policies were impacting and achieving some of the key policy objectives.

In his supplementary, Councillor Michael Neal stated that some studies referenced by the council in relation to the low emission parking permits were not related to Croydon and he asked why they were being rolled out. In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon said that he had

established why, which was to encourage people to change their behaviour and move energy production away from fossil fuels to combat the effects of climate change and pollution. These policies were backed up by national government and the Mayor of London.

Councillor Robert Canning stated that following the onset of Covid pandemic in 2020, Croydon Council quickly provided assistance to households who had challenges paying their council tax. He asked if there were any plans to continue any kind of assistance in the next financial year.

Councillor Callton Young, Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance, agreed that the council had acted quickly in 2020 to allow residents to defer their council tax instalments by two months as an early fiscal reaction. In addition, the council used its discretionary powers, under Section 12a of the Local Government Finance Act, and announced its approval of a new emergency scheme to support residents' payment of council tax in 2021. This was funded by a £4.3 million Council Tax Hardship Fund financed the MHCLG. A further grant of £5.2 million for the same purposes had been provided by MHCLG to the council and would be implemented in 2021, in accordance with the rules of the grant funding to helping vulnerable residents financially impacted by Covid. The Cabinet Member informed Council there was a long standing council tax support scheme in place available to any Croydon resident who was in receipt of low or no earning and was facing difficulty paying council tax. This was planned to continue and was means tested.

In his supplementary, Councillor Robert Canning commended the council tax support which had been made available and asked the Cabinet Member for further details on how successful the measures were by sharing the take-up of support. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance stated there 3,381 residents had benefitted from deferring council tax instalments for two months in 2021. There were 19,625 transactions in relation to council tax payments in the previous year and the council paid £2.2 million. There was a remaining £2.1 million which would be paid before the end of the financial year. In relation to the council tax scheme, the council paid £33.5 million to 2,820 working age claimants and 7,888 pension age claimants. He concluded that overall, the uptake was positive and had helped vulnerable residents.

Councillor Vidhi Mohan stated that over the next four years the Administration would have to borrow £150 million to simply balance the budget, which would cost £11 million per annum in loan interest. He asked the Cabinet Member which services would be cut and how many jobs would be lost just to service the debt generated from the loan.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance stated that the specific answer to that question was not possible to provide at that stage as they were yet to secure the capitalisation direction from MHCLG. He said that the Members of the Council of both political groups should work together in finding ways to minimise job losses.

In his supplementary, Councillor Vidhi Mohan described to the Cabinet Member what services £11 million can buy the council if it was not used to purely service debt. The five libraries in Croydon had a £250,000 annual operating cost, and additionally if the council wanted to reinvest in the five buildings, the total cost would be £700,000. He asked the Cabinet Member to tell residents and staff how their services would be affected and how many would lose their jobs. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance stated that the Administration had inherited a debt of £740 million when they came into power in 2014, accounting for half of the current total debt, and added that all councils financially operated with debt. Croydon Council was currently in a financial crisis and there were tough decisions to be made which the Administration would consult on. This process had already started and at the end of that process they would duly appraise the impacts.

Pool 2

Madam Mayor opened the second pool of questions to Cabinet Members. Cabinet Member Councillors Oliver Lewis and Alisa Flemming were invited to make their announcements.

Councillor Oliver Lewis, Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration, reminded residents watching that the statutory consultation on the future of library services in Croydon had begun and he encouraged anyone with an interest to participate. Throughout that process they hoped to establish some community run models which were cost-neutral to the council. The Cabinet Member updated Council on the leisure contract and explained that they had applied for the recently established UK Active Fund for leisure providers, which would help mitigate costs for centres and leisure venues, and he would provide a further update on the response from the fund.

Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, said her vote of thanks to Nick Pendry, the departing Director of Children's Social Care, who was part of the Croydon's Ofsted journey from the beginning. She praised his fantastic work supporting the team throughout that journey to embed systemic practice model to children's social care and secure the 'Good' Ofsted rating. The Cabinet Member welcomed Roisin Madden as his successor and looked forward to working with her.

Councillor Jason Cummings stated that a significant number of employees within the children's services remit had either already lost their job, or may as well lose them now because of the council's financial position. He noted that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning sat on the committee that agreed the severance package that was paid to the former Chief Executive, to which she voted in favour. He asked the Cabinet Member how that financial package was justified.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning stated that she was not able to comment on the content of that meeting in

question. She noted that any supplementary information relating to that meeting would need to be approved by the Monitoring Officer.

In his supplementary, Councillor Jason Cummings dismissed that he was asking for any details of the package and asked again, for what he considered as non-confidential, why the Cabinet Member thought the financial package was justified. In response, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning stated that in order to fulfil that information request she would need to go into confidential information which she was not able to publically discuss. She said that if this answer was not satisfactory, in the next instance the Monitoring Officer should be called to comment.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the meeting in question was held in private session and therefore confidential.

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that nearly 10 years had passed since the East Croydon Master Plan proposed a pedestrian link from Chilton Road to East Croydon Station and the McAlpine contractor had started construction on the Morello Cherry Orchard Road site. Considering those factors, he asked what progress had been made with Network Rail and Govia Thameslink Railway to move the porta cabins to ensure that pedestrian access was open once the new residential buildings were completed in two years' time.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that it was important for both residents of Addiscombe and the Town Centre that the pedestrian bridge was completed. He understood that council officers were in contact with Network Rail officials and he had spoken to Sarah Jones MP. He hoped that the combination of these would increase the Network Rail view of importance of this work and they would do what they could to facilitate the requirements.

Councillor Stuart Milson asked the Cabinet Member which of the priority one and priority two issues identified within the external audit report in relation to parks health and safety did he find most concerning.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that park health and safety was no longer part of his portfolio, however at that time he said he found the repairs to play equipment in playgrounds concerning. He had worked with officers to resolve those issues as soon as they arose. At times, there were difficulties in terms of supply chains of importing parts to repair bespoke equipment, which could often be costly. He said he took health and safety very seriously when his role covered that remit.

Councillor Muhammad Ali, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon, whose portfolio covered this service, stated that health and safety was a primary concern. They had begun taking feedback on savings proposals for parks, and as part of that, the council would be engaging and working with local residents and Friends of Parks to strive to make parks more accessible and secure.

In his supplementary, Councillor Stuart Milson stated that the audit would have

taken place whilst parks health and safety was within Councillor Oliver Lewis' remit. The audit found three priority one issues and four priority two issues, which included fundamental issues of there being no overall strategy, missing risk assessments and missing fire risk assessments still outstanding. He asked how the Cabinet Member could be fulfilling his role if they were not aware of these details in an audit report. In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon confirmed that he had seen the report and discussed the findings with council officers in terms of making sure there was an overarching strategy for managing parks. There would be a piece of work on how parks would be managed going forward once feedback had been gathered from local residents. Health and safety would be one of the key issues which would be addressed by the strategy.

Councillor Pat Clouder stated that Covid had an enormous impact on Croydon's young people which included, in her view, the government's shocking and chaotic handling of exam results in August 2020. She recognised and commended the hard work and care from school staff, social workers, youth workers and everyone who had supported young people through this difficult time. She asked the Cabinet Member for an update on the present situation of schools.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning thanked Croydon head teachers of both primary, secondary schools and special schools for the tremendous effort ensuring young people were still receiving the support they required. She said that schools had been open since March 2020 and a huge amount of work had been completed to ensure that school buildings were Covid safe and to also facilitate online teaching. They were currently undertaking a check to find out how many young people in the borough did not have access to a laptop and were not able to access one of the government schemes. They were also currently working in conjunction with Sarah Jones MP, who was leading a campaign to refurbish laptops, and local businesses to provide devices to families in need. The council had particularly focussed on one-to-one support to young people who were cared for by the local authority. The Cabinet Member said she would be holding a briefing with all Members to give an overview on the work that had taken place within specific wards and schools.

Councillor Stuart Millson asked the Cabinet Member to specify the weaknesses in the agreement between the council and Brick by Brick that were identified by the internal audit report into the Fairfield Halls delivery and what he would be doing to address those.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that there were a number of recommendations made in that report specifically around governance. He said that the capital development of Fairfield Halls was never part of his portfolio, however he was a part of the culture side of the agreement and championed securing a world class heritage and restoration of the building, which was achieved. When it was safe to do so, it was important Croydon worked with the operator to ensure the delivery of high quality arts and entertainment in Croydon Town Centre.

In his supplementary, Councillor Stuart Millson said he welcomed high quality arts to the borough. He stated that the Cabinet Member's position seemed weak in his suggestion that he had no involvement in the capital development when in fact he was part of the Cabinet who delivered the venue. At the General Purposes and Audit Committee on 14 January 2020, the Head of Internal Audit for Croydon Council suggested that the approach with Brick by Brick of there being no formal contract or conditions in place relating to the quality or deadlines was highly unconventional and he was not aware of that being used for other delivery in Croydon. Councillor Stuart Millson said that if the Cabinet Member was interested in Fairfield Halls becoming a top venue, then he had to have been interested in the key details on how the building was delivered to the best standard. With this history, he asked how residents could have confidence in him to deliver the Borough of Culture programme in 2023. In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that it was important to learn from the arrangements of the capital delivery of Fairfield Halls, which was a process currently being undertaken by the Administration.

Councillor Clive Fraser referred to Paragraph 4.2, School Place Planning, of the Education Estates Strategy report on Page 21 of the Agenda, which stated that pupil projection indicated sufficiency of mainstream school places for both primary and secondary schools for the next three years. He asked the Cabinet Member to comment on the reasons for that.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning stated that they would be discussing that report in detail later in the meeting. She explained that the council had based its school place sufficiency for the local area on birth rate projections from the Greater London Authority (GLA), demographic affects from big planning developments and took into account in-year transfers. For some schools there was now a 7% surplus rate, following years of averaging 5%.

In his supplementary, Councillor Clive Fraser asked if the capital investment since 2014 contributed to that outcome, and if so, he asked for more detail about that investment into the creation of school places. In response, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning stated that since 2014 they have had a mixture of free schools delivered. They were continuing to look at inward and outward migration of school places and over the next few years were looking to develop a more detailed SEND strategy, which would bring into focus any further provision of places and continue wider discussion.

Councillor Stuart Millson asked if the Cabinet Member was aware of the conflict of interest of the Executive Director of Place continuing to chair meetings of the Fairfield Halls Delivery Board after her becoming the Director of Brick by Brick. He secondly asked, if the previous was true, why he allowed the appointment to take place. He stated that this was a priority one issue from the audit into the Fairfield Halls delivery and this happened while Councillor Oliver Lewis was the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that it was important to learn lessons from the advice given in the audit report. The Administration was committed and focussed in getting the governance arrangements right going forward.

In his supplementary, Councillor Stuart Millson stated that his previous question was not answered and he asked the Cabinet Member if he was aware of the conflict of interest, and if so, why he allowed the appointment. In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that the appointment to Brick by Brick was not within his remit or power. He reiterated that it was important to get the governance arrangements right going forward and learn the lessons from the report.

Councillor Chris Clark asked for an update on the latest uses of Fairfield Halls during the recent lockdown.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that most recently it was used as a test and vaccination site in the push to overcome Covid.

In his supplementary, Councillor Chris Clark described that residents were keen to see the Fairfield Halls, a centre of cultural excellence in Croydon, and asked when it would be able to re-open safely and for the public to attend events. In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration agreed that they were all keen to see the re-opening and audiences to flock to the venue for top quality entertainment. In recent weeks, tickets went on sale for events later in the year and they hoped that customer confidence would remain high. The council would support the operator to open the venue in a safe and profitable manner.

In reference to the question asked to the Leader earlier in the meeting, relating to a scrutiny meeting held in February 2020, **Councillor Robert Ward** stated that Councillor Oliver Lewis said that the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls would cost £42.6 million at zero cost to the council or Croydon taxpayers because the money had been found by releasing the value of the development potential of the land. He asked the Cabinet Member if he stood by that explanation and the sum of £42.6 million.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that the sum quoted was what he was told at that time in February 2020. Since, there was an issue for Brick by Brick about how they brought the development forward in terms of their internal finances. Additionally, it was important that the council found the real figure of the true cost of the Fairfield Halls refurbishment and what caused the issues with the progress of development of the site.

In his supplementary, Councillor Robert Ward asked if a sum nearing £1 million was paid to BHLive in liquidated damages. He said that if that was the case, this would have been a direct result of the failure to deliver which was

part of the Culture, Leisure and Sport portfolio. In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration said that some liquidation damages were paid to BHLive as there were issues that had implications for them.

Councillor Toni Letts stated that the former award winning Planning Department was currently under tremendous pressure, caused both from the pandemic and staff working from home. The council's financial position had also meant that a number of staff had left the council. She asked what the Cabinet Member could do to improve the services within the Planning Department to ensure a greater turnaround of applications, whilst ensuring that the health and wellbeing of the staff was protected under those conditions. Councillor Letts gave her thanks to the staff in the Planning Department for their hard work.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration stated that he recognised pressure had built up in the Development Management Department within the council. This had been two-fold pressure; an increase in applications alongside resourcing pressures. In response the council had moved staff from Spatial Planning into Development Management to try and work down the backlog in cases, which had so far made some impact and they hoped would reduce the impact in coming weeks. Staff would continue to work remotely until it was safe to return to the office.

Pool 3

Madam Mayor opened the third pool of questions to Cabinet Members. Cabinet Member Councillors Jane Avis, David Wood and Manju Shahul-Hameed were invited to make their announcements.

Councillor Jane Avis, Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services, informed Council about the prosecution of Anthony Roy at Croydon Crown Court the previous Friday, published in national newspapers, who had been convicted of failing to apply to Croydon Council's borough wide landlord licensing scheme and breaking the council prohibition order against renting out a flat to a lone tenant. The 'flat' in question was a converted former bank vault and inspectors found category one hazards relating to fire safety, lighting and excess heat. Following the ruling, the rogue landlord was on the Mayor of London's rogue landlord register and the council were applying to the MHCLG's national register.

Councillor David Wood, Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Resilience, told Members about the annual Holocaust Memorial Day event due to take place virtually at 12 noon on Wednesday 27 January 2021. The event would be broadcast on the council's website and speakers included Madam Mayor, colleagues from the Croydon Synagogue and Mr. Sok Din who survived the Cambodian Genocide. He thanked the organisers for putting together the incredible event in the challenging circumstances.

Councillor Shahul-Hameed, Cabinet Member for Economy, Recovery and Skills, updated Members on the business grant distribution. She explained that

the government had announced a number of different Covid support grants to support businesses. Each grant was for different business types and based on specific periods of time relating to national or local restrictions. Businesses had been using one simple form to apply for the 10 grants available, including the local restriction support grants for the mandatory closure of business and a separate form for the additional restriction grant. In respect of the local restriction grant, the council had issued 1344 businesses which totalled £2.41 million. Phase One of the additional restriction grant distributed £490,000 to 264 businesses and Phase Two of the discretionary grant was due to open the following week. This would widen the eligibility criteria to home based businesses and businesses outside hospitality, retail and the leisure sector. Additionally as part of Phase Two, there was a new business, growth and innovation grant fund; a scoping and implementation of a new business support programme; and an evening and night time grant fund.

Councillor Lynne Hale stated there were many vulnerable residents in Croydon who from time to time needed support and said it was fantastic that the borough had a long standing Welfare Rights Team which helped residents claim benefits they were entitled to as well as generating income for the council. She asked if the Cabinet Member agreed it was a value service to residents.

In agreement, the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services said the Welfare Rights Team was incredible and it had been utilised by residents. Unfortunately due to the council's financial situation, that provision would be integrated into other services and additional support and advice was provided by a number of voluntary sector organisations. The Cabinet Member said that she wished there was not a need for this type of service and the welfare situation in Britain had been further exacerbated by Covid. She reassured Members that the supply of the service would continue but how that was coordinated would change.

In her supplementary, Councillor Lynne Hale stated that the Cabinet Member had said at a previous meeting that the ethos of the service would be embedded in other council departments. She questioned how an ethos alone would be tangible help to any vulnerable residents. She explained that this specialised service saved the council money in the long-term, whether that be through revenue or cost avoidance work. It was not fair to expect the voluntary sector to pick this up to the standard of an experienced and specialised service, established 25 years ago, whilst having their own funding reduced. Councillor Lynne Hale asked for a detailed cross-departmental cost-benefit analysis and for the decision to disband the Welfare Rights Team to be reviewed. In response, the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services commended the passionate defence for the service and said that no Member would be in disagreement. She said that her ethos statement was in relation to Gateway Services and went on to say that there were benefit teams across all departments in the council, where some duplication had been identified.

Councillor Chris Clark asked what support was available to small businesses as they prepared to navigate the changes of Britain leaving the EU.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Recovery and Skills stated that the council were receiving enquiries from business communities, London Business Hub and Croydon Business Partnership about the incoming rules which covered a range of topics including rules on import/exports, data, working in the EU and hiring. Last week, the London Business Hub had organised a session about how to navigate the new EU landscape for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) which a number of Croydon businesses attended. There was another session planned to cover HR, visa and employment regulations, and a second session, on how leaving the EU affected GDPR and data sharing. She explained that the London Chambers of Commerce, a partner of the council, provided free advice for businesses. The Cabinet Member stated that all the information listed could be found in the council's business newsletter which was circulated to over 7,500 businesses in the borough and provided regular updates on Brexit and other related issues.

Councillor Jeet Bains stated that Brick by Brick was not delivering council homes and had provided no income to the council. In light of this, he asked the Cabinet Member if it was appropriate for the CEO of Brick by Brick to be positively tweeting about generating revenue.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services said she was not able to answer because there was a review of Brick by Brick underway. The Leader of the Council, who was responsible for Brick by Brick in her role, said the outcome of the review would be reported to the next Cabinet meeting in February 2021. The outcome of the review would inform the Cabinet decision on the future of Brick by Brick, which would be focussed on the risk to the public investment already in the company whilst balancing the benefits in terms of the original objectives to deliver more affordable housing.

In his supplementary, Councillor Jeet Bains reiterated his specific comments about the appropriateness of what he felt to be a flippant and inaccurate tweet by the CEO of Brick by Brick in a public forum, at a time when there was a lot of public scrutiny of the council on the matter. In response, the Leader said the future review was relevant to this comment and the council's response. In terms of the council's shareholders interest in Brick by Brick, the Leader chaired the Shareholder and Investment Board which was a platform for constructive dialogue with Brick by Brick company directors who were appointed in November 2020 to ensure that communication was as constructive as possible going forward.

In relation to the announcement earlier regarding rogue landlords, **Councillor Joy Prince** stated that much of the casework in Waddon could be traced back to poor standards of housing in the private sector. She accepted there was not a flat standard of landlords or tenants. She asked the Cabinet Member for an update on the application for a new selective licensing scheme which had been waiting for approval from the Secretary of State since July 2020.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services said that

many landlords do perform well and do well by their tenants. However, any renting sector that was not regulated and closely monitored, rouge landlords would enter the field, which they wanted to stop using a new selective licensing scheme. The application was in the latest stages of assessment by policy officers and the legal team at MHCLG and was currently being reviewed by senior officers. Following the review, the policy would need to be passed by the Secretary of State.

In her supplementary, Councillor Joy Prince asked for statistics or examples which supported the effectiveness of a selective landlord licensing scheme. In response, the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services stated that the council had one in place some years ago, but now the government had widened the ability for a local authority to prosecute. There had been 57 financial penalty notices issued to landlords in the past few years, helping the borough's private tenants. It was noted that the private rented housing sector was the biggest growing sector in Britain today, where there 58,000 properties in Croydon alone.

Councillor Andy Stranack said that Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA), along with a number of other leading community organisations, issued a statement which outlined the devastating impacts of the Administration's cuts program to the voluntary sector in Croydon. In the statement they invited the council to partner with the voluntary sector to develop a Croydon Communities Renewal Plan. He asked if the council had responded to the request.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Resilience firstly stated that no official decision had been made yet on the cuts to the community sector and it was a process which would be involving the community sector in terms of understanding the impacts of possible cuts on their activities and how they would be able to deliver. They would need to be realistic going forward in what services they think they would not be able to deliver, given the possibility of the funding cuts. In terms of the timeline, each of the organisations with funding allocations had been individually contacted for feedback on the process and the council was currently working through their responses. There were aspects the council were keen to speak to the voluntary sector about and he provided assurances to organisations that there would be an open and honest dialogue about the position going forward and how to best serve residents.

In his supplementary, Councillor Andy Stranack raised concern over the Cabinet Member misleading Council and residents. He asked for confirmation if the cuts programme would have an impact, in light of the community ward budget scheme being suspended. He stated that the council had taken back money from various voluntary sector organisations from the community funds. He asked again if the council had responded to the statement raised in his previous question, and if they had not, what date they were planning to respond. Additionally he raised, there was an outstanding response awaited from the Leader of the Council in relation to the Appropriate Adult Volunteering Scheme. The Cabinet Member for Communities Safety and Resilience replied by giving assurance that the council would respond to both letters, however he

was unable to provide a specific date. He stated there were a number of factors they were looking at in respect of the response and how the council responded to the specific questions raised. The council was mindful of the importance of the decisions and discussions in question and the issue would remain a priority.

Madam Mayor invited the Leader to respond on the matter and she agreed with the Cabinet Members response. The Leader said she had responded to the questions and had email correspondence with the CVA.

Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice stated that successive lockdowns have had a negative impact on the highstreets and borough district centres, which she considered to be the lifeblood of the local economy. She praised the Cabinet Member for Economy, Recovery and Skills for her work to ensure funding was distributed to local businesses, whilst practicing due diligence that was required to properly enact those. She was pleased to see that Shop Local banners were appearing in shop windows and asked the Cabinet Member when this initiative would be rolled out across the borough.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Recovery and Skills thanked the councillor for her praise and prompted the shop local campaign social media tag line #LoveCroydonShopLocal, which was used on banners across the borough. Prior to Christmas, the council was able to install banners in Addiscombe, Crystal Palace Triangle, South Croydon, Coulsdon, Thornton Heath, Broad Green and Selsdon. The Cabinet Member stated that during January 2021 the council would be installing banners in South Norwood, Kenley, Coulsdon, Norbury and New Addington. A further set of updated banners would be rolled out in February 2021. The council was providing support through the business grant advice and information and the comms team were preparing a webpage to help promote and direct the public to support local business. Additionally, ground stickers would be installed to those locations when weather permitted.

5/21

Governance Review Implementation

Councillor Clive Fraser introduced and outlined the report which recommended to delay the introduction of three previously agreed recommendations of the Governance Review until May 2021. He explained this was due to financial and resourcing constraints the council currently faced, whilst considering the additional resourcing required to implement the changes. Some elements would be scaled back and Council was being asked to delay amending the Constitution to establish Cabinet Member Advisory Committees (CMACs); the definition of Key Decisions; and the procedure for Council rules. These would be delayed until the 2021/22 municipal year, subject to appropriate resources and capacity being available in the Council budget 2021/22. He updated Council that there would be four meetings of each CMAC per municipal year and it was hoped that they would commence within the first two months following Annual Council 2021. Councillor Clive Fraser moved the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Jason Perry, the Leader of the Opposition, told Council that a huge amount of effort had been given to the working of the Governance Review, and as a follow up, the implementation working group to formulate the new arrangements. He stated that it was disappointing that the Administration's mismanagement of the finances had led to delays of the proposals. Councillor Jason Perry seconded the recommendations, but stated this was in the spirit of the continuation of cross-party cooperation to be fostered through the later stages of the implementation of the CMACs.

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons, the lead member of scrutiny, expressed his disappointment in the delays of the implementation of the Governance Review recommendations. It was clear from the events of last year that the governance of the council required improvements. The reasons for the delay were laid out in the report and he accepted the assurances given. He further expressed his concern over the wording 'when resources allow' and described the phrasing as a weak commitment to deliver and he would like more certainty to be recorded and agreed. He hoped that the necessary resources to implement the recommendations would be included in the 2021/22 budget and a section be included to cover recommendations in addition to the number listed by Councillor Clive Fraser. He called for an implementation timetable to be published as he felt that many backbenchers would like to see the recommendations implemented, in particular those relating to access to information which had been the crux to a number of problems for councillors.

In response, Councillor Clive Fraser stated that some of the issues faced by council were caused by insufficient scrutiny and challenge to officers from Members, which was highlighted in the report from the auditors. The governance review was part of the improvement journey for the council, as described in recommendation 1.2, and the delays needed to be viewed in the context of the council's financial situation. Once the council had a clearer understanding of their status going forward, there would be a better idea on the timelines and detail of the Governance Review implementation and the discussion should flow as part of the wider conversation and budget process.

Ahead of the vote on the recommendations contained within the report, Madam Mayor advised Council that there were 40 Labour Members and 29 Conservative Members in attendance.

The recommendations as set out in the report were put to the vote and all were agreed unanimously.

6/21

Council Debate Motions

The Mayor read out the first Council Debate Motion on behalf of the Administration:

"This Council recognises that Croydon's system for local governance must always reflect the need for strong democratic engagement and accountability. This Council commits to consider a resolution, based on a detailed report to be presented to Council at an ECM, to hold a referendum on the council's

governance model in Autumn 2021, so that residents can decide the best model for Croydon. A directly elected mayoral model will be an option in this referendum, alongside the Leader and Cabinet model. In the event that the residents of Croydon vote for a change from the council's current governance model the resulting election can take place at the next local elections scheduled for May 2022."

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Hamida Ali to propose the motion.

Councillor Hamida Ali stated that in October 2020, the new Administration committed to being resident focussed, open and transparent whilst working on the changes the organisation required to stabilise the council's finances and governance. The aim was to create a culture of transparency and accountability with value for money at the heart. In the spirit of those commitments, the Administration welcomed the debate on the best system of governance; whether the rules on which political administration in control was determined by the largest political group or by an individual determined by a popular vote. The date of this vote would be based on when public health grounds would allow, and should be considered as they were in the context of the country currently remaining in its third period of lockdown with no scheduled exit date.

It was noted that the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government, Luke Hall MP, wrote to the organisation regarding a new relaxation of regulations and encouraged, rather than directed, to hold a referendum in May 2021. Following this later that week, the Prime Minister described the timings of relaxation as an open question, and as a result, the Minister of State for Constitution and Devolution, Chloe Smith MP, notified political parties that canvassing nor leafletting were permitted during lockdown. The judgement of the Administration was that holding elections in May 2021 was far from certain and the focus of the organisation was to stabilise its financial position by balancing the budget and removing the Section 114 Notice, which would enable them to facilitate and fund this debate and to hold the referendum in the Autumn 2021. She hoped that residents would understand the reasoning for this position and informed Members that there would be an Extraordinary Council Meeting to debate the strengths and shortcomings of each option. Councillor Hamida Ali moved the motion.

Councillor David Wood seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Jason Cummings stated that this motion was not about giving the people of Croydon what the record breaking petition deserved. Labour ignored the call by 1000's of residents asking for a vote on a democratically elected mayor at the time it was initially submitted and the Administration did everything they could to block the request. The motion was not preparing the ground to fix an election date before MHCLG took the matter from their control. It was stated that Croydon Labour always ignored the will of the residents in the borough and pursued the interests of the Labour party. Furthermore, Councillor Jason Cummings stated that the previous political leadership, Councillors Tony Newman and Simon Hall, only a few days before

had surfaced in the press by writing an article where they denied responsibility for the disaster they had created. He expressed dismay at how the current Labour leadership could authorise such an article which effectively blamed MHCLG for the council going bankrupt and let the disgraced ex leadership sit on the backbenches and keep the whip.

Councillor Jason Cummings stated that it was the hard working staff of the council and residents of the borough who were paying the price, suffering redundancies and the cutting of services, whilst the leadership of the Administration refused to take the pay cut the Opposition had already taken. He further suggested that the current leader was too weak to take control of the party and properly accept responsibility, manage their own councillors and face the electorate. The campaign for a democratically elected mayor demonstrated that the people of Croydon want their say on how the borough is run and they were unhappy with the actions of the Administration.

Councillor Ian Parker told Council that they were debating this motion for reasons which were rooted in the failings of the Administration. Councillor Parker stated that the Administration had failed to listen and respond to the residents of Croydon in the area of Planning; the arrogance of consulting on Planning and then ignoring where objections were routinely overlooked. Seeing the closure of leisure facilities, recycling centres and libraries; community ward budgets frozen; and residents in LTNs ignored. Residents who were the electors were routinely ignored.

The reputational damage caused by the Labour Administration would take years to recover, however it could be done. It was stated that Croydon owed a huge debt of gratitude to the residents and their Residents Associations around Croydon for the massive role they had played in collecting signatures for the Democratically Elected Mayor of Croydon (DEMOC) petition, which the Administration did their utmost to block. The motion, it was stated, was a consequence of bottom-up pressure from residents and a direct result from an incompetent Labour Administration. Councillor Parker reported that the momentum for a DEMOC was growing as residents began to recognise the failings of Croydon Labour. This call for a DEMOC was about fairness in the system of electing Croydon's leader and moving to a system where a vote was equal across the wards and towards a borough that represented all residents, beyond narrow party political interests. The current model of governance had failed this borough and a DEMOC would be a route to bring the change needed.

Councillor David Wood stated that as a committee member responsible for democratic participation he was pleased to second the motion and residents should be given a choice in how the council was governed. It was noted that after the new Leader took control in November 2020, she gave a commitment to listen to residents and hear their voice. She also gave an early commitment to meet petitioners and did so as soon as reasonably practical, now welcoming debate. In deciding the right time to hold the referendum they had to consider a range of factors in these unprecedented times, most notably Covid, and the Administration felt the best course of action was to plan the vote in Autumn

2021. Councillor Wood stated that this decision was not reasoned in any way as a rebuff to the government. To hold the vote in Autumn would mean that it would be less likely affected by Covid and reduce uncertainty following vaccinations, in terms of public health of residents and the risk of low turnout. Additionally, it was difficult to make the case that this discussion was what residents needed as the council's priority was trying to manage the response to Covid and the financial challenges. Councillor Wood stated that the Administration was committed to delivering the referendum.

The motion was put to the vote and was unanimously carried.

The Mayor read out the second Council Debate Motion on behalf of the Opposition:

“This failing Council has bankrupted Croydon. To plug the £65 million annual black hole in its finances they have proposed a devastating cuts package that hits the most vulnerable residents in Croydon the hardest.

These terrible cuts will decimate vital services that the poorest in our borough rely upon. It will also severely cut funding to essential voluntary organisations and charities that have done so much to help local people to get through the pandemic.

In order to protect the most vulnerable in Croydon, this Council will cancel the proposed service cuts, and maintain funding for our vital voluntary and charitable sector.”

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Andy Stranack to propose the motion.

Councillor Andy Stranack told Council that last week was one of the most depressing weeks he had to endure as a local councillor; he had heard from charities what the cuts programme would mean for them. He reported that the council's approach to making cuts to the voluntary sector was going to have a devastating impact on the heroic volunteer army who had supported the borough through this pandemic. More tragically, the cuts would decimate services for the most vulnerable in the borough. Councillor Stranack went on to name some of the potential impacts of the cuts programme; Disability Croydon would have to close; Croydon Carers would close their respite care programme; Croydon Vision staff were facing redundancies; services for the over 65s would be dramatically reduced; Woodside Bereavement Centre would need to close; and Croydon Hearing Resource Centre contracts with the council would end on 31 March 2021.

It was stated that it was clear the Labour Administration cuts programme was going to have the biggest impact on bereaved residents with disabilities and the elderly. It was reported by Councillor Stranack that during the previous week the CVA, in partnership with 20 other leading voluntary organisations in Croydon, had asked the council to pause the cuts programme and instead sit down with the voluntary sector to devise a road map of how they could work together going forward. Councillor Stranack explained an example of this

working successfully, and that was his experience in managing a neighbourhood care charity that ran support services for older and vulnerable residents living in Selsdon. Thanks to his team of over 300 volunteers, they were able to provide a multitude of services on an annual budget of £60,000 per annum whilst only needing a council grant of £15,000. He explained that he wrote a paper which demonstrated that if the council or the NHS were to provide similar services, it would cost over a quarter of a million pounds to the taxpayer. They all recognised that the council needed to make financial savings, but he urged members to take up the CVAs offer and for the council to work with the voluntary sector in developing a partnership approach. Councillor Andy Stranack moved the motion.

Councillor Yvette Hopley seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Callton Young questioned when the Opposition began forming their newly discovered concern of the poor and vulnerable. The Administration had always sought to fund Croydon's voluntary and community sector and nurture and encourage its growth. When Labour came into power in 2014, the funding to the voluntary sector was £1.2 million, and under this Administration the figure had risen to £2.7 million. It was reported that after the proposed cuts, the funding would still be £600,000 more than what the Administration inherited.

Councillor Callton Young explained that he became heavily involved in his local voluntary sector 10 years ago through the Croydon African Caribbean Family Organisation and the Thornton Heath Festival. When he became aware of the likely impact to the sector from the financial crisis in Croydon, he did not panic or scaremonger like he felt Opposition Members were, he looked at the sector as resilient and was confident that they would find a way through. The sector had already been addressing the fall-out of national Conservative austerity policy for the past decade. Additionally Councillor Young stated, Croydon Council should not be the sole source of funding to these organisations and they had written to charities to find solutions going forward. It was noted that there were many other sources of funding which would dwarf any funding that Croydon could offer, such as National Lottery grants, and charities could benefit from support in focussing on professional bid writing to secure those funds. Councillor Callton Young stated that the Opposition should focus energy on supporting the sector going forward and explore ways in which they could secure extra funding. He encouraged Members to vote down the motion.

Councillor Stuart King stated that the opening speech from the Opposition was heavy on condemnation, however light on responsibility. The responsible course of action for the council was to balance the budget. The motion before Council claimed to protect the most vulnerable in the borough by cancelling proposed cuts, not a targeted proposal to exempt individual organisations or groups where a specific concern may exist, but instead a complete blunt cancellation of over a one million pounds of savings and efficiency proposals. Those proposals were designed to minimise the impact on the most vulnerable

and represented less than 2% of the entire savings programme, which demonstrated that the Administration had worked hard to ensure that the voluntary sector bared a small share of the savings programme as possible.

Councillor King explained that approving this proposal would undermine the entire carefully prepared recovery plan and the effort to secure the capitalisation direction of £150 million which would allow the council to balance its budget; something the Opposition had always claimed to consider a priority. On this basis, the claim that the Opposition would like to protect the vulnerable remained thin as long as they continued to be selective on who they chose to stand for, whilst presenting no alternatives to the difficult decisions the Administration must take. By law, the council was required to set a balanced budget, therefore, Councillor King suggested, the Opposition must present alternative options on how to achieve the £1 million savings described in the motion. He urged Members to vote against the motion.

Councillor Yvette Hopley stated that the motion highlighted the devastating impacts on vulnerable residents in the borough as a result of the corporate blindness and incompetence of the Labour Administration growing a debt of £1.5 billion through poor decision making. Impacts included the cutting of care packages by 20% and disbanding of services for disabled employment support and reductions to the Welfare Rights team, whose £2 million savings would result in £12 million of losses to the council which was lacking any business case – where no formal consultations were executed ahead of those decisions. It was stated that the voluntary sector would be expected to provide support where the council retreated and were expected to apply for National Lottery funding as a solution. It was noted that the budget must be balanced, however savings should be made in other areas such as selling Brick by Brick and the Colonnades or recovering the £200 million of outstanding loans. Councillor Yvette Hopley supported the motion.

The motion was put to the vote and fell.

7/21

Recommendations of Cabinet or Committees to Council for decision

Education Estates Strategy

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Alisa Flemming to move the recommendation referred from Cabinet on 18 January 2021 relating to the Education Estates Strategy. Councillor Alisa Flemming moved the motion and Councillor Shafi Khan seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council unanimously agreed the recommendation in the report.

General Fund Capital Programme 2020-2024

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Stuart King to move the recommendation referred from Cabinet on 18 January 2021 relating to the General Fund Capital Programme 2020-2024. Councillor Stuart King moved the motion and

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Councillor Callton Young seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council agreed the recommendation in the report.

8/21 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This item was not required.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

Signed:

Date:

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Council

Meeting held on Monday, 8 February 2021 at 6.30 pm. This meeting was held remotely

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Maddie Henson (Chair);
Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Hamida Ali, Muhammad Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Leila Ben-Hassel, Sue Bennett, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttinger, Janet Campbell, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Luke Clancy, Chris Clark, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Mary Croos, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Mario Creatura, Nina Degrads, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Felicity Flynn, Clive Fraser, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Simon Hoar, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Stuart Millson, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Oni Oviri, Ian Parker, Andrew Pelling, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Helen Redfern, Scott Roche, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Andy Stranack, Gareth Streeter, Robert Ward, David Wood, Louisa Woodley and Callton Young

Apologies: Councillor Steve O'Connell and Jason Perry

PART A

8/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

9/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There was one item of urgent business; a report in relation to the Appointments Committee. The minute of this item can be found below.

10/21 **Appointments Committee**

Madam Mayor informed Council that she had agreed that one item of Urgent Business should be taken at the meeting relating to the appointment of Chair of the Appointments Committee and minor amendments to the Constitution relating to that Committee. Members were advised that the report had been circulated and published prior to the meeting and that both Groups had received briefings on the report.

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Young to move the recommendations and introduce the report.

Councillor Young noted that in November 2020 the Council received the Report in the Public Interest from the council's external auditors, Grant Thornton. At the same time the council had been preparing its submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government for a capitalisation direction and the Section 151 Officer (Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance, Investment & Risk) had issued a Section 114 Notice. It was stated by Councillor Young that as part of the Administration's commitment to understand and rectify the very serious position it was in it had commissioned an independent investigation. Furthermore, it was noted that there was an ongoing staff restructure which may require meetings of the Appointments Committee.

In light of the rapid and important changes which were taking place Councillor Young informed Members that he had requested that officers reviewed the council's preparedness in case action was required. The review, it was stressed, was to ensure there were adequate processes in place for any eventuality and formed part of the Administration's commitment to strengthen governance. The review, it was noted, had identified three urgent recommendations which were outlined within the report.

The Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali, seconded the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

1. Following the change of Leader of the Council, suspend paragraph 2.4 of Part 4F of the Constitution in order to appoint a new Chair of the Appointments Committee;
2. Appoint Councillor Hamida Ali as the Chair of the Appointments Committee for the remainder of the 2020/21 Municipal Year; and
3. Agree to amend Part 3 of the Constitution (Responsibility for Functions) and Part 4J (Staff Employment Procedure Rules) as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report.

11/21

Matter for Consideration by Council - Proposal for a change in Governance Referendum

The Mayor informed Council that in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) the Council was required to hold a meeting to consider and resolve to hold a referendum before a change to governance arrangements could take place. The meeting was being asked to consider and resolve on whether to hold a referendum on Thursday 7 October 2021 or on a revised date should the GLA election be postponed to a date within 28 days of the date proposed by the council.

Councillor Hamida Ali proposed the recommendations within the report and stated the Administration welcomed the debate on the best system of governance for the governance and noted that residents had requested that this change be facilitated. The recommendations within the report included

holding a referendum on 7 October 2021 which gave residents the chance to decide how the Council was governed; specifically whether control of the council was determined by the largest political group or by an individual determined by a popular vote.

Councillor Ali stated that it was both the responsible and common sense approach to hold the referendum in October 2021 as the impact of the pandemic and restrictions continued and it was imperative the council resolved its immediate financial pressures.

It was noted by Councillor Ali that during the previous month, the High Court had upheld the London Borough of Newham's decision to declare the petition it had received from local residents to hold a governance referendum invalid due to the suspension of all elections until 5 May 2021. To that end, Councillor Ali stated that the judgement suggested that Croydon Council was also right to declare the petition it had received invalid. Whilst it was recognised that the Government had introduced new regulations which came into effect the following days to provide councils with the opportunity to receive and verify petitions despite the suspension of election activity; the regulations only gave councils until the end of the week to verify thousands of signatures to hold a referendum in May 2021.

Councillor Ali stated the new Administration had already taken the view that it was right to accept the premise of the request for a referendum from some residents and to facilitate that debate. The recommendations, it was stated, removed the uncertainty of verifying a petition and enabled all involved to look toward to the referendum.

Councillor Ali highlighted the Administrations priorities in relation to the referendum and that whilst the proposal for a referendum had not originated from the Administration, it was stressed that the Administration welcomed the debate and the appetite shown by residents to engage in the governance of the council. Furthermore, whilst the pandemic continued there remained uncertainty as to whether elections scheduled to take place in May 2021 would take place due to the unpredictability of the virus. Thirdly, the Administration's overwhelming focus, it was stated, was on stabilising the council's financial position and a decision from MHCLG remained outstanding. With such challenges, Councillor Ali suggested that both residents and government would agree that a balanced budget should be secured in the first instance before facilitating the funding the debate.

It was noted by Councillor Ali that Opposition councillors had voted in support of The Mayor informed Council that in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) the Council was required to hold a meeting to consider and resolve to hold a referendum before a change to governance arrangements took place. The meeting was being asked to consider and resolve on whether to hold a referendum on Thursday 7 October 2021 or on a revised date should the GLA election be postponed to a date within 28 days of the date proposed by the council.

Councillor Ali concluded by noting that the national lockdown reduced the capacity to campaign on the merit of the different governance models. Such a debate required proactive engagement with residents to ensure informed decisions were made when going to the polls.

Councillor Hamida Ali proposed the recommendations.

Councillor Wood seconded the recommendations and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Jason Cummings stated that it was in his opinion standard form that the Labour Administration sought to subvert the will of Croydon residents by holding a meeting one day before the council would have been forced to validate the largest petition received from Croydon residents.

It was stated that Labour had devastated Croydon, both its reputation and finances and were unable to see that they were at fault. Councillor Cummings stated the Administration had not taken the pay cut that the Conservatives had despite them not having set up Brick by Brick or bought hotels or having, in his opinion, misled both councillors and residents as to the true financial position of the council. The Administration were suggested to be showing incompetence and arrogance, especially in not listening to local opinion and the desire to hold a referendum in May 2021.

Councillor Cummings stated that he was immensely proud of what Croydon residents had done by acting to try and create positive change. They had engaged with the democratic process, mobilised cross-party support and, in Councillor Cummings' opinion, had submitted a valid petition which was both an indictment of the current Administration and a massive boost for local representative democracy. Councillor Cummings paid tribute to their efforts and declared that the Conservative Party in Croydon were 100% in support of the residents' campaign to hold a referendum in May. It was stated that a further delay of six months was not welcome or necessary as they were clear of their position in the campaign.

It was noted that the meeting was taking place a few days after the MHCLG Rapid Review had been published which, Councillor Cummings stated, had revealed how the council had previously been run. In light of the report, Councillor Cummings questioned why the Leader continued to have those Members he felt to be responsible in the Majority Group and suggested that this was due to her position being reliant on the votes of those who had been suggested to be at fault. As such, Councillor Cummings stated that the Leader was making the case for a change in governance herself.

Councillor Cummings concluded by stated that the Administration supported only themselves at the expense of others. He stated that they had created the worst financial situation faced by any council in history and stated that the situation had been reached due to, in his opinion, bullying and deceit. As such, he felt that the Administration needed to go and a Mayoral election was

needed in May 2021 as the people of Croydon had enough and further delay was not welcomed by residents.

Councillor Jason Cummings opposed the recommendations.

Councillor Oviri stated the Opposition had warned against racking up the council's debts to £1.5 billion which had led to the council's financial situation; the fallout had been that street cleaners and social services had lost their jobs and services for the most vulnerable residents had been cut. This was, in her opinion, evidence that the Labour Administration was not working and was not listening to councillors or residents.

It was stated that the Administration was not listening to the residents of Purley in particular who had, in Councillor Oviri's opinion, been besieged by planning applications with the area on course to provide over 30% of the boroughs required new homes. Councillor Oviri further stated that the Community Infrastructure Levy from the developers had not been invested in the local area and residents had now had enough and wanted change.

Councillor Oviri suggested that the approach to planning in the south of the borough was evidence of the Administration's approach and, in her opinion, sought to not only bankrupt the council but also sought to bankrupt democracy. This was the reason that Croydon residents wanted change, it was stated, and the change they wanted was the ability to democratically vote for an individual who would be held accountable for their decisions.

It was noted by Councillor Oviri that the Secretary of Croydon South supported the campaign for an Elected Mayor as being the best option to ensure the borough had clear leadership. Councillor Oviri stated that she supported the campaign but she questioned what the Administration's stand point was.

Councillor Oviri concluded that over 17,000 residents had signed the petition and those residents did not welcome further delay; as such Councillor Oviri stated the Council should vote to hold the referendum in May 2021 to ensure it was conducted at the minimum cost to the council.

Councillor Oviri opposed the recommendations.

Councillor Fitzsimons stated that he welcomed the recommendation to hold a referendum on the council's governance model in autumn 2021. It would be an opportunity to give residents a say on the governance model which would best suit the area and one which was hoped to be an improvement on the strong leader model which had been adopted by the Conservative Administration in 2010. Councillor Fitzsimons felt that the strong leader model had been the root cause of all the governance issues which had faced the council in the last decade; from the selling of the Riesco Collection without the right for call-in, attempt to backdate Special Responsibility Allowances and more recently the mismanagement of Brick by Brick and the financial challenges facing the council.

It was recognised by Councillor Fitzsimons that residents had rightly been appalled by the outcome of poor decision making during the previous ten years and demanded that councillors did better. It was Councillor Fitzsimons' opinion that rushing to a referendum in May 2021 whilst the pandemic remained a major issue was wrong. Councillor Fitzsimons stated that having a referendum in the autumn would enable meaningful conversation, which was not solely focussed on planning, to take place as to the best governance model for the borough

Councillor Fitzsimons stated that it was clear that the strong leader model had failed residents but he felt that it was a shame that it was not possible, under legislation, to have a third option on the referendum ballot paper for a return to the committee system. He felt that both models; elected mayor and strong leader were flawed but declared that he would support the move to the governance model which avoided repeating the mistakes of the previous decade, which improved the culture of decision making in the council and had strong access to information rights.

Councillor Fitzsimons stated that he hoped by the summer that the borough would be over the worst of the pandemic and there would be opportunities to debate the merits of the two options put forward in the referendum ahead of an autumn vote to ensure the future for all Croydon residents.

Councillor Fitzsimons supported the recommendations

Councillor Hale noted that her and for many councillors being elected to the council had always been a huge privilege and an opportunity to make a positive change to Croydon to ensure it was a great place to grow up in, work and live. In light of this, she stated the previous few years had been incredibly frustrating as the Administration had, she felt, ignored common sense and created a huge financial overspend.

She stated that she was furious that a Cabinet on just ten elected Members had brought the borough to its knees and accused members of bullying, being arrogant and making nonsensical decisions; behaviour which had no place in Croydon. Councillor Hale stressed that those responsible would be made responsible in time and that they were no longer able to blame everyone else for the problems facing the council.

Councillor Hale felt that Croydon had so much to offer but opportunities had been squandered with large sums of public money being loaned without accountability. Concerns in regard to whether Brick by Brick had been a financial risk had been disregarded in previous years, however Councillor Hale noted that those concerns had been accurate.

Councillor Hale stated that not just councillors had been ignored by the Administration, but residents also who had looked for options to change the governance of their town. The approach to Planning in the borough was suggested to be a driving factor for the desire for change from residents as

trees had been felled and cherished open spaces had been developed without respecting the views of residents. Councillor Hale noted that thousands of residents had signed a petition, which had been supported by all political parties and resident associations from across the borough, to call for change.

It was stated that the council continued to ignore residents and had tried to block progress towards a referendum on a directly elected mayor and Councillor Hale suggested that it was only due to the Government's intervention that any action was being taken towards a referendum. She stressed that the Opposition did not support further delay and called for the referendum to be held in May 2021 which would not only be the right thing to do but would, she claimed, be the most cost effective option.

Councillor Hale opposed the recommendations.

Councillor Wood noted that two weeks prior to the meeting a Motion was debated by Council on the premise of holding a referendum in October 2021 and expressed surprise that the Opposition had, he felt, changed their mind and no longer supported that option and suggested holding the referendum in May 2021 instead. Councillor Wood quoted John Maynard Keynes; "When the facts change, I change my mind" but questioned what facts had changed to cause the Opposition to no longer support the recommendations as that debate had taken place after the Minister for Local Government intervention in relation to considering petitions during the pandemic.

Councillor Wood noted that the Leader had met with the DEMOC campaign group in October 2020 to discuss their petition and had welcomed the debate on the future governance model of Croydon. As such this meeting, Councillor Wood, stated was part of that commitment to support a debate on governance models. It was recognised that there was a cost in holding the referendum, but Councillor Wood pointed out, that by holding the referendum in October 2021 the council was taking serious the safety considerations of both staff and residents in terms of the risk of spreading covid-19.

It was stressed that the debate of the future governance model of the council was important and warranted maximum consideration and scrutiny. By holding the referendum in October 2021, Councillor Wood, stated those debates could be held safely and campaigning could also take place which was considered to be unlikely for May elections. Furthermore, Councillor Wood expressed concern that by holding a referendum earlier in the year the attention of councillors and officers would be diverted from responding to twin challenges of the council's finances and responding to the pandemic which many residents felt should be the primary focus of the council.

Whilst it was recognised that there were over 17,000 unverified signatures on the petition, Councillor Wood noted that this figure represented 7% of the borough electorate. He welcomed the debate on the governance model but called on the council to do so in a responsible manner when lockdown restrictions were no longer an issue as residents had been vaccinated.

Councillor Wood seconded the recommendations.

A Point of Order was received from Councillor Jason Cummings. It was stated that a number of references had been made to the vote on the Labour Debate Motion at the Council meeting on 25 January 2021. Councillor Cummings stated that the vote at the previous meeting had been in relation to holding the Extraordinary Council Meeting to consider the referendum and was not to agree to the principle of holding the referendum in October 2021. It was stressed that the Opposition had supported the meeting being held but not the proposed date.

Madam Mayor noted the Point of Order from Councillor Jason Cummings.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council hold a referendum on Thursday 7th October 2021 to allow local electors to decide upon the future governance arrangements of the Council;
2. To note that should the Greater London Authority and London Mayor election (“GLA election”) 2021 be further postponed to within 28 days of the above date, the Council will have to combine the referendum in 1.1 with that poll;
3. To agree that the model of governance available for electors to choose from at the referendum will be either;
 - A. The current model of the Executive Leader and Cabinet (“the Leader Model”) OR
 - B. The Mayor and Cabinet Model (“the Mayoral Model”)
4. To note that a further report be presented at a Council meeting prior to the referendum in order to approve the referendum proposals that must include detailed constitutional changes in the governance arrangements for a Mayoral Model in accordance to the Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000) that also requires those proposals to be available for inspection and to be published; and
5. To note the referendum timetable at Appendix 1 of the report.

12/21 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This item was not required.

.....
The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Signed:

Date:

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Council

Meeting held on Monday, 8 March 2021 at 6.30 pm.
This meeting was held remotely; to view the meeting, please click [here](#).

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Maddie Henson (Chair);
Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Hamida Ali, Muhammad Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Leila Ben-Hassel, Sue Bennett, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttinger, Janet Campbell, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Luke Clancy, Chris Clark, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Mario Creatura, Nina Degrads, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Felicity Flynn, Clive Fraser, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Simon Hoar, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Stuart Millson, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Oni Oviri, Ian Parker, Andrew Pelling, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Helen Redfern, Scott Roche, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Andy Stranack, Gareth Streeter, Robert Ward, David Wood, Louisa Woodley and Callton Young

Apologies: Councillors Mary Croos, Steve O'Connell and Jason Perry

PART A

13/21 **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020, 30 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

14/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

15/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

16/21 **Announcements**

Madame Mayor

Madame Mayor, Councillor Maddie Henson, wished the virtual chamber a happy International Women's Day. In the week prior, Croydon was fortunate to receive a visit from the Duchess of Cornwall who attended a local vaccination

centre and received her first dosage, streamed live over Facebook.

Madame Mayor explained that she had two remaining fundraisers planned before the end of her role in May; firstly a virtual bingo night hosted by Simon Edmands, and secondly, a virtual murder mystery evening, which would be written and performed by an acting troop who studied at the Brit School. She described another two events planned; firstly an event called Creating Conversations based on 'coming out', which was supported by Councillors Wood and Campbell, and the final event would be the Mayor's Baby and Toddler Festival which was a two day programme of taste sessions presented by toddler groups from around the borough. These sessions were aimed to help organisations start generating bookings as restrictions were eased and to support people who were pregnant or had given birth during the pandemic, particularly to provide spaces for them to start to socialise with other parents.

The Leader

The Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali, wished Council a happy International Woman's Day. The Leader highlighted that the council had been successful in its application for a capitalisation direction for a total of £120 million, which covers the current and next financial year. A letter from the Minister of State, Luke Hall MP, had been received which set out the details of the offer and attached conditions. The expectations included; making good progress against the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan; meeting the expectations of the Improvement and Assurance Panel; and a condition that any additional borrowing to the Public Works Loan Board would result in an increase of an additional percentage point to the loan interest rates. This loan was a significant moment to Croydon's recovery and brought stability to the budget position. She stated that an enormous amount of work had been contributed to this successful effort from officers across the council, led by the Interim Chief Executive, and she invited Madame Mayor to join in her thanks to everyone - which was granted.

Interim Chief Executive

The Interim Chief Executive informed Council of three recent appointments: Chris Buss had been appointed as the Council's Interim Section 151 Officer, Asmat Hussain had been appointed as the Council's Interim Executive Director of Resources and Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer and Doutimi Aseh had been appointed as the Interim Council Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

17/21 Scheme of Members' Allowances 2021-22

The Leader introduced the item by applauding the productive work the Administration had led on to find a significant level of savings from the members' allowances budget, particularly in relation to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs). She noted there had been a focus on reducing the London average level. Ward Councillor Budgets would remain, as which was decided given the level of financial remuneration and that those

carrying more a responsibility should contribute more in this exercise. It was clear that these changes in no way would resolve the council's financial position, however left a way in which councillors could make a contribution. The Leader moved and Councillor Clive Fraser seconded the recommendations.

Madam Deputy Mayor put the recommendations to the vote and they were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: Council AGREED the recommendations contained in the report:

- 1.1. To approve changes to the Council's existing Members' Allowance Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 to this report with effect from 1 April 2021.
- 1.2. To authorise the Monitoring Officer to comply with the necessary statutory publicity requirements in respect of the on-going annual publicity of the Members' scheme of allowances which is required, and subject to Members' approval of recommendation 1.1 of this report, the approval of the revised Members' Allowance Scheme as detailed in this report.

18/21 **Council Tax and Budget**

Questions to the Leader

Madam Deputy Mayor explained that the Council Tax and Budget item would commence with questions to the Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali, for a total of 15 minutes.

Councillor Jamie Audsley congratulated the Leader on the budget and asked how the budget was shaped in terms of listening to the community.

In response, the Leader explained that they ran a public consultation which received a strong 1,800 respondents. The key consideration for that consultation was understanding the impacts on residents of the proposals. There were other processes within the consultation which considered the interest and capacity there might be in the community to discover alternative methods of delivering and continuing to run some of our current services. There was plenty to consider drawn from the consultation, in terms of how savings proposed in the budget could be achieved, and there was a commitment to ongoing important dialogue with the community throughout the challenge ahead.

In his supplementary, Councillor Jamie Audsley commended the commitment to listening and involving the community in financial plans to areas of interest to local residents. He asked the Leader if residents and local businesses who were in their own financial struggles, who may be worried about how they

would pay their council tax and bill, would be offered any support from the council. In response, the Leader said that there was a number of residents who were receiving support from the council and that to name a primary scheme was that 30,000 residents were part of the council tax support across the borough. There was also a tax hardship fund, a government grant, which was benefitting 20,000 residents. Additionally, she told Council that on the onset of the pandemic, the council offered a two month deferral for council tax payments from which 3,381 residents benefitted from. To support businesses, there was government support to local authorities which played the key role in distributing the payments – where in the borough this totalled £15 million across 1000s of businesses in a 12 month period.

Councillor Jason Cummings stated that there were a significant number of recommendations following the government’s rapid review into the council, where a number of those were in progress, and he asked the Leader to confirm if the Administration was committed to delivering all of the recommendations.

In response, the Leader stated that many of those recommendations were in train and the Administration was following faithfully through the entire list.

In his supplementary, Councillor Jason Cummings asked when arrangements would be made for the chair of the General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC) to be appointed outside of the majority group. In response, the Leader stated that there was not currently a timeline in place for this process, however they were bringing plans for the GPAC chair forward and in due course that post would be appointed by Council. The recommendation from the RIPI stated that the chair should be outside the majority group, however the report had challenged the whole council in its capacity, from a governance point of view, therefore the Administration was looking potentially to appoint an external chair.

Councillor Jeet Bains stated that the Leader formerly held the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources in 2016; had been a Cabinet Member for five years along with five other Cabinet Members who sat on the former Leaders Cabinet; and she had partaken in all of the budget and financial decision making during that period. He asked why the Leader had not resigned because decisions throughout those roles meant that the most vulnerable residents across the borough would be paying for the mistakes of the Executive members and he stated that fresh leadership was needed.

In response, the Leader stated that the new leadership which was recognised by external bodies had been in place since October 2020. The rapid review team had inspected the authority during November 2020 and the resulting report acknowledged the new leadership, understanding the nature of the council’s situation and its demonstration to tackle it. Additionally, the Improvement and Assurance Panel were content with the Cabinet’s approach, from a political perspective, that they recognised the situation and that they were taking the appropriate steps. The council had been granted the capitalisation direction from central government of the amount requested for

2021-22 and 2022-23, which demonstrated the openness and commitment to tackle the council's situation. The Administration presented a balanced budget to the Council which was comprised of a delicate balance between investment and savings to deliver, whilst replenishing reserves and limiting liabilities. The proposed budget this evening responded to a range of challenges raised by the RIPI and offered a route out of the situation towards a sustainable financial footing prescribed by the external auditors.

Councillor Jerry Fitzpatrick stated that there were wide exchanges discussing the assumption of responsibility for past and forthcoming budgets. He asked the Leader what she understood about those assumptions of responsibility and what constraints there might have been beyond the control of the Administration.

In response, the Leader stated that the budget responded to a range of challenges within and outside the local authority's control. Those factors beyond was the emergency response to the pandemic, in unison with other authorities, and the vital support to the unaccompanied children and young people who arrived in the borough to which Croydon provided significantly more support and resource than other authorities. There were factors that contributed to the situation which were within the council's control, but the core tenants of the proposed budget was strong financial discipline throughout the organisation going forward and delivering the balanced budget.

In relation to the savings strategy, **Councillor Yvette Hopley** raised her concerns over the impacts to the social care sector. She stated that the focus of the strategy would affect 7,000 residents in receipt of care packages and 2,500 in receipt of complex care, in tandem to the reduction in funding to the voluntary sector partners. She said that residents were worried about the implications of the spending reduction proposals and asked the Leader how the Administration came to decide those policies.

In response, the Leader challenged the alarmist language of the Opposition to the social care budget proposals, which were not factually supported and were misleading for residents, and stated that the budget proposals included additional investment into adult social care services. The Administration would continue to ensure those services were of the best quality and that the appropriate concerns rested with why the current spending on those services was disproportionate to other London borough authorities and how the council should be achieving the maximum value for money and demonstrating the best outcomes for residents as a result of investment. They were working with external partners who were assisting the council in understanding the services and benchmarking data to identify how to bring investment into line to ensure residents were supported.

Questions to the Cabinet Members for Croydon Renewal and Resources & Financial Governance on the Budget

Madame Mayor opened questions to Cabinet Members Councillors Stuart King and Callton Young. She firstly invited them to make any announcements

, which there were none.

Councillor Lynne Hale asked the Cabinet Member for confirmation that much of the problem of the budget setting was centred around the council's significant overspends, lack of reserves and the additional risks to the financial brought by commercial property acquisitions and Brick by Brick. Councillor Stuart King, Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal, agreed and added that in addition to those problems the authority had not displayed sufficient financial discipline which was an underlying root cause of the challenges.

In her supplementary and in light of the response, Councillor Lynne Hale asked if it would be understandable to the Cabinet Member that residents would be questioning why Labour councillors who were largely responsible for the decisions leading up to the situation were proposing a budget tonight which meant residents were paying for the mistakes made. Whilst appreciating that the former Leader and lead Cabinet Member finance were now independent members, Councillor Lynne Hale asked why the other councillors who sat on Cabinet setting the previous budgets were still part of the Labour group and were voting for the budget as part of the Administration. In response, the Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal stated that the RIPI had been critical of the behaviour of all councillors, that it was true that some members would share a greater level of responsibility, however it was wrong of the Opposition to avoid understanding the true nature of the issues the council was facing. All councillors voted through the previous budget, which included the asset investment strategy, and the Opposition leadership had never explained their reasons for doing so.

Councillor Karen Jewitt asked how Cabinet Members had sought to reflect the RIPI recommendation in the budget proposals.

Councillor Callton Young, Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance, replied that the recommendations from that report were wide ranging and were embraced within the proposals. He described his role to improve the financial governance which this budget reflected. The budget set to advance the robustness of the financial resource functions and to encompass the mechanicals, staff and training to build the organisation's capacity to the deliver the Croydon Renewal Plan.

Following comments from **Councillor Andy Stranack** stating that the councillor ward budgets were removed within the budget proposals and listing a number of further cuts in the budget's millions of savings, the Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal replied this was false and not within the report. He corrected the councillor and said that ward budgets were only being slimmed in the proposals, adding that there would also be change in how they were governed. He stated that the council was currently operating above its spending capacity and needed to reduce its expenditure, therefore this reduction was necessary; the Croydon Renewal Plan meant that the organisation had to live within its means and be prepared to make tough decisions.

As a follow up to the Cabinet Members response, Councillor David Wood, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Resilience, stated that the council tried to minimise the impact on the voluntary sector in the process of planning the spending reductions. They had gone to lengths so as to not follow other London boroughs who did not assist the voluntary sector in any capacity. Instead, there have been many constructive and engaging discussions with the sector as to how they can find savings and explore alternative routes of support, whilst enabling partners in continuing to support residents.

In his supplementary, Councillor Andy Stranack raised concern over the proposed budget cuts set of: £100,000 to night-time noise reduction, £250,000 to violence reduction units, £200,000 to community teams and £400,000 to the Community Safety Fund. He also commented on the introduction of charges to bulky waste collection, which he stated would result in increased fly tipping. He asked the Cabinet Member if residents would still be safe living in Croydon following the budget cuts. In response, the Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal firstly stated that residents would be safe. Secondly, he stated that the charges to bulky waste collection were already in place and were not related to the budget proposals. He noted that no feedback was recorded by services which indicated a huge rise in fly tipping as the Opposition predicted. There were difficult but necessary decisions ahead and they were implementing them in a way as to mitigate the legitimate concern that existed.

Councillor Joy Prince asked the Cabinet Member to set out the key risks facing the successful delivery of the budget proposals.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal stated that there were two types of risks they faced, ranging internal and external factors. The single most challenging risk to the council was the pandemic, similarly to most other authorities, and the impact of the potential economic downturn that was likely to follow of the ending of the furlough scheme, the Universal Credit uplift and the end to the ban on evictions. These factors were likely to increase the demand for council services and which they needed to mitigate and manage. The second most challenging risk, following the capitalisation direction and agreement of the budget, was the council to operate within its means. This risk was mitigated by the talented executive staff team in place to manage the departmental approach and the political determination from the Leader and Cabinet team.

Questions to the Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on the Scrutiny Budget Report

Madame Mayor opened questions to Councillors Sean Fitzsimons as the Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee (SOC) on the Scrutiny Budget Report. She firstly invited him to make any announcements.

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons gave an overview on how the SOC reviewed the proposed budget. He referred to page 7 of the agenda which set out the

business reports and provided feedback to the 16 February 2021 SOC meeting. He explained that backbench members of both parties were involved in the review of the proposals, including the Sub-Committees, receiving briefings from the Section 151 Officer, the Leader and Cabinet Members. As a Committee they had also reviewed the council's strategies underpinning the budget approach, including the Croydon Renewal Plan and both stages of the PwC strategic review of companies. Overall, scrutiny members supported the budget, however that came with reservations.

Councillor Ian Parker stated that following the failure of the council's scrutiny function to notice what was happening to the organisation's finances, he asked if the Chair of scrutiny should be elected by Council and not just the Labour Group. He also noted that the scrutiny chair had not changed since 2014.

In response, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons noted that the Opposition Leader appointed their scrutiny leads and the Administration's backbenches voted on theirs. Croydon Labour would be developing their manifesto towards the 2022 local elections and if Croydon Labour would continue the current system for electing their chair of scrutiny he said he would support that, but at the current time the focus was to ensure the council delivered the balanced budget. He urged the Councillor to attend the SOC and see for himself the hard work contributed by cross-party.

In his supplementary, Councillor Ian Parker stated that the Grant Thornton Report highlighted a number of areas where SOC had failed the task of holding Cabinet to account, listing the specific failings of the Committee. He said that the Labour Group should have the rights of chairing the committee revoked as it had demonstrated its inability to properly run this function on which Croydon residents depended. He stated that it was not too late for the Chair to resign and support a better system of electoral replacement. In response, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that he was proud of the cross-party group of councillors, noting that the Opposition Vice-Chair, Councillor Robert Ward, was an excellent councillor and scrutineer.

The Chamber noted the point raised by Councillor Gareth Streeter, as a point of personal explanation on behalf of Councillor Ian Parker, that it was improper for Councillor Sean Fitzsimons to accuse Councillor Ian Parker of being negligent in his duties because he was not a member of any scrutiny committees.

In relation to the work that scrutiny committees had completed in the past year, **Councillor Clive Fraser** asked if there had been an appropriate balance struck between financial and non-financial matters, particularly in the lead up to the budget setting period.

In response, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that the primary focus since July 2020 was the scrutiny of the finances. During this period, they had also been responding to the consequences of the pandemic, particularly in the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee, and he stated that nearly

1000 residents from Croydon had sadly lost their lives to Covid. The financial crisis was important to scrutiny, but they had to balance that with ensuring the council's health services were responding well to the pandemic, including the economic fallout which was and would continue to devastate the local economy. The third area they were focussing on was the economic recovery, which all members would want scrutinised. Looking at Croydon's town centre, where trends in the previous years indicated the need for an economic rethink and focus.

In his supplementary, Councillor Clive Fraser asked how the SOC would work alongside the new Cabinet Member Advisory Committees (CMACs) in monitoring the delivery of the budget and developing new budget options. In response, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that the coming municipal year would be important for GPAC and CMACs, whilst managing the prevention of duplicating workload. It would be important for the chairs of the committees to work together constructively to build an agreed work programme. CMACs would provide backbenchers, including Opposition members, room for more robust political debates on the merits of council proposals. Both groups of committees would work alongside each other to assure that the proposed budget would be delivered.

Councillor Vidhi Mohan stated that the external auditors report made it clear that the scrutiny function in Croydon held a poor record in holding the Administration to account, particularly on the matter of council finances. He asked what the Chair of the SOC would specifically do to improve that record and asked whether it was time for him to consider his position and allow for new scrutiny leadership, in light of the fact he had held that post since 2014.

In response, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that his role in taking the position of the chair of scrutiny was to rebuild the function of scrutiny in the council following the devastation and side-lining it experienced during the previous leadership. He stated that during this time he had worked hard with his Opposition colleagues and Labour Group backbenchers to support scrutiny and to ensure Conservative councillors chaired committees. Looking forward, scrutiny had a role to ensure that the council's budget would be delivered, and that in regard to his own role, he has never held the presumption it would roll on to the next year as it was elected by the Labour Group backbench members. He noted that Opposition members in this meeting were more interested in the single role of the chair of the SOC, rather than the Scrutiny Budget Report for consideration in the agenda this evening. He stated he would be working with Conservative colleagues in a non-party political approach to hold the council to financial account over the next year.

In his supplementary, Councillor Vidhi Mohan rejected the claim that the scrutiny function was left in devastation following the previous leadership. He asked the chair of scrutiny to outline what new approaches would be adopted, and for himself as chair to ensure it would happen, for scrutiny to effectively hold the Administration to account. He stated that new ideas were required otherwise the chair should step down in their role to make way for a member who would bring change.

In response, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that the approach of scrutiny had changed since September 2020, which also had to be adapted due to the challenges of the pandemic. Scrutiny committee members had engaged in many online meetings, received a number of detailed briefings and councillors from both parties had actively been involved in developing new questioning strategies. During scrutiny committee meetings, it was clear that members thoroughly read the report papers and put forward considered questions to Cabinet Members and officers. The agendas for scrutiny had been redefined and shortened to enable a streamlined function. Councillor Sean Fitzsimons stated that, under his request, the council invited the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to undertake a review of the scrutiny process within Croydon, which would be reported in due course. Arising from that report, would be lessons that would need to be understood and addressed and he welcomed the opportunity to present the subsequent work programme to a future meeting.

Council Tax Debate

Madam Deputy Mayor introduced the start of the Council Tax debate and invited the Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali to speak.

The Leader stated that it was with great pride that she made this speech as a female council leader on International Women's Day to move the council's budget. The Administration put forward a balanced budget, having secured the capitalisation direction from central government to stabilise the council's position. This was a significant moment in the organisation's recovery, relieved of the Section 114 Notice, and able to move forward with confidence to deliver the balanced budget. This would offer reassurance to residents of the borough, who relied on the council for vital services, and the hard working staff who were among hidden heroes of public sector working in the pandemic. Reassurance was also offered to the council's partners across all sectors, who together worked closely in the best interests of the borough to improve the collective opportunity and prosperity of all the residents and businesses.

With almost 1000s lives lost to the pandemic in the borough, the Leader wanted to pause and reflect on the last 12 months and the remarkable work from council staff in the borough and across the country during this period to support communities. Examples of the support provided by this authority included protecting care homes by coordinating access across the borough to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); setting up a food delivery hub within one week; extending the domestic violence services to open seven days per week; securing access to tonnes of food every week to food banks; providing over £200,000 pounds of emergency funding to the voluntary sector; keeping schools open all year round; distributing over £15 million to local businesses; supplying food to families during school holidays; and delivering surge testing in the borough. The Leader gave her sincere thanks to the workforce who enabled the support to protect communities throughout the pandemic and serve the residents of Croydon.

Looking ahead, the Administration had set a new set of priorities for the

council to live within its means and focus on delivering the best quality services and continue the important work of tackling structural inequality and poverty in the borough. Given those priorities, the proposed budget was an important milestone in achieving those objectives and bringing stability to the borough. The government's decision to grant the capitalisation direction reflected the confidence in this new Administration's drive and commitment to forward the council's improvement journey. The government's rapid review report described the strong commitment from all quarters, with members and officers working energetically on the recovery, and the Minister for State recognised the Administration's openness and commitment.

The Leader stated that it was only the Opposition who spoke out of line to their national counterparts and she expected them to continue their ongoing hypocrisy; simultaneously protesting the council's financial position, by opposing any steps to improve resilience by raising concerns about the impact of budget savings, whilst protesting any proposals to increase income.

This year had been difficult for everyone, families and businesses, and the Administration did not take the decision to propose a raise in the council tax lightly. This move was in-line with the majority of local authorities across London and nationally and there was little alternative choice. The central government's financial settlement for local government both nationally and for Croydon provided an increase in the core spending power of the council, which described the combined total of the range of funding sources which made up the council's budget, whether this be through council tax or government grants. However, that spending power was entirely predicated on all local authorities raising their council tax by 5%. That together with the Mayor of London's targets to provide more police officers and help to pay for concessionary travel, in practice will mean the council will need an additional £2 per week per household across the borough of additional income. The central government's policy direction in recent years was that local government should be funded locally, which still left questions on how social care would be funded in the years ahead.

The proposed budget this evening offered continued protection for Croydon's communities and continued investment in vital services across the financial plan for the next three years, which included investing additional funding to social care services. Over that period, in the contrary to the Opposition's inaccurate narratives, there would be £84 million of growth to Children's and Adult's Social Care services. The savings to be delivered were not at expense of investment and it was important to plan the budgets right.

There were still savings to find over the next few years and from now to the end of 2023-24, the council had to find an additional £80 million on top of the £45 million next for 2022-23 and £35 million for 2021-22. Further savings would become increasingly harder to identify and would continue to be challenging to the communities' expectation of the council. The relationship and dialogue with residents was all too important to retain and build an understating of the position of the council and communities.

The Leader stated that the Section 151 Officers assessment was clear that delivering this budget was dependant on a number of factors, including the political will to build the financial discipline required to stay within budget, and the Administration was determined to deliver and reflect the core political objectives. Moving forward, it could not be political and executive leadership alone to deliver the budget and the discipline required for the council to live within the margins; the entire organisational workforce and backbench members would have their role to play. Beyond the processes and systems being fit for purpose, the plans for this recovery encompassed the need to address cultural and behavioural shifts, weighted as important in this journey.

The Leader moved the Council Tax Debate motion and Councillor Stuart King seconded and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Jason Cummings, Shadow Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal, stated that the Conservative government had finally agreed to bail out Croydon from the disaster that the Administration caused to the finances, which was an indictment of what had gone on over the previous years and the scale of the capitalisation direction was unprecedented. Despite the Administration's claims that other local authorities were in similar positions, it should be made clear that the situation Croydon was much worse.

Central to the delivery of this budget would be the council's political leadership. The former Leader and former Cabinet member for Finance and Resources were clearly to blame for the council's position, who were now sitting as independent members and should have had the whip removed by the Leader sooner. There was clear evidence of mismanagement that had cost Croydon millions of pounds and a culture of bullying and secrecy. The current leadership was not strong enough to act, even their national party had taken action which was indicative of the weakness of their position.

Councillor Jason Cummings told Council that he found it shocking that he now lived in a borough where a council tax strike was openly discussed. There were many decisions approaching for Croydon Labour in what sort of party they were and what they stood for, which would be followed closely by the people of Croydon. The budget represented a huge failure of the Administration's mismanagement, with very few positives to draw from, where the depth of financial mess continually increases as it was previously said that there were £80 million of savings still to be found.

Croydon had one of the most expensive council taxes in London and in future years was set to hike to the maximum increases. Residents would bear the brunt of balancing the books, not only through council tax, but through penalty charge notices which were set to increase by millions of pounds. The increased income was being squeezed out of the same residents who were losing their services at the fault of the Administration.

There was a vast and varied set of recommendations for the council to turn its fortunes around, which all had a similar theme of prescribing change. At this time two of the council's key committees had not changed their leadership,

GPAC and SOC, despite the auditor's reports making deep criticisms of their functions. The fact that the chair of SOC did not resign following the report's findings was outrageous and it would be a test to the Labour Group as to whether they regard their own interest above the public's if they were to elect the same chair again. The case for change in scrutiny was overwhelmingly clear in the RIPI and was vital to deliver the proposed budget. For GPAC, the recommendations from the rapid review was to appoint a chair outside of the majority group, one that the council had fully accepted. However, instead of immediately and easily appointing a member of the Opposition who would be able to effectively apply scrutiny, the intention was to read the recommendation differently and decide to appoint the post externally because it suited the Administration politically.

The worst part of the budget this evening was the costs and cuts to the local residents of Croydon, which Conservative colleagues would be speaking to this evening. An example of the impacts to local people was the uncertain future of the new Addington boxing club which had been run by volunteers. This club's history crossed 50 years and served the residents of new Addington and beyond, providing a healthy sports activity and a sense of discipline to the young and older alike. It would be a tragedy if this wonderful institution was lost due to the council's financial mismanagement and subsequent inability to provide any assistance. As a council, they should not be reduced in to a position where they could not provide support to local volunteer led organisations who relied upon assistance for survival.

The capitalisation directive received from national government was conditional and the council would only receive additional spending capacity if they delivered a balanced budget for 2021-22 and made sufficient progress on the Croydon Renewal Plan. National government, nor the Conservative Opposition, trusted the Labour Administration to deliver the budget. Councillor Jason Cummings said he did not support the motion.

As a point of personal explanation, **Councillor Karen Jewitt**, the chair of GPAC, stated that she had only been acting as the chair of the Committee since May 2020. She stated that she had a good working relationship with the Opposition members of the Committee and at this stage there was no benefit from Councillor Jason Cumming speaking as he did because the running and leadership of the GPAC was clearly changing. She stated that at the recent GPAC training, the independent member spoke about what they would bring to the Committee.

Councillor Callton Young, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Financial Governance stated that the RIPI issued by the independent auditors on 23 October 2020 was a wakeup call to the council as it pointed to the collective corporate blindness and missed opportunities to tackle the council's financial position. Since then, there has been clear change to set the council on a path to renewal, which could not be encapsulated in a three minute speech, however he said it would be remiss not to praise the stewardship of the new Leader and executive leadership during these difficult times.

The Minister of State's letter on 5 March 2021 to the new Leader was an essential milestone at this early stage of Croydon's path to renewal. The capitalisation direction secured from MHCLG by the new Leader and Interim Chief Executive left the Cabinet in a position able to recommend a balanced budget to Council and to fulfil the council's legal duty. The letter from the MHCLG had a balanced approach by acknowledging and displaying appreciation for the council's cooperation with central government.

Agreeing the budget recommended for 2021-22 would allow the council to focus on the delivering to meet the conditions of the loan and provide assurance in the context of the Croydon Renewal Plan. Going forward, there would be an enhanced focus in bringing demand led spending in Adult Social Care closer in-line with the London borough average per head. By in way of contribution, the Administration would like to see a clear and measurable contribution made to the savings from the council's commissioning and procurement function because too many contracts were outdated, which meant the council was not able to say they were obtaining the best value for money for their services. Due to this, the council would be initiating a review of those processes, set to improve the function and oversight of contract management and would reach to the market for more than a third of the council's 460 contracts over the course of the year to eliminate avoidable costs. The council spent £395 million per year to these contracts therefore the level of spending power meant that it could create markets that better met the council's needs to provide quality services at the best value for residents.

Councillor Callton Young concluded, the balanced budget presented would allow the council to deliver its new priorities set out in the Croydon Renewal Plan and he would be voting for the budget, noting that the council tax increase proposed were in-line with most London boroughs.

Councillor Maria Gatland stated that it had been a difficult year for many due to the pandemic where children and young people had been profoundly affected. Residents would expect a responsible council to safeguard vulnerable families. Due to the council's reckless investments and financial incompetence, Croydon's reputation had been damaged nationally. The Administration had announced a series of cuts to services to vulnerable residents despite the bailout from central government. The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning played her role leading to this crisis and it was clear she was unable to financially run her department because they had seen budget growth from 2016 and the event of her refusing to act on the external auditor's past recommendations or use of transformation funding as intended. This lack of action had left a weakened department having to cut loyal staff and vital services.

She stated that Councillor Stuart King was correct in the fact that the council was left with no other choice but to slash those services, but this was due to the Administration's failure since 2014. Councillor Andy Stranack was also correct, there were cuts to vital early help services and adolescent teams preventing early intervention to vulnerable families and support to adolescents at risk of exploitation and violence and there were cuts to vital centres, care

packages and SEN transport. The cost to children in this borough were high.

In agreement with the belief that children being returned back safely into a stable home was the best outcome where possible, Councillor Maria Gatland stated that she trusted the hard working staff in the department responsible. However, it was difficult to trust that process under the assurance of the discredited Administration. As corporate parents it should not be forgotten that under the leadership of Councillor Alisa Flemming, children had been left at risk of significant harm and further reduction to services would only raise that risk level. There was still £20 million of growth in the department which raised questions as to how she was directing the department to live within its means and deliver the Improvement and Assurance Board recommendations, where clearly the culture of overspend remained.

Councillor Maria Gatland stated that Labour members spoke of social justice, however in reality would be delivering the opposite and would leave children to pay the price of their failings. After stating the budget situation was shameful, she opposed the budget.

Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning, stated that past year had seen changes internationally, nationally and locally against a backdrop of a pandemic that had claimed the lives of so many loved ones across the world. Against that backdrop, she spoke in support of the budget presented this evening with a particular focus on Children's Social Care. Following the successful request of the capitalisation direction, the council was now able to present a balanced budget and was the first platform to continue the work to build a financially stable council that provided good value for money services to the residents of Croydon.

Children's and Adult's Social Care accounted for more than 60% of the council's total budget which was used to protect the most vulnerable. Within the paper, it was set that the departmental savings and growth request in Children's Social Care and education, and the right sizing of budgets, would help meet the underlying historic pressures. These pressures included structurally inappropriate funding to services because Croydon received funding of an outer London authority, however the makeup and characteristics were equivalent to an inner London Borough in terms of the levels of need and deprivation.

The council was continuing assessments to ensure they were looking after the right children in care, reviewing care packages where appropriate and insuring the delivering the best value for money services for the Croydon taxpayer. In relation to children in care, Councillor Alisa Flemming stated that the focus to reduce looked after children had been a priority far prior to this financial crisis and firmly lay in the best interests of young people.

Councillor Alisa Flemming stated that the Children's Services the Administration inherited in 2014 also included cuts, particularly to the youth services, when Councillor Gatland was responsible. Councillor Alisa Flemming stated that it was important to highlight that on a national level, there were

problems ahead in the uncertainty of how social care would be funded moving forward, which was apparent in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech stating that there was still no final decision. She went on to say that the Administration would continue to work collectively, both as a Cabinet and a council, alongside partners to ensure that with the Department for Education and Ofsted they would be delivering the best value for money within Croydon's means whilst keeping the most vulnerable residents at the forefront of interests.

Councillor Gareth Streeter expressed disappointment over the clear consequences in the budget of years of mismanagement and dangerous speculation. This was another meeting whereby the Labour Administration refused, and displayed classic attempts to evade, taking responsibility for their actions blaming everyone but themselves. The residents and businesses of Croydon would not let the Administration get away with that responsibility as it was them who would have to pay highly through cuts and taxes.

The country would soon be reopening, high streets would be opening their business and local authorities across the nation would be doing everything they could to support business during the most difficult period in living memory. For Croydon however, not only did the budget not offer any hope or support, but instead would be squeezing an additional £8 million of income from motorists and creating a hostile environment for customers and the highstreets. Following this budget, they would see parking charges increase, where the free parking measures were so important to the Labour Group in the run up to the 2018 election, where unsuspecting motorists would be landed with fines together with there being no evidence that would suggest an improvement to local air quality.

Councillor Gareth Streeter stated that the Labour Administration budget was not only bad for businesses, but also bad for residents, and if the track record were to follow they would not stick to their budget. He urged other members to reject the proposed budget presented.

Councillor Janet Campbell, Cabinet Member for Families, Health and Social Care, stated that it was no secret to the public that social care had been greatly underfunded by national government, serving temporary fixes to the sector and in a backdrop of 10 years of austerity. Despite the inevitable increasing costs and demand to care services, the council had ended Quarter 3 with an overspend of approximately £21 million. Following the announcement of the successful receipt of the capitalisation direction, they had requested £23 million in Quarter 1 to increase the baseline budget. This was a stance which the council had been in the past, which now put the council in good stead to safely and wisely make the cuts necessary to eventually adjust spending in-line with other local authorities. Those 5% budget cuts would be achieved by working closely with the commissioning team and reviewing and decreasing contracts, placements and care packages.

Councillor Campbell explained that the departments had made several cultural financial measure changes, including a challenge panel, a spending review

panel and making direct payments made by default. The council's social workers empowered people to identify their support network. They were promoting resilience, determination and strength rather than looking at care packages as immediate solutions. To this date this approach saw £150,000 of savings which reduced spending by Quarter 2.

Councillor Campbell told Council that she was keen to see the progress of the locality and integrated care networks to work more closely with the Clinical Care Commission (CCG), the NHS and the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM). In these organisations, there was great potential of local staff, local knowledge and bespoke budget to achieve good outcomes working together. Those factors working together would see long term savings, aiming at the focus of achieving the budgetary savings, whilst improving residents experience. Councillor Campbell moved on to say that the council was clear on the risks that long term Covid could bring to the carer sector and that she was keen to listen to residents through the Croydon Listening Campaign, which was launched last month to hear resident's health concerns. She lastly stated that it was important to challenge the proposed budget with facts and not to misinform residents as an attempt of scaremongering.

Councillor Yvette Hopley stated that the proposed budget disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable and poorest in the borough; those who were sick, mentally ill, disabled and those who relied on the council to help them navigate through services and support them in everyday life. The Labour Administration had chosen to make decisions that would impact the availability of services for desperate residents who were simultaneously trying to get through the pandemic, and where in many cases had not left their homes in nearly a year. It was the residents who were not able to care for themselves and were in receipt of complex care packages who were going to be hardest hit by these decisions. Following these proposals, over 7,000 residents would see their complex care packages impacted, and in particular a huge hit to 2,500 residents where that change would be significant. Those were the residents who would bear the brunt of the 20% savings forecasted in this area; £17 million for 2021-22, £10.7 million in 2022-23 and £9.5 million in 2023-24. The overspend in Quarter 3 alone was £21.3 million.

Savage cuts had already been experienced by the departments supporting those vulnerable residents, such as the abolition of the Disability Employment Team and the Welfare Rights Team. Many other services were set to be cut, including the transportation service which supported elderly residents who were housebound, care beds were being removed for sick residents being discharged from hospital, the support centre, the voluntary sector and the Peter Sylvester Centre's future was now uncertain.

The Labour Administration should not expect health partners or the voluntary sector, who were expecting further cuts, to bail out their situation. Despite the Administration receiving a £120 million capitalisation direction from the Conservative central government, they persisted to attack the most vulnerable in the borough. Councillor Hopley said she opposed the budget.

Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice, Cabinet Member for Homes, stated that a key factor to a person's success was having a place to call home. Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice said that the Housing Resident Account (HRA) was ambitious for residents of Croydon and she shared the work of the HRA with Council. She explained that despite the government edict that reduced the HRA income by £34 million over four years, the council continued to make difficult, responsible but humane decisions in delivering a great service to tenants. Following the tragedy of Grenfell, the Administration prioritised the safety of the borough's tenants, independent of the government's promise of recompense. Croydon was the first local authority to install sprinklers in their high-risk housing blocks, where the true value of the decisions was demonstrated when two potentially fatal fires were extinguished by the new defence pioneering installation of ground source heat pumps - which was also a step closer to the council's ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Tenants of those blocks were now benefitting from a 60% reduction in their bills by their energy being harnessed from the earth's heat and thus providing natural cheap energy; which would contribute to a healthier environment for future generations.

Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice described the success of Croydon Affordable Homes LLP (CAH) and said the charity had provided Croydon with 350 genuinely affordable homes, with more plans to come. CAH's additional value was the profit generated which injected into the HRA, where over the relatively new organisation's operation had generated £1.5 million that had benefitted all citizens of Croydon. Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice explained that without a home a downward spiral of poverty would continue for a person and she was proud to say that the council had reversed this trend over the years for many by increasing the housing supply in the borough, by 800 homes which was more than the Opposition's time in office. The council would continue their hard work, whilst being cognisant of cost. She said the borough should pay attention the quote from the UK Ambassador to the UN of that how society treated its most vulnerable was a measure of its humanity. Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice supported the budget.

Councillor Stuart Milson stated the bail-out of this council was the biggest in history of local authorities and was not one caused by the pandemic, but from errors and incompetence over many years. This budget was the start of that payback, but it was not the Labour Administration who were still yet to take the pay cuts that all members voted through in November 2020. The payback was on current residents who would be asked to pay higher taxes and see vital services cut to the bone or scrapped entirely. It was true that Croydon received less funding from central government than it statistically should, but therefore needed to be led with human literacy and pragmatism. Unfortunately the necessary tough decisions for the council had been made much harder, because since 2014, the watchwords of Croydon Labour had been arrogant, bullying and incompetent. There was a vast amount to cover on the Administration's incompetence relating to the management of Brick-by Brick and the Croydon Park Hotel. The Labour Administration's had made desperate attempts to manipulate to balance the council's accounts.

Over the years, GPAC had asked the council to accept that, while funding may not be where it should be for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), the budget gap could not be wished away. The 2019-20 account claimed that the gap between what credit was received from government and what it spent on UASC was unpaid revenue, and that the government was a debtor who would pay money to the council when asked. A similar event happened in Quarter 3 during 2020 when £7.7 million of spending shifted from the revenue account to the capital account, which Councillor Cummings highlighted at February 2020 Cabinet. After GPAC on 4 March 2021, it was abundantly clear that the 2019-20 accounts would need to be adjusted and to address those movements. The Administration's bad decisions were not hard to find.

Brick-by-Brick was troubled since the set-up and the Croydon Park Hotel was always going to be an enormous risk, as pointed out at the time by the Opposition. Anyone who questioned the Labour Administration's decisions were at best belittled, but were also led to believe, threatened and bullied behind the backdrop. Councillor Stuart Millson asked how the people who made these decisions keep their positions as councillors and further stated that there were members of Cabinet who voted on these past decisions claiming moral authority to continue to lead the council. This budget was a punishment on residents for the failings of Croydon Labour.

Councillor Andrew Pelling thanked the Labour Group for a third opportunity to speak at Council since the May 2014 elections and stated that as an infrequent speaker he could share a detached viewpoint to others. He told Council that the Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali, had shown great sagacity since the beginning of the crisis saying that both parties needed to reflect on their contribution to events. There was a time where the Opposition would move an alternative budget and at this time it was not sufficient for opposition members to oppose the Administration's budget, but they should move an alternative if the party wanted to be elected in the 2022 Local Elections.

Considering that the Opposition were not clear of historical extravagant expenditure, due to the expense of Bernard Wetherill House, they showed disproportionate glee. This included central government by imposing a penal rate of interest to the council, costing £24 million, which could be described as a Conservative tax to the Administration. Councillor Pelling stated that he did not wish to blame the government for the circumstances, however many problems routed to the distortions that came with the council tax system; an emergency measure following the failure of the poll tax. Since, councils were driven to take risks and make investments in areas their expertise could not compete. Croydon was treated with the same level of funding it received when once a dormitory suburban outer city town, which could be described as poor treatment when comparing those funding figure to inner borough's.

Councillor Pelling stated that it was important to recognise problems from the Labour Administration which included a culture of bullying and a culture of boycotting whistle-blowers in the public domain. To conclude, this was the

second crisis Labour had faced whilst in power, the first being the 27% council tax increase. As described by the Leader, Councillor Pelling said that it would be a tough task for the Administration to win back trust, particularly in the eve of the Local Elections. Lastly, he was encouraged that Labour was offering more in terms of aspiration, demonstrating proper growth in the real stress areas of adults and children's services.

Councillor Lynne Hale welcomed news that the government announced they would help the Labour Administration to balance their budget and said that it was a pity that the Administration had not expressed much gratitude for providing that essential support. She stated that this evening there had been misdirected anger from some members at the Opposition for daring to challenge and ask the important questions around the ongoing poor decision-making and overspending of the Labour Administration.

It was clear that the government had acted with caution about giving the Administration access to any more public money, particularly with the largest bailout request in history of local authorities, therefore significant conditions were attached. The latest financial figures show that Labour had been hiding details they did not want to be known. It was clear that Labour were incapable of grasping the fact that the council needed to live within its means and not spend money it did not have. Labour Cabinet Members who were paid by the Croydon taxpayer had been overseeing council departments which were regularly over spending public money, representing a clear lack of oversight and control. The monumental risks taken by the Administration using taxpayer's money was shocking; buying a hotel and a retail park, ignoring continuing warnings about Brick by Brick and its failure to repay its loans and deliver the homes promised and running the council's financial reserves down to a dangerously low level.

Croydon residents would now have to pay the price for the Labour council's lack of financial discipline and face rising tax bills, reduction to services and hardworking council officers would pay with their jobs. Lastly, Councillor Lynne Hale expressed her dismay with the audacity of the four councillor's chiefly responsible, previously holding Cabinet positions, for the financial mess poised to vote for this council budget this evening and backing residents having to pay the bill for their failings. Councillor Lynne Hale stated that she did not support the motion.

Councillor Stuart King, The Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal and Deputy Leader, told Council that he was pleased to respond to the debate and demonstrate a culmination of determined action by the Administration to fix the council's finances. The setting of this budget was an important step towards the council's financial strength and stability, and the government's acknowledgement of the willingness to take the necessary tough decisions. During this debate, it was clear that the Opposition was either in denial about the need for difficult decisions or they were standing in the side-lines for political gain; whilst the majority group were continuing their vital work. There were signs from the minority group of political analysis, however no apparent action and they had only opposed millions of savings whilst failing to produce

an alternative budget. The Opposition say that the budget spending was too high, whilst at the same time criticising the savings proposed. The Secretary of State was clear in their letter to the Administration that the council must meet all identified budget gaps without any additional borrowing and therefore the savings plan within the budget must be delivered.

Whilst the council welcomed the capitalisation direction as positive news, the financial position of the council would continue to be challenging. There was no allowance for complacency on the part of the new Administration and the responsibility tasked was in its early stages on the road to recovery. Councillor Stuart King supported the budget for approval.

Council Tax and budget vote

Recommendations 1.2 to 1.4, as detailed in the report, were taken as three separate recorded votes.

The first recorded vote was for recommendation 1.2: a 1.99% increase in the Council Tax for Croydon Services (a level of increase Central Government has assumed in all Councils' spending power calculation).

The members who voted in favour were: Councillors Hamida Ali, Muhammed Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Leila Ben-Hassel, Alison Butler, Janet Campbell, Robert Canning, Sherwan Chowdhury, Chris Clark, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Patsy Cummings, Nina Degrad, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Felicity Flynn, Clive Fraser, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Tony Newman, Andrew Pelling, Joy Prince, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Caragh Skipper, David Wood, Louisa Woodley, Callton Young and Maddie Henson.

The members who voted against were: Councillors Jeet Bains, Sue Bennett, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Jan Buttinger, Richard Chatterjee, Luke Clancy, Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Simon Hoar, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Stuart Milson, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Oni Oviri, Ian Parker, Helen Pollard, Badsha Quadir, Tim Pollard, Helen Redfern, Scott Roche, Andy Stranack, Gareth Streeter and Robert Ward.

The recommendation was carried; 40 votes in favour and 27 against.

The second recorded vote was for recommendation 1.3: a 3.00% increase in the Adult Social Care precept (a charge Central Government has assumed all councils' will levy in its spending power calculations).

The members who voted in favour were: Councillors Hamida Ali, Muhammad Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Leila Ben-Hassel, Sue Bennett, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttinger, Janet Campbell, Robert Canning, Sherwan Chowdhury, Richard Chatterjee, Luke Clancy, Chris Clark, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Mario Creatura, Nina Degrad, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming,

Felicity Flynn, Clive Fraser, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Simon Hoar, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Stuart Millson, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Oni Oviri, Ian Parker, Andrew Pelling, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Helen Redfern, Scott Roche, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Andy Stranack, Gareth Streeter, Robert Ward, David Wood, Louisa Woodley, Callton Young and Maddie Henson.

The recommendation was carried unanimously.

The third recorded vote was for recommendation 1.4: to note the draft GLA increase of 9.5% on the Council Tax precept for 2021/22.

The members who voted in favour were: Councillors Hamida Ali, Muhammed Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Leila Ben-Hassel, Alison Butler, Janet Campbell, Robert Canning, Sherwan Chowdhury, Chris Clark, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Patsy Cummings, Nina Degrad, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Felicity Flynn, Clive Fraser, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Tony Newman, Andrew Pelling, Joy Prince, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Caragh Skipper, David Wood, Louisa Woodley, Callton Young and Maddie Henson.

The members who voted against were: Councillors Jeet Bains, Sue Bennett, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Jan Buttinger, Richard Chatterjee, Luke Clancy, Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Simon Hoar, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Stuart Milson, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Oni Oviri, Ian Parker, Helen Pollard, Badsha Quadir, Tim Pollard, Helen Redfern, Scott Roche, Andy Stranack, Gareth Streeter and Robert Ward.

The recommendation was carried; 40 votes in favour and 27 against.

The remaining recommendations (1.1 and 1.5 to 1.13, as detailed in the report) were taken en block and were carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: The Members of Council resolved to agree the following recommendations:

- 1.1. Council's request for a Capitalisation Direction of £150m covering financial years 2020/21 to 2023/24.
- 1.2. A 1.99% increase in the Council Tax for Croydon Services (a level of increase Central Government has assumed in all Councils' spending power calculation).
- 1.3. A 3.00% increase in the Adult Social Care precept (a charge Central Government has assumed all councils' will levy in its spending power calculations).
- 1.4. To note the draft GLA increase of 9.5% on the Council Tax precept for

2021/22.

- 1.5. With reference to the principles for 2021/22 determined by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) confirm that in accordance with s.52ZB (1) the Council Tax and GLA precept referred to above are not excessive in terms of the most recently issued principles and as such to note that no referendum is required. This is detailed further in section 3.8 of this report.
- 1.6. The calculation of budget requirement and council tax as set out in Appendix C and D including the GLA increase this will result in a total increase of 5.83% in the overall council tax bill for Croydon.
- 1.7. The revenue budget assumptions as detailed in this report and the associated appendices
- 1.8. The programme of revenue savings, income and growth by department for Financial Years 2021/22 to 2023/24 (Appendix A).
- 1.9. The Capital Programme as set out in Section 18, table 17 and 18 of this report, except where noted for specific programmes are subject to separate Cabinet reports.
- 1.10. To agree that in light of the impact on the Council's revenue budget no Capital contractual commitment should be entered into until a review of revenue affordability has been concluded.
- 1.11. To approve that any receipts that come from the Council's Housing company Brick by Brick will first be applied to the accrued interest and any subsequent receipts will be used to pay down the principle loan balance.
- 1.12. To note there are no proposed amendments to the Council's existing Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2021/22.
- 1.13. The adoption of the Pay Policy statement at Appendix G.

19/21 **Recommendations of Cabinet or Committees to Council for decision**

Cabinet, 1 March 2021

i) Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2021/2022;

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Stuart King to move the recommendation referred from Cabinet on 1 March 2021 relating to the treasury management objective for the forthcoming year. Councillor Stuart King moved the motion

and Councillor Callton Young seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council agreed the recommendation in the report.

Cabinet, 18 February 2021

ii) Rent Setting Policy for Council Homes;

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Jane Avis to move the recommendation referred from Cabinet on 18 February 2021 relating to the rent setting policies for council homes. Councillor Jane Avis moved the motion and Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council unanimously agreed the recommendation in the report.

iii) Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd: Brick by Brick Shareholder decision – the future of the company;

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Hamida Ali to move the recommendation referred from Cabinet on 18 February 2021 relating to Brick by Brick. Councillor Hamida Ali moved the motion and Councillor Callton Young seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council agreed the recommendation in the report.

iv) Croydon Equalities Strategy;

Madam Mayor invited Councillor David Wood to move the recommendation referred from Cabinet on 18 February 2021 relating to the Equalities Strategy. Councillor David Wood moved the motion and Councillor Patsy Cummings seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council unanimously agreed the recommendation in the report.

Ethics Committee, 11 February 2021

v) Succession Planning for and Recruitment and Appointment of Further Independent Persons; and

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Clive Fraser to move the recommendation referred from Ethics Committee on 11 February 2021 relating to the appointment of independent members to the committee. Councillor Clive Fraser moved the motion and Councillor Pat Clouder seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council unanimously agreed the recommendation in the report.

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Ethics Committee, 19 February 2021

vi) Complaint under the Councillor Code of Conduct

Madam Mayor invited Councillor Clive Fraser to move the recommendation referred from Ethics Committee on 19 February 2021 relating to the Councillor Code of Conduct. Councillor Clive Fraser moved the motion and Councillor Pat Clouder seconded.

Madam Mayor moved the vote and Council unanimously agreed the recommendation in the report.

20/21 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This item was not required.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Signed:

Date:

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REPORT TO:	Council 11 October 2021
SUBJECT:	APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM STATUTORY CHIEF OFFICERS
LEAD OFFICER:	Katherine Kerswell Chief Executive
WARDS:	ALL

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is recommended to:

- 1.1 Appoint John Jones as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer from the date of this meeting pending recruitment to the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer post on a permanent basis; and
- 1.2 Note the appointment of Richard Ennis as the Council's interim statutory Section 151 Chief Finance Officer and Corporate Director of Resources on 2 September 2021.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report asks Councillors to agree to appoint John Jones as the Interim Monitoring Officer following the resignation of the Council's previous Interim Monitoring Officer, Asmat Hussain.
- 2.2 Councillors are also asked to note the appointment of Richard Ennis as the interim statutory Section 151 Officer and Corporate Director of Resources following the resignation of the previous Interim Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and Section 151 Chief Finance Officer, Chris Buss.

3. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

- 3.1 Under Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended), the Council has a duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer. Neither the Head of Paid Service nor the Chief Finance Officer (section 151 officer) can hold the position of Monitoring Officer. There is no statutory requirement for the position to be held by a legally qualified officer.
- 3.2 The Monitoring Officer has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities relating to the Council's Constitution and its arrangements for effective governance. Those duties include maintaining the Constitution, ensuring the lawfulness and fairness of decision making and promoting high standards of

conduct. The Monitoring Officer's responsibilities are listed in full in Article 12 and Part 5C of the Council's Constitution.

- 3.3 The Council's previous Interim Executive Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer, Asmat Hussain, left the Council's employment on Friday 24 September 2021.
- 3.4 Following a recruitment process involving Members of both political groups, John Jones was the successful candidate for the role of Interim Monitoring Officer. This report asks Council to appoint John Jones to fulfil the role of Monitoring Officer on an interim basis until such time as a permanent appointment is made.
- 3.5 Members will be aware that such a permanent appointment will flow from recommendations regarding the organisational redesign of the Council, including the structure and job roles for the three most senior tiers of management, that were agreed at the Council meeting held on 5 July 2021.

4. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S151 Officer, also known as a Chief Finance Officer, to have responsibility for those arrangements.
- 4.2 As such, the Chief Finance Officer must lead on a local authority's financial functions and ensure they are fit for purpose. Chief Finance Officers must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced. They cannot also hold the position of Monitoring Officer and their full duties are detailed in Article 12 of the Constitution.
- 4.3 In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the Chief Finance Officer must be a member of one of the following bodies in order to qualify as a responsible officer:
 - (a) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales;
 - (b) the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland;
 - (c) the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants;
 - (d) the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy;
 - (e) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland;
 - (f) the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants; and
 - (g) any other body of accountants established in the United Kingdom and for the time being approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section.
- 4.4 Following a recruitment process involving Members of both political groups, and in accordance with powers delegated to her under paragraph 3.3(2) of Part 4J of the Constitution, the Chief Executive appointed Richard Ennis as the Interim Director of Finance with effect from 23 August 2021. Richard Ennis is a member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

- 4.5 This appointment allowed a handover period prior to the departure of the outgoing Interim Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and Section 151 Chief Finance Officer, Chris Buss, whose last working day at the Council was 1 September 2021. Chris Buss remained the Council's Interim Chief Finance Officer during that handover period and Richard Ennis has been the Interim Chief Finance Officer since 2 September 2021.
- 4.6 Following the departure of the Interim Executive Director of Resources, Asmat Hussain on 24 September 2021, and in keeping with the organisational redesign of the Council that was agreed at the Council meeting held on 5 July 2021, Richard Ennis has now moved into the position of Interim Corporate Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no new financial implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

Approved by Matthew Davis, Interim Director of Finance.

6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Council may generally appoint such staff as it considers necessary for the proper discharge of its functions, as the Council thinks fit. However, there are certain statutory appointments which must be made.
- 6.2 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the 1989 Act') section 5 (as amended by the Local Government Act 2000) places a duty upon the Council to designate one of their officers to be known as the Monitoring Officer. The duties of the Monitoring Officer include the requirement in section 5A to prepare a report to the Council if at any time it appears to him/her that any proposal, decision or omission by the Council or any of the Council's committees, sub-committees or officers or any joint committee on which the Council is represented has given rise to or is likely to give rise to a contravention by the Council of any enactment or rule of law or any such maladministration. The Monitoring Officer also has additional statutory responsibilities set out in the Localism Act 2011 regarding maintenance of the ethical framework for Members.
- 6.3 The Council is separately required to provide the Monitoring Officer with such staff, accommodation and other resources as are, in his/her opinion, sufficient to allow those duties to be performed.
- 6.4 The officer so designated by the Council may not be the head of the authority's paid service or its chief finance officer.
- 6.5 Section 5(7) of the 1989 Act goes on to provide that the Monitoring Officer has the power to appoint deputies.
- 6.6 Separately the Council's Constitution provides in the Staff Employment Procedure Rules at part 4J the procedures to be followed for the appointment of Chief Officers (which includes the Monitoring Officer), the declaration which

must be made by candidates and a notification process to ensure that the Leader and any other Cabinet Members have no objections to the offer of appointment.

- 6.7 This report is designed to ensure compliance with the statutory responsibilities placed upon the Council regarding such an appointment.

Approved by Doutimi Aseh, (Interim) Director of Law & Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no Human Resources implications beyond those detailed in the body of the report.

Approved by: Jennifer Sankar, Head of Human Resources

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 The appointment processes for both roles set out in this report have been undertaken in accordance with the Council's agreed processes.

Approved by: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy, Programmes and Performance

CONTACT OFFICER: Katherine Kerswell, Chief Executive

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: There are no unpublished documents which have been relied on in the production of this report.

Agenda Item 7

REPORT TO:	COUNCIL 11 OCTOBER 2021
SUBJECT:	CROYDON QUESTION TIME: PUBLIC QUESTIONS LEADER AND CABINET QUESTIONS
LEAD OFFICER:	Katherine Kerswell, Chief Executive
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: The business reports of the Leader and Cabinet are prepared in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules at Part 4A of the Constitution.	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the process for:
- public questions; and
 - questions to the Leader and Cabinet from Councillors.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Part 4A of the Constitution details the process that allows for the Leader and Cabinet Members to take oral questions. Question Time is split into two part; public questions and Councillors' questions to the Leader and Cabinet.

Public Questions

- 2.2 Public questions can be asked of the Leader or Cabinet Members on issues of policy at the Meeting as set out within the Constitution Part 4A, Sections 3.12 – 3.15. Any questions of a purely factual or of a detailed nature that cannot be answered on the evening shall be noted and shall receive a written response within three weeks following the meeting. The responses shall be published on the Council's website.
- 2.3 Public Questions shall only be taken at Ordinary Council meetings and shall be allocated a total time of 30 minutes. This timeframe shall include both the questions and responses by the relevant Cabinet Members or Leader.
- 2.4 The Mayor has absolute discretion to decline to allow any question to be dealt with under this procedure on the grounds that it addresses matters that would be inappropriate to consider at the meeting, including where the questions being asked are repetitive or have already been addressed.

- 2.5 Following advice from the Government and Public Health England to enforce social distancing and prevent the spread of Coronavirus, the Council is holding public meetings in the Town Hall under strict conditions to limit the risk of all those attending public meetings. As a result, attendance in the public gallery is limited to 10 persons and any residents wishing to ask questions in person are encouraged to register their attendance in advance to avoid disappointment.
- 2.6 However, in accordance with Part 4A, paragraph 3.15(ii), the Mayor may also accept questions from Members of the Public submitted by email to the designated email address by 12 noon on the Friday prior to an ordinary Council meeting. The Mayor will put questions received by email to the Leader or the relevant Cabinet Member and, where a number of questions are received on the same subject, the Mayor may put a summary of those questions instead.

Leader and Cabinet Questions:

- 2.7 This item is to enable Members to ask questions of the Leader and Cabinet on issues of policy. Any questions of a purely factual or of a detailed nature that cannot be answered on the evening shall be noted and shall receive a written response within three weeks following the meeting. The responses shall be published on the Council’s website.
- 2.8 Questions which relate to a current planning or licensing matter or any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment shall not be permitted. In addition, questions shall not be received or responded to where they pertain to anticipated or ongoing litigation, conciliation or mediation or any employment or personnel related issues or disputes.
- 2.9 The Leader shall be the first to respond to questions under this item and the total time allocated to questions by Members to, and responses from the Leader, shall be 15 minutes. The first two minutes of the Leader’s 15 minute slot may be used by the Leader to make any announcements.
- 2.10 Cabinet Members, divided up into three ‘pools’ of three Members each, shall thereafter respond to questions by other Members of the Council. The total time allocated to each ‘pool’ of Cabinet Members shall be 30 minutes. The three Cabinet Members shall each be permitted to use two minutes of this 30 minute slot to make announcements.
- 2.11 The ‘pools’ for this meeting will be as follows:

Pool 1

Name	Portfolio
Patricia Hay-Justice	Cabinet Member for Homes
Manju Shahul-Hameed	Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety & Business Recovery
Muhammad Ali	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Croydon

Pool 2

Name	Portfolio
Stuart King	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Croydon Renewal
Callton Young	Cabinet Member for Resources & Financial Governance

Pool 3

Name	Portfolio
Janet Campbell	Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care
Oliver Lewis	Cabinet Member for Culture & Regeneration
Alisa Flemming	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning

- 2.12 Representatives of political groups may give advance notice to the Council Solicitor by 12 noon on the Friday preceding an ordinary Council Meeting, the names of the first two Members of their respective political group that they wish the Mayor to call to ask a question of each Member of the Cabinet, including the Leader of the Council.
- 2.13 After those Members have been called, the Mayor will call Members that indicate they have a question, with a presumption of inviting questions from as many different Members as possible. Each Member asking a question will also be allowed to ask a supplementary questions.

CONTACT OFFICER: Cliona May
Senior Democratic Services and Governance Officer –
Council & Regulatory

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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REPORT TO:	COUNCIL 11 OCTOBER 2021
SUBJECT:	MEMBER PETITIONS
LEAD OFFICER:	Stephen Rowan, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: This report is prepared in keeping with paragraphs 3.26 to 3.31 of the Council Procedure Rules at Part 4A of the Constitution.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council is asked to note the petitions presented by Councillors at the meeting as listed in paragraph four of the report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 In accordance with Part 4A of the Council's Constitution up to three Members of the Council can present petitions to any ordinary meeting of the Council, with the exception of any meeting of the Council reserved for the setting of Council Tax.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Part 4A of the Constitution allows up to three Councillors to present petitions to meetings of the Full Council.
- 3.2 The Constitution requires that a petition must contain "the signatures of at least 100 local people or 50% of the local people affected by the subject" in order to be presented at a Council meeting.
- 3.3 The full petition wording of each of the three Member petitions to be received will be included in the Council agenda (see paragraph four below). The Member petitions will be received but shall not be the subject of a debate or questions at that or a subsequent Council meeting.
- 3.4 Where possible, the Cabinet Member shall provide a response at the Council meeting at which the Member's petition is received. Where a response is not provided at the meeting, a written response shall be provided within three weeks of the meeting.

4. PETITIONS TO BE PRESENTED TO COUNCIL AT THIS MEETING

4.1 The Monitoring Officer has received notice of the following petitions to be presented to this meeting of the Council:

a) Petition presented by **Councillor Stephen Mann** on behalf of residents:

'Petition to Lower the Speed Limit to 20 mph on Crown Dale from the Students and Parents of the Norwood School and the St Josephs Federation.'

b) Petition presented by **Councillor Stuart King** on behalf of residents:

'Please introduce a controlled parking scheme in the Gonville, Blakemore and Trafford Roads, Thornton Heath, CR7 so that residents can park close to their homes, children can cross roads safely, visibility for drivers is improved, and out of area commuters, recreational and commercial vehicles are not parked on a long-term basis. The recent introduction of a controlled parking zone in a nearby area has increased congestion on these roads and a controlled parking scheme is required to reduce this.'

c) Petition presented by **Councillor Andrew Pelling** on behalf of residents:

'Request for a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN, or Safe Street) by excluding through traffic along Woodplace Lane from/to Surrey.'

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 Where possible the Cabinet Member will respond to the petition at the meeting.

5.2 Where a more detailed response is required, a written response shall be provided within three weeks of the meeting.

CONTACT OFFICER: Cliona May
Senior Democratic Services and Governance
Officer – Council & Regulatory

APPENDICES: None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

REPORT TO:	COUNCIL 11 OCTOBER 2021
SUBJECT:	CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL ANNUAL REPORT
LEAD OFFICER:	STEPHEN ROWAN, HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND SCRUTINY
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	
This report is prepared in keeping with paragraphs 3.42 – 3.49 of the Council Procedure Rules at Part 4A of the Constitution.	

1.	RECOMMENDATIONS
1.1	The Council is asked to receive and consider the Corporate Parenting Panel’s 2020-21 Annual Report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 In accordance with Part 4A of the Council’s Constitution, Council can receive Annual Reports from Committees. The Constitution also prescribes how these Annual Reports are treated by Council.

3. PROCEDURE FOR ANNUAL REPORTS

3.1 In accordance with para 3.47 of Part 4A of the Council’s Constitution, the overall time which may be devoted to question the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report shall be not more than 10 minutes. The Chair of the Committee (or in absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair) shall introduce and answer questions on the report. The Chair of the Committee shall not have more than 3 minutes speaking time to introduce the report.

3.2 For the remaining time available, the report will be open to questions.

3.3 Any Member, except the Seconder of the Report, may ask the Chair or Vice-Chair, as appropriate, not more than two questions on each paragraph of the report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Cliona May
Senior Democratic Services and Governance
Officer – Council & Regulatory

APPENDIX 1:

Corporate Parenting Panel's Annual Report 2020-
2021

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2020 - 2021

be the change
for children and young people in croydon



Forward



By Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member and Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Welcome to our Corporate Parenting Annual Report, which details the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and our services to children looked after and care leavers. During the last year the Corporate Parenting Panel have been mindful of the impact of Covid 19 and the issuing of the s114 notice by the London Borough of Croydon.

The role of 'Corporate Parent' is a collective responsibility of the Council. Many of our children looked after care leavers will have faced difficulties in their early years that will place them amongst the most disadvantaged in our society if we do not provide the care, stability and support needed to help them achieve their ambitions.

The work of our Participation Team, specifically EMPIRE our Children in Care Council and the feedback we receive from our children and young people through various means, play an integral part in Croydon's improvement journey. Our children and care leavers voices help us to keep focussed at ground level and influence development of services in the right way.

As corporate parents we all want the best for our children. We are proud of their achievements and create opportunities to celebrate with them. I am proud of all our young people and their achievements and it is a privilege to work with them.

As a council it's so important that we take steps to be the best corporate parent and corporate family that we can be. I am committed to doing everything I can to support children and care leavers so that they can benefit from the many opportunities our borough has to offer.

Everyone can play their part in this – from businesses and the voluntary sector to families who can offer a foster home to those children who need one.

Our annual report is a summary of the work presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2020-2021 and is a celebration of the success and achievements of both our staff, children and young people.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the achievements, progress and challenges in meeting the needs of Croydon's Children Looked After and Care Leavers in 2020/2021. This was an unprecedented year in terms of the challenges for children looked after and care leavers due to Covid19 and the restrictions on society as a whole. Many children and young people experienced loss within their families and networks and the usual routines and safety networks were significantly limited.
- 1.2. Within Croydon face to face visits to children that are looked after and care leavers was disrupted. Croydon operated virtual visits throughout the year, interspersed with face to face visits when lockdown conditions allowed. From January 2021 alternate virtual and face to face visits have taken place.
- 1.3. The 2020 financial crisis within Croydon, resulting in the issuing of a S114 notice also impacted upon service delivery with a tightening of financial controls. This did impact on the payment of some providers and also recognised some areas where budgets were not at the correct level for demand in Croydon
- 1.4. As corporate parents we need to understand our strengths, our areas of challenge, and take actions to address any identified improvements. Ofsted graded children's services as Good overall in February 2020, Children Looked After and Care leavers received a grading of requires improvement. Significant work has been undertaken, within the challenging Covid19 and S114 environments to improve the level of service further for children that are looked after.
- 1.5. During 2020-2021 our efforts focused on:
 - Working towards improving the health of children looked after
 - Increasing our children access and support to remain in educational employment and training (EET)
 - Reviewing Children Social care performance to improve care planning for our children
 - Improving our children placements stability and permanence planning
 - Improving compliance with statutory requirements and good practice



2. Corporate Parenting Panel

- 2.1. The statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services (in Croydon this is the Executive Director, Children, Families and Education) and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, states that the Council has a responsibility to act as an effective and caring corporate parent for all children looked after and care leavers. There is a strong emphasis on improving educational attainment, providing stable and high quality placements and proper planning for when young people leave care. The council takes its responsibility for Children looked after and care leavers very seriously and closely monitors the services provided to these young people to ensure that all Children looked after and care leavers are safe, healthy and happy and aspire to be the best they can be.
- 2.2. The term 'Child Looked after' refers to any child or young person for whom the local authority has, or shares, parental responsibility, or for whom care and accommodation is provided on behalf of their parent/s. The term "child" can refer to any child or young person aged 0 to 18 years. The council also has a duty and responsibility to those young people who leave their long-term care from the age of 16 years until they reach the age of 25 years.
- 2.3. A cross-party Croydon Corporate Parenting Panel of elected members, looked after young people, foster carers and cross council senior officers has been in place since 2007. The panel provides governance and challenge to ensure that outcomes for Children looked after continue to improve via regular panel meetings throughout the year, meeting with young people to hear directly from them their views and experiences of service offered.

2.4. The panel will review outcomes for services to Children Looked After and Young People Leaving Care, including Management Information and Performance Indicators monitoring all aspects of Children in Care. The data details the following:

The number and age range of Children Looked After;

Health information;

Distance children are placed from their home address;

Education attainment and attendance;

Personal Education Plan compliance;

The number of young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);

The number of statutory visits completed within the timeframe;

The number of Children and Young People who have up-to date plans.

2.6. Our priorities for 2021-2022 are based on the analysis in this annual report, Ofsted recommendations and our broader understanding of our children looked after and care leavers we have identified the following actions as our priorities for the year ahead that we are already working on:

- **Right to a family life**

Throughout 2020/21 there was a renewed effort to ensure that only children who need to be looked after enter the care system. Through improved work with families the number of children requiring care has reduced and a number of children have returned to their families with support.

Where children do need to become looked after the provision of care within a family environment is our priority, considering wider family and friends before placing a child with foster carers.

During 2021/22 commissioning suitable accommodation that is able to meet children's care needs and recruiting foster carers (30 for Croydon campaign) is a priority.

- **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

Due to the location of Lunar House in Croydon we have always provided care and support for this most vulnerable group of children and young people. The expertise that has developed has been recognised by the home office and we are seconding a small expert team to help ensure practice develops for all UASC. We will continue to work hard to ensure that all UASC receive the care they need, whether in Croydon or through transfer to another local authority.

- **Health & Wellbeing:**

During 2020/21 the skills of the embedded systemic practitioners will be utilised across teams, enabling more direct work with families and enabling a 'Trauma Informed' approach to work, recognising the impact that Covid19 has had on many of our children and young people.

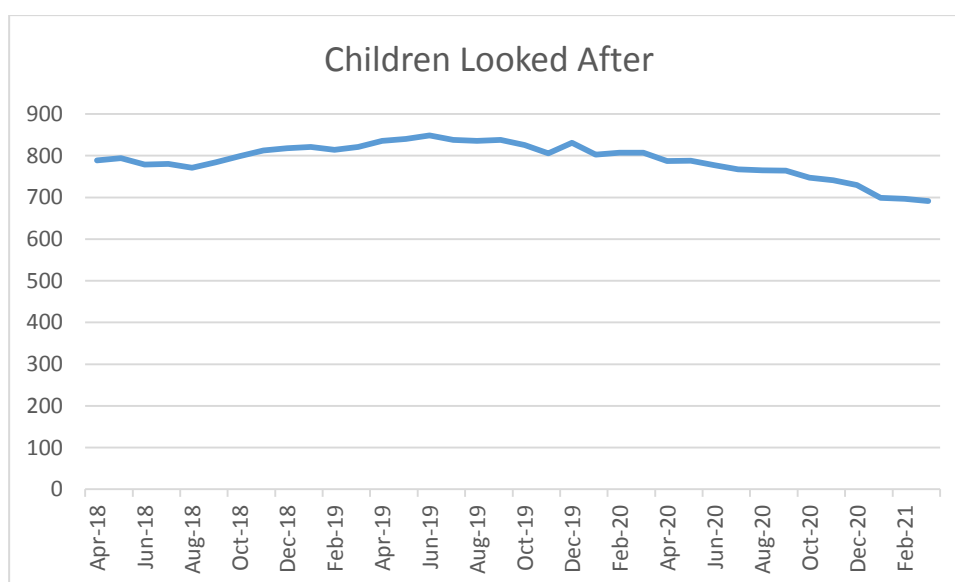
- **Transitions & care and pathway planning:** Continue to improve preparation for independence for Care Leavers and reduce the number of children and young people who experience poor outcome. Our focus has been on proactive care and Pathway planning that identifies clear routes and objectives to transition from dependent to independent lives. We would like to see clear ways for our Care leavers to access a housing pathway that will meet their need. We have updated our "local offer" and are working on updating our "staying put" policy.
- **Engaging in education or training:** 2020/21 has been unique in relation to the disruption to education for many children and young people. Our Looked After and Care Leavers population have been supported with their education throughout this period, however the challenges to on-line learning and future employment/training has impacted. Throughout 21/22 each child's education, employment and training needs will be a priority working alongside the virtual school and employers to actively promote opportunities and support.

3. Children looked after: Demographics, health and education

3.1. The number of children that are looked after has further reduced by 12% during 2020/21. With a rate of 72.8 children per 10,000 being looked after in Croydon we continue to present a high rate compared to other London authorities (52.8), however we are closer to the average rate for England (67). If Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are not counted in this rate then a rate of 50.7 was represented at 31/3/2021.

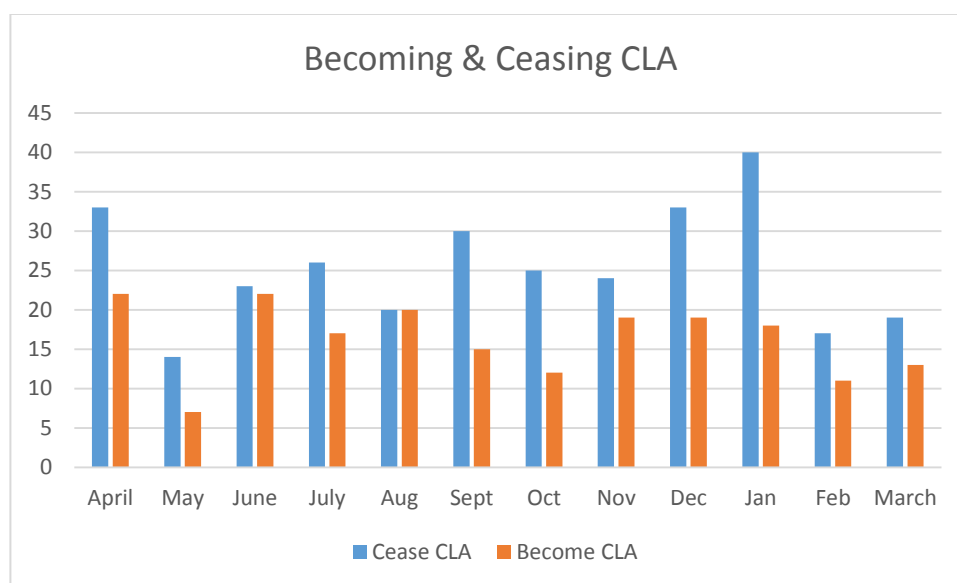


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Croydon	87.00	83.00	81.00	86.00	85.00	72.8
Statistical Neighbours	56.30	54.20	54.60	53.70	52.8	Not available
England	60.00	62.00	64.00	65.00	67.00	Not available



3.2. During 2020/2021 there was a reduction of 22% in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children that are Looked After by Croydon, with 210 Unaccompanied children looked after at 31/3/2021.

3.3. The reduction in children Looked after can be seen in the comparison of the number of children becoming looked after alongside the number of children ceasing to be looked after. Children reaching 18 will cease to be looked after and are then supported as a care leaver.



3.4. **Age & Gender:** The majority of our CLA are between 10-17 years old. 65% of our children in care are male, 30% of which are UASC, 35% of our children are female and only 5% are UASC.

AGE AT 31 MARCH 2021			
MALE 51%		FEMALE 49%	
Under 10:	17.7%	Under 10:	28.6%
10 - 17:	82.3%	10 - 17:	71.4%

3.5. **Ethnicity:** We are looking after a wide range of children from a diverse cultural and ethnic background. 37% of our children are recorded as White or White British, 27% are recorded as Black or Black British, 19% are recorded as Asian or Asian British and the rest are recorded as mixed or other ethnic group. This reflects the CLA population in 2020 as well.

ETHNIC ORIGIN OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 31 MARCH 2021	
White British and White Other	37%
Mixed	14%
Asian or Asian British	19%
Black or Black British	27%
Other ethnic groups	3%

- 3.6. **Type of placement:** In March 2021, 82% of our children were placed in Foster placements (compared with 72% of SNs and England Average data 2018/19). This is a 1% decrease from last year with 51% being placed with in-house foster carers. This is above the SNs 37% and England 50% rates for 2018/2019. 12% were in a Residential provision. The rest of our children were placed with prospective adopters or living with parents.
- 3.7. **Children missing from care:** Children looked after are more likely to go missing than any other children we are involved with as a council. On average, 80% of all missing children during 2020/21 were looked after. When found in average 96% of children are offered a return home interview and 73% of children and young people participated in conversations about the reasons why they go missing and complete this interview with an independent person. Children at risk of exploitation benefit from effective multi-agency information sharing. Action plans developed through the multi-agency complex adolescent's panel are increasingly comprehensive and well targeted.

4. Health for Children Looked After

4.1. During 2020-2021, the way that Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments are undertaken and monitored has been reviewed by the commissioners and includes an operations group chaired by the Service manager for CLA and a monthly quality assurance meeting.

4.2. Public Health have developed an improved CLA Health Needs Assessment to enable a better understanding of Children Looked after Health needs.

4.3. Care Leavers now benefit from a 'Health Passport' which helps them to have a greater understanding of their health needs and to access information. There was a delay in rolling this out due to Covid19, however this has now been in place since August 2020.

4.4. The table below shows the timeliness of assessments as at 31st March 2021.

Looked after children	2020	2021
Percentage of children with health assessments on time @31st March	84%	90%



5. Education of children looked after

Schools: In the academic year Sept 2020- July 2021, the Virtual School worked with 644 children and young people who were in care (CLA) continually for the whole 12 months (including eligible and relevant Care Leavers.) Virtual school works on behalf of all children and young people of 'educational age' which means ages 3-18 in school years, nursery to year 13. This is 32 less CLA who were in care long term, than in the same period last year. There are a number of reasons for the reduction, including a reduced number of UASC YP during the Covid pandemic, an increased number of UASC YP have been transferred to other LA's, at least 15 who had been looked after by Croydon for over 12 months. (Currently 40 YP have ceased to be CLA during the academic year, following being CLA for over a year).

- 5.2. During 2020-2021 a total of 51% of children and young people attended schools in borough and 49% were placed in schools out of borough.
- 5.3. **Special educational needs and disabilities:** 34% of the CLA cohort between 3 and 18 years old were recorded as having SEND needs in the academic year 2020/2021. Of these, 15% had an EHCP and 19% were classified by schools as receiving SEND support. This is a slight rise on 29% in 19-20.
- 5.4. Of the total number of children looked after at the end of the academic year, 54 (7%) attended special schools, a drop on 8% last year.
- 5.5. At the end of 2020/21, 92.4% of statutory school age CLA attended schools rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' or 'Good'. Compared to 90% the previous year.
- 5.6. Virtual School continued to work with Croydon town school-CTS (11-16) and Croydon Town College-CTC (16-25) as our interim provisions for newly arrived young people. The provisions offer a full curriculum complement and intensive ESOL as well as school readiness and preparation for understanding how schools and education in the UK work. There are 20 places at CTS and the school was full throughout the 20-21 with a waiting list. The college had 6 places in 20-21.

Educational Attainment at the end of 2021 academic year (predicted)

- 5.7. 2020/2021 Academic Year was an unusual year with Covid19 ongoing throughout the school year and another full lockdown in the spring term that changed the way our children were able to access education. The Virtual School report presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2020 provides a detailed account of our children progress and challenges.
- 5.8. Our Virtual School noted that formal grades were not submitted to examination boards by schools for EYFS, Year 1 pupils or KS1 and KS2 pupils. Therefore data about our children progress will all be collated and analysed internally over the autumn term by the Virtual School and an updated data

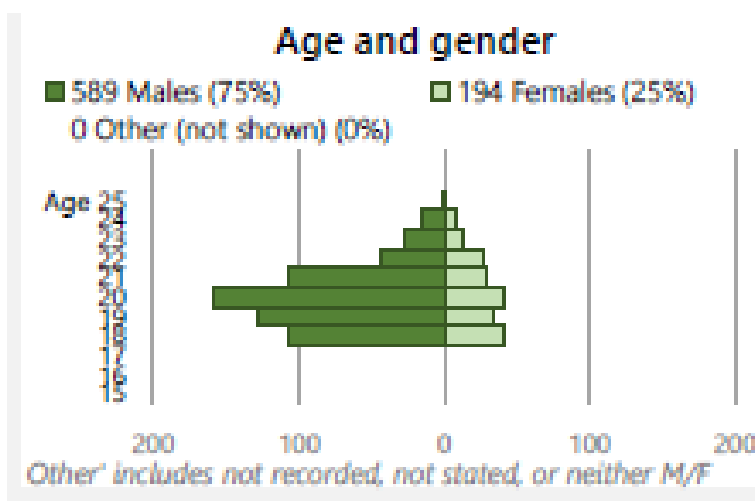
report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting panel. Some of the data submitted is hard to compare to previous years, however we are very proud of our children achievements and not least thankful to the support their carers provided to continue their learning. Currently out of the 15 KS1 pupils who have been CLA for more than a year, 13% are on track for nationally expected levels, with 53% on track for their personal targets in both Reading and Writing and 47% on track for personal targets in Maths. Of the 25 KS2 pupils who have been CLA for more than a year, 44% are on track for nationally expected levels, with 72% on track for their personal targets in Reading and 76% in Writing and 76% on track for personal targets in Maths. Out of the 73 KS4 CLA who have been in care for more than a year, 15% are on track to achieve 5+ GCSE grades including English and Maths at great 4 or above, 47% are on track to meet their own personal target in English and 51% in Maths.

- 5.9. **Personal educational plans (PEPs):** Percentage of CLA at SSA (Statutory School Age) with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviewed & completed on a 6 monthly basis has continued to improve during 2020/2021. The average completion and review within timescale rate was over the 85% target throughout the year. Our Virtual School designated teachers and Virtual Head teacher have been working to improve our children in care access to learning and support progress. This is currently at 96.8%
- 5.10. **Exclusions:** There have been no permanent exclusions of Croydon CLA during the 2020/21 academic year, which is a decrease on the previous year's figure of 2.



6. Care Leavers:

- 6.1. The Children & Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on local authorities, to provide Personal Adviser (PA) support to all care leavers up to age 25, if they want this support.
- 6.2. The duty commenced from 1 April 2018.
- 6.3. As of March 2020, there were 848 young adults in Croydon's care leaver population, which had seen a steady increase during 2019. By March 2021 this number had decreased and there were 786 young people supported by our Leaving Care Service.
- 6.4. **Age and Gender:** 75% of our carer leavers are male and 25 % are females. The majority of our care leavers are between 18-21 years of age. This is relatively unchanged from the previous year.



6.5. **Ethnicity:** In terms of ethnicity, 32% as White British or White Others, 31% of our care leavers are recorded as Black or Black British , 26% recorded as Asian or Asian British, 6% are recorded as other ethnic group and

Ethnic background

White	32%
Mixed	6%
Asian or Asian British	26%
Black or black British	31%
Other ethnic group	6%
Not stated	0%
Not recorded	0%

6.6. **Pathway planning:** All our care leavers should have pathway plans which details how we work together to support them in all aspects of their lives .Our performance in terms of completing the plans has dropped by 1% during 20/21 with 83% of care leavers having up to date plans. There is greater involvement of Young People in developing their pathway plans. The quality of Pathway plans has shown a gradual improvement through the bi-monthly audit process, with most now ranked as Good or above.

6.7. **Education, Employment and Training (EET):**

2020/2021 was a difficult year for many young people, with limited employment opportunities and a number of care leavers experiencing Furlough or uncertainty through zero hour contracts. Throughout 2020/21 there has been a

gradual decline in the numbers of care Leavers who are in Education, Employment or Training.

- 6.8. As at 31st march 2021 57% of care leavers were either in full time or part time Education, Employment or Training. This is an area of concern for us as we enter another year of uncertainty in relation to employment opportunities for young people.
- 6.9. During this period the support and help provided to young people by the income maximisation team has been immeasurable, assisting with housing benefit and entitlements.

7. Fostering

- 7.1. During 2020/21 the partnership arrangements with CORAM came to an end with recruitment campaigns now being managed in house. Our priority is particularly in finding homes for older children, sibling groups, children with disabilities and long- term placements.



- 7.2 As of March 2021 the Fostering Service had a total of 222 approved fostering households that offer short break care, short term foster carers and long term foster carers. This include the “Connected Persons Foster Carers” who are approved to care for specific children. At the end of the year, 314 children looked after were placed with Croydon approved Foster carers.
- 7.3.. The introduction of the two Fostering Reviewing Officers has meant that the carers’ reviews are chaired by an independent person, not the allocated Supervising Social Worker. This allows opportunities to identify support needs

for both carers and children with additional scrutiny. Foster Carers Annual Reviews completion in timescales performance was 95% for the year.

- 7.4.. The Fostering Panel was reviewed in 2019 and a new Panel Chair was appointed and took his role in April 2020. Further work to expand on panel membership and central list was also completed to increase diversity, skills and knowledge.
- 7.5. . Our Foster carers have provided fantastic care for many children and young people during an unprecedented year. The additional pressures placed on family homes due to lockdown have been evident, however the strength of the support network around fostering has helped children maintain positive experiences of being cared for.



8. Adoption & Permanence

- 8.1. Croydon Council no longer operates as an Adoption Agency. Adopt London South (ALS) is our Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and was established in July 2019. ALS is one of the four RAAs that provides adoption services across 23 London Boroughs.
- 8.2. ALS is the largest partnership involving 9 Local Authority services: **Croydon**, Kingston and Richmond operating as AFC, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth. ALS recruits and assesses new adoptive families and finds families for children in partnership with the LA's.

- 8.3. ALS also provides post adoption support to families, children and adopted adults. Services are also available for birth parents and a letterbox system enables indirect contact between birth families and children.
- 8.4. During 2020-2021, 19 Croydon children were adopted compared to 11 in 2019-2020. As with the previous year an average of 17 children were waiting to be matched with a prospective adoptive family at any point during the year. Average time between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family, for children who were adopted (536 days) has reduced from the previous year(553) and is now better than our SN's(549).
- 8.5. During the year 14 children left our care after the court granted a Special Guardianship Order to their carer, family members and/or friends.



9. Voice of children and young people in our care

- 9.1. Croydon's Children in Care Council (E.M.P.I.R.E.) has an active membership and continued to meet virtually throughout the pandemic. The appointment of a Young Director and apprentices is assisting in ensure that children's views are heard and valued. The group has provided invaluable feedback throughout the year. During Practice week (October 2020) young people's experience of transitions between services was provided and has informed a service restructure. E.M.P.I.R.E. was actively involved in helping to develop the sufficiency strategy, fostering service and in Croydon's commitment to challenging discrimination following the death of George Floyd in May 2020. The group will have its own section in Corporate Parenting Panel moving forward and will be supporting service development in a number of areas:

Housing conditions; Communication & Transparency; Care Leavers experience and setting up home allowances.



10. Independent visiting & Mentoring & Advocacy

10.1. The Independent visiting service has continued to provide an independent contact for children looked after during Covid19. Many Independent Visitors maintained regular contact with children and young people, with face to face meetings taking place between lockdown periods. During 2020-2021 there was an average of 95 children and young people matched with an Independent Visitor. A recruitment campaign also took place recruiting a further 15 Independent visitors during the year.

10.2. The three Independent Visitor co-ordinators are now managed by the IRO Service Manager, building on the external scrutiny and support that the roles provide.

10.3. Many of our children looked after and care leavers, including unaccompanied minors access services from Bernardo's and other community Advocacy Services, which increases their social network and provides safety and support

10.4. Our Children access mentoring, independent visitors or community services from:

- Independent Visitor Service
- Learning Mentor Volunteer Scheme

- Young Roots- Department for Education grant funded mentoring Scheme
- Croydon Council UASC mentoring scheme (run by YP from migrant background)
- Community Services: Red Cross, Refugee Council etc.



11 Key achievements

11.1 2020-2021 has been unprecedented in the challenges faced for children, families and staff. Throughout the Covid restrictions virtual and face to face visits have continued to take place. Our use of technology has enabled different ways of engaging with many young people.

11.2. Our quality assurance activity has shown a gradual and sustained improvement in the quality of plans and work with children, although this remains a priority for us.

11.3. We have continued to limit the number of changes in social worker for children that are looked after with 72% having experienced no change in social worker over the last 6 months as at 31st March 2021

11.4. The Care Panel continues to be chaired by the Director for Children's Social care and has continued to ensure that only those children that need to become

looked after do, with improved support being provided to families to limit the need for care.

11.5. Our vulnerable children in care who are at risk of abuse and exploitation and reviewed regular via our Complex Adolescent Panel or MACE

Conclusion

- 12.1. The challenges presented during 2020/2021 by Covid and the S114 notice have provided a difficult environment in which to continue to support children looked after and care leavers to the extent that we would want. While everyone has managed the challenges well we know that periods without face to face support has been far from ideal. That said, we have also seen increased engagement for some young people through the use of technology for meetings and support groups which we need to learn from.
- 12.2 Our performance measures have shown a maintenance of provision or improvement in most areas. Looking forward we expect to see demand for more emotional and wellbeing support for children and young people and the need to develop a robust and joined up response to mental health needs.
- 12.3 Croydon continues to provide support and care for many unaccompanied Asylum seeking children, which we are very proud of. There has been an increase in other local authorities taking on their responsibility for these vulnerable children and young people.
- 12.4 The real praise needs to go to all our children Looked After and Care Leavers who have shown amazing resilience and compassion during what has been an extremely difficult year for all children and young people.

REPORT TO:	COUNCIL 11 OCTOBER 2021
SUBJECT:	RECOMMENDATIONS OF CABINET REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL FOR DECISION – PART TWO
LEAD OFFICER:	Richard Ennis, Interim Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer
WARDS:	ALL

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

The Recommendations of Cabinet referred to the Council for decision report is prepared in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules at Part 4A of the Constitution.

The Council is asked to approve the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 12 JULY 2021

Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company

- 1.1 Council is asked to note the recommendations set out in Appendix 1, which were considered by Cabinet on 12th July 2021 and note that Council shall receive a verbal update in respect of the outcome.

In considering the above recommendation, Councillors are asked to note that there is a Part B appendix to the report which is included in the Part B agenda papers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 16 AUGUST 2021

Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Results

Council is asked to:

- 1.2 Consider the outcome of the consultation and the consultation responses as set out in Appendix 5 [as listed as Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report] and the assessment of those responses.
- 1.3 Consider the equalities assessment at Appendix 6 [as listed as Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report] and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements under Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 as detailed in paragraph 10;
- 1.4 Consider the assessment regarding the Council's ability to deliver a statutory library service in accordance with the requirements of Section 7 of the Libraries and Museums Act 1964 if the recommended option is agreed;
- 1.5 Having due regard to the contents of Appendices 5 and 6 [Appendices 1 and 2 in the Cabinet report] and the assessment referenced in 1.3.3, agree that it implement changes to the statutory Library service by reducing hours by an

average of 21% across the borough as detailed in paragraphs 3.13 achieving £506,980 of savings.

- 1.6 Note that a delegation will be sought from Full Council regarding the implementation of the recommended option and further engagement with service users of the boroughs' 13 Libraries regarding the implementation at individual sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

Review of temporary chief officer cover arrangements

- 1.7 To note the extension of the temporary chief officer role appointments, for:
- i) Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education
 - ii) Assistant Chief Executive

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GENERAL PURPOSES & AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2021

Recruitment and appointment of independent Chair of General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC)

- 1.8 To agree to retain one independent co-opted member on the General Purposes & Audit Committee, alongside the independent Chair, with effect from a decision of Full Council to implement the new arrangements.
- 1.9 Endorse the proposed changes to the Constitution set out in section 4 of Appendix 8.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. The Recommendations of Cabinet and Committees referred to the Council for decision report comprises of matters of business formally undertaken by the Leader and Cabinet as well as Committees since the last ordinary meeting of the Council that require Full Council approval.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Part 4A of the Constitution requires that Cabinet and Committees include any recommendations that it has made to Council within this report.
- 3.2. These rules do not apply to any recommendations contained in the Annual Report of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.
- 3.3. The Leader or Chair of the Committee making the recommendation may exercise a right to introduce the recommendation; in so doing the Leader or Chair of the Committee shall speak for a maximum of 3 minutes.

- 3.4. The recommendation shall be seconded without any further speakers and if not deferred for debate shall immediately be put to the vote.
- 3.5. Any Member supported by a seconder, may ask that a recommendation be deferred for debate and the recommendation shall immediately stand deferred.
- 3.6. In the event that any Cabinet or Committee recommendations have not been reached when the time limit for the meeting has expired, those recommendations shall immediately be put to the vote without further debate.

CONTACT OFFICER:	Cliona May Senior Democratic Services and Governance Officer – Council & Regulatory
APPENDIX 1:	Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company – <i>Part A Report from Cabinet held on 12 July 2021</i>
APPENDIX 2 (Restricted):	Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company – <i>Part B Report from Cabinet held on 12 July 2021</i>
APPENDIX 3:	Feedback from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee review Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company – <i>Appendix to the Part A Report from Cabinet held on 12 July 2021</i>
APPENDIX 4:	Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Results – <i>Report from Cabinet held on 16 August 2021</i>
APPENDIX 5:	Croydon Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Summary July 2021 – <i>Appendix to the Report from Cabinet held on 16 August 2021</i>
APPENDIX 6:	Equality Impact Assessment - <i>Appendix to the Report from Cabinet held on 16 August 2021</i>
APPENDIX 7:	Review of temporary chief officer cover arrangements – <i>Report from the Appointments Committee held on 21 September 2021</i>
APPENDIX 8:	Recruitment and appointment of independent Chair of General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC) – <i>Report from the General Purposes & Audit Committee held on 16 September 2021</i>
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	None

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For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET 12th July 2021 COUNCIL 11th October 2021
SUBJECT:	Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company
LEAD OFFICER:	Katherine Kerswell – Interim Chief Executive Chris Buss - Interim Director of Finance , Investment and Risk
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Hamida Ali - Leader of the Council
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT Delivery of the Croydon Renewal plan, to minimise the financial impact to the Council of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and to resolve the future of the company.	

FINANCIAL IMPACT This report considers the future of Brick by Brick Croydon Limited (Brick by Brick) and recommends that the offer from the bidder be rejected and that Brick By Brick builds out 23 of the 29 sites in its ownership and returns the other 6 sites back to the Council for sale. The impact of the decision means that the Council may need to write off a portion of the outstanding loan to Brick by Brick estimated at between £25.6 million and £52.7 million depending upon the performance of the company during the period in which the build out (and consequent sales) are completed. These costs will be offset in part by capital receipts arising from sites which may be sold following initial design work undertaken by Brick by Brick. This debt write-off may increase revenue capital financing costs by up to £1.85 million p.a dependent upon the level of loan written off. There will be one-off revenue costs estimated at £160,000 arising from this proposal.
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: 3321CAB The notice of the decision will specify that the decision may not be implemented until after 13.00 hours on the 6th working day following the day on which the decision was taken unless referred to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

1. CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below. Cabinet is recommended (acting, where relevant, on behalf of the Council exercising its functions as sole shareholder of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd) to: 1.1 Reject the offer for the purchase of Brick by Brick (Croydon) Ltd. 1.2 Agree that a modified build out scenario of 23 sites will be implemented and to
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note that in order to deliver that, Brick by Brick will require additional management and technical support, the costs of which are factored into the costs shown in this report and as further consequence of this decision that Brick by Brick will return 6 sites to the Council on the basis that they will be marketed for sale (and on the basis that site ownership will either remain with Brick by Brick or transfer to the Council, whichever is most efficient for maximizing value or the efficiency of the sale process).

- 1.3 Agree that the decisions made under this Report shall take effect as amendments to the current Business Plan of Brick by Brick (and as a shareholder decision under the Articles of the company). In addition, and also as shareholder, the Council will require Brick by Brick to issue monthly reports to the Council to update on its financial position, progress with development of sites, sales, any key contractual issues and any other relevant matter (as needed). Such reports are to be presented to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 1.4 Confirm that, in accordance with the February Cabinet report, sales receipts may continue to be recycled by Brick by Brick and agree that the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer be given authority to approve those ad-hoc sales receipt recycling requests from Brick by Brick, up to a total amount of £5m in any one transaction and following the terms of the consolidated loan agreement, reporting on a quarterly basis to Cabinet.
- 1.5 Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, to make any necessary formal shareholder resolutions in order to give effect to the above recommendations and to authorise the entering into any of the necessary formal legal documentation that arise as a consequence (including (i) to confirm the appointment of consultants to provide the necessary additional management and technical support, and (ii) in respect of the sale of the 6 sites, as are referred to in recommendation 1.2).
- 1.6 Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, to vary the loan agreement in respect of the sites returned to the Council sites (subject to SDLT and various other tax advice) and with any such modifications being reported in the quarterly report to Cabinet.
- 1.7 Otherwise note the progress made with regard to Brick by Brick.
- 1.8 To thank the Improvement and Assurance Panel for their advice and support in the production of this report.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.9 Council is asked to note the recommendations set out above, which were considered by Cabinet on 12th July 2021 and that Council shall receive a verbal update in respect of the outcome.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This purpose of this report is to receive and note the proposal for the future of Brick by Brick and considers the evaluation of the three options decided by Cabinet in February 2021 namely a partial build out, a full build out or possible sale of the company. The Council has continued to engage PwC to undertake financial work and engaged Savills to undertake additional technical and professional due diligence. In light of the now urgent need to make decisions and take forward the recommended course of action, none of the other options previously considered (e.g. seeking market offers for the company) remain valid and do not merit re-consideration.
- 2.2 The partial build out option was intended to be a build out of sites until October 2021 and then a novation of existing sites to a developer to complete. The fact that six sites are not yet under contract means that if these were started now, considerably more sites than originally envisaged would require novation.
- 2.3 Advice has been taken from Savills (as independent property consultants with relevant experience) and they advise that the assumptions made on cost recovery on novation are optimistic and that novation itself may be difficult to undertake. In the light of this professional advice, this partial build out option is not now recommended in that form.
- 2.4 The full build out option was originally envisaged to be all 29 sites. However, 6 sites are not at present under formal contract. As the value of the 6 sites is close to the estimated net revenue from those sites, it is proposed to return those sites to the Council for sale (either by way of a land transfer back to the Council or by other means which maximise value and enable an efficient sale process). This option is in effect now the partial build out option without novation. It is currently forecast that the remaining 23 sites will be completed by February 2023 but that unit sales will extend beyond that date. It is estimated that 22 of the sites will be completed in the current financial year. This will require Brick by Brick to engage additional management and technical support which has been costed into the financial impact. This option will involve the Council incurring additional direct costs estimated at £100,000 in 2021/22 and £60,000 in 2022/23. Based on the modelling undertaken, the net loan written off with this option will be between £26.6 million and £52.7 million excluding any land value which may accrue to the Council.
- 2.5 In the sale option the loan write offs would be between £54 million and £68.4 million. As will be explained further in the report, this option is not recommended.
- 2.6 Upon conclusion of the process recommended under this report, Brick by Brick will have delivered 774 residential units in the Borough.

3. UPDATE ON THE REVIEW

Background

- 3.1 The Cabinet at its meeting on the 18th February 2021 received a report on the way forward on Brick by Brick and agreed a number of specific recommendations concerning Brick by Brick.

These were in summary to:

- a. Agree to proceed with the option set out as scenario 2 of that report, which is a build out of sites by Brick by Brick combined with a sale of sites under construction whilst still considering the option of a sale of the business, with a further report to Cabinet in April / May 2021.
- b. Agree that revised funding arrangements be entered into with Brick by Brick to reflect the current loan positions and proposals for the future, including, where relevant, moving to a 100% debt funding position (as opposed to 25% equity and 75% debt); extending relevant loans and repayment periods; allowing delays with repayments of existing loans; agreeing to further funding of no more than £9.99 million in relation to sites proposed for Brick by Brick to continue developing (and only where absolutely necessary within an appropriate repayment period),
- c. Agree for the necessary steps to be taken, in accordance with the Council's Tenders and Contracts Regulations, to appoint marketing agents to consider the disposal options for the College Green site (note, this is the site adjacent to Fairfield Halls which was due to transfer to Brick by Brick, but is currently held by the Council);
- d. Agree for the Council to review those sites Brick by Brick propose not to develop and to receive a future report to Cabinet on the potential use and future of each site
- e. Approve that the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) can acquire residential units from Brick by Brick as part of this review.

Update on Options.

- 3.2 Following the Cabinet decision in February 2021, the Cabinet considered at its meeting on the 17th May 2021, actions concerning Fairfield Halls and the purchase of social rented units. It also noted the agreement of a revised loan agreement between the Council and the Company. It was also reported that a bid had been received from a single bidder for the company, and that a best and final offer was received from the bidder on April 19th.

Due diligence has subsequently been undertaken on that bid both with regards to the company making the offer but also on whether the bid reflects what might have been receivable if the Council had marketed the opportunity to acquire Brick by Brick. Unless otherwise mentioned, all costs and values are based on cash flows produced by Brick by Brick as at March 2021.

The Bid

- 3.3 The February 2021 Cabinet report detailed the fact that the Council had received an unsolicited expression of interest for the purchase of Brick by Brick. Cabinet agreed to proceed with exploring this offer alongside the other options as explained in this report. The expression of interest has materialised into an offer. As part of the bid and offer process the Council granted the bidder a period of exclusivity to enable them to have a degree of comfort whilst they invested in the initial due diligence on Brick by Brick. The detail of the offer is contained in the restricted agenda.
- 3.4 The Council has undertaken both independent financial due diligence on the bidder and independent technical due diligence on their offer to assess it. As it is a sole bidder the Council has to satisfy itself that the offer is reasonable and in particular that it is comparable to a bid that it might have received in competition. The financial and technical reports from PwC and Savills are attached as appendices 2 and 3 to the restricted paper.

Savills have taken the same base information as the bidder and their approach was to “undertake a series of development appraisals for each site utilising standard appraisal methodologies to understand the underlying potential value of the real estate within the Brick by Brick portfolio.” This is the same approach that any purchaser would undertake.

Analysis of the bid and the company.

- 3.5 Savills analysis of the bid can be summarised as follows: “On the basis of the information we have reviewed, the principles of the offer are not unreasonable but further due diligence and negotiation is required.” In that regard, see the comment made at the end of paragraph 7.1 regarding further due diligence and negotiation of the sale, and therefore the risks that attach to any sale process of this kind.
- 3.6 PwC have undertaken financial due diligence on the bidder and this is included in Appendix 2 on the restricted agenda. The summary of their analysis is that “Overall our view is that we have seen no evidence that the financial standing of the bidder should rule them out as a suitable acquirer of BBB.”

Part Build out option

- 3.7 The February 2021 Cabinet agreed that Brick by Brick would be funded to build out 29 sites, the majority of which were expected at that time to be completed by October 2021. In the PwC analysis, this is described as Scenario 2. The intention then was to attempt to sell on the two larger sites that were in progress with anticipated sell dates post 2021 and to have a phased wind down of the activities of Brick by Brick. The position has moved on since then and the table below shows the position at the end of May 2021 on each of the 29 sites.

Site	No of units	Revised date
Faithful	9	Dec-19
Windmill Place	24	May-20
Pump	14	Jul-20

Drummond	28	Aug-20
Chertsey	7	Nov-20
Flora	27	Mar-21
Longheath	53	Jun-21
Marston	12	Jun-21
Northbrook	11	Jun-21
Ravensdale	30	Jun-21
Auckland	57	Jul-21
Montpelier	34	Jul-21
Tollers	40	Jul-21
Tollgate	42	Jul-21
Warbank	36	Jul-21
Heathfield	20	Aug-21
Oxford	9	Aug-21
Thorneloe	10	Aug-21
Warminster	6	Sep-21
Avenue	12	Oct-21
Coldharbour	8	Oct-21
Kindred	128	May-22
Lion green road	157	Feb-23
Academy	9	Not on site
Belgrave and Grosvenor	102	Not on site
Coombe road	9	Not on site
Eagle Hill	8	Not on site
Malton	9	Not on site
Regina road	19	Not on site
	930	

3.8 The February report to Cabinet indicated that all of the above sites were either transferred to Brick by Brick or were required to be transferred to Brick by Brick. The latter was required to enable some of the requirements of the section 106 agreements relating to those sites to be fulfilled although this was not explicit in the February report. At that time it was assumed that works would commence on all sites. However, the table above shows that based on information provided by Brick by Brick in June 2021, 6 of the sites have not commenced. The Savills report indicates that there is limited viability in these sites and it is recommended that the Council instruct Brick by Brick not to commence development of those sites and that they be returned to the Council. The non development of these sites reduces the Council's risk exposure. These sites will be marketed for sale by the Council together with any adjacent land acquired by Brick by Brick in anticipation of development. It had been the intention in the February report that sites that were uncompleted were marketed by Brick by Brick, and those sites would have all have involved the novation of a building contract as well. This does not apply to these sites not yet in development and it is considered that the Council would be better placed to maximise value. The return and sale of these sites will be undertaken to ensure best consideration is obtained and on a basis which is tax efficient (as reflected in recommendation 1.2).

With regard to the remaining 23 sites, 21 sites are expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year. The remaining two sites would both run beyond the end of the year. Of the two the Kindred site could be completed whilst Brick by Brick is being wound down if Scenario 2 was chosen as originally envisaged in the February Cabinet report.

3.9 The above leaves one significant site which would straddle into the new financial year which is Lion Green Road. The four main alternatives for that site are as follows:

- that the site is built out by Brick by Brick;
- the site is transferred to the Council along with novation of the building contract(s) and the build out is undertaken directly by the Council;
- the site is sold mid-build at the same time as the other sales (as envisaged in Scenario 2); OR
- the building contract is terminated and the site sold as is now.

The analysis of these options is contained in Appendix 5 on the restricted agenda. The appendix indicates that of the four options, the direct build is not practicable, the termination and sale of site option would lead to significant additional cost, the option of transferring to the Council and novation of building contract(s), although possible is practicable but difficult and unlikely to recover costs leaving the build out option as the most viable for the Council.

3.10 Discussions with the directors of Brick by Brick, have led to the conclusion that the company would need additional support in any build out option as the company is likely to lose staff. The Council has, after discussion, with Homes England, approached three organisations to enquire about providing that support and two of whom responded with written submissions which have been examined by the Council and passed to the Directors of Brick by Brick and the costs are factored into the cash flows for winding down and closure costs. The two firms have subsequently been interviewed by the Council & members of the Improvement and Support Panel to gain assurance that they can provide the level of management support necessary to enable Brick by Brick to continue to deliver the build out of the 23 sites and to maximise the net returns to the Company (enabling as much of the consolidated loan as possible to be repaid.) It is a matter for the directors of Brick by Brick to make the appointment, but either firm are in the view of Council officers capable of providing the level of support required by Brick by Brick, and subject to the agreement of terms one of them would be the preferred provider. The appointment will be decided by the directors and then confirmed by the Council. The costs of the appointment have been included in the estimates provided by PwC and Savills.

In the event that the recommendations are approved the Council will also incur costs of additional support above that incurred to date during the build out estimated at £100,000 in the current year and £60,000 in 2022/23 and a yet to be determined cost of providing an ongoing level of support to private house purchasers over a number of years after the completion on site either through a residual Brick by Brick or through other means. The nature of support to private house purchasers will be the subject of a further report in due course.

Full build out option.

- 3.11 The February 2021 Cabinet report contained the option of a full build out of the 29 sites (scenario 1). This is still a potential option to the Council, and the costs and benefits of that are included in Appendix 2. The costs do include the costs of additional management support to Brick by Brick and assume that contracts are completed in line with the programme. This would mean that for the six sites not yet under construction as detailed above, contracts would be let with eventual conclusion of the programme in 2024. These sites have marginal additional return over and above the assessed sale value of the land (£8 million-). Additionally-, the Council would need to provide in house support to Brick by Brick-, who would also require increasing levels of external support as projects completed. In addition arrangements would be required post completion to support private house purchasers over a number of years. In the light of the marginal potential gain from building out the last 6 sites, this option is not recommended for further evaluation.

Analysis of options

- 3.12 Two analyses of the options are contained in the PwC report in Appendix 2 and the Savills report in Appendix 3 both on the restricted agenda. Both reports analyse the build out options from slightly different but complementary perspectives.
- 3.13 The net loan written off of the build out option would be between £ 25.6 million and £-52.7 million.

In the Sale option the loan write offs would be between £54 million and £68.4million.

In addition to the loans written off, the Council would incur additional costs arising from any of the options. These costs would be charges to the revenue budget. These are in addition to the costs incurred to date since the original report from PwC on Brick by Brick. These costs are detailed in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2

There are also potential cash flow advantages to the Council in the build out option. Under the sale offer, no repayments of loans are expected until 2022-. Whereas in the build out option model, repayments are forecasted to be made in 2021/22. These repayments in both options are of course dependent upon sales receipts arising and as such any advantage is dependent upon the timing of receipts from sales.

The Council would under the build out option continue to act as funder for Brick by Brick, because the revised loan agreement noted in the May report and as agreed in February allows Brick by Brick to recycle with the Council's permission proceeds from sales. However, neither report detailed how this would be authorised. Accordingly, it is requested that the Cabinet agree that sales receipts may continue to be recycled on the agreement of the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer with specific authority to approve ad-hoc sales receipt recycling requests from Brick By Brick, up to a total amount of £5m in any one transaction and following the terms of the consolidated loan agreement, reporting on a quarterly basis to

Cabinet. It should be noted that there may be more than one such transaction a month.

- 3.14 The legal advice set out in below and in Appendix 4 (based on a set of initial queries regarding the initial offer of sale) of the restricted agenda gives the Council clear guidance as to what it can and must consider when making this decision which may include both financial and non-financial considerations. However, when taking decisions, the Council needs to be mindful of ensuring that it only considers relevant issues, and disregards irrelevant ones.
- 3.15 The Cabinet when considering the February 2021 report took the view that in constraining its involvement in Brick by Brick to the 29 sites the Council was minimising its liabilities and risk exposure. Neither of the two options are risk free. The sale of the company to the party making an offer does significantly negate risk however at the cost of lower receipts to the Council. The table below is a summary of the range of risks under the two options to be read in conjunction with the body of this report and its supporting material..

KEY FACTOR	OPTION 1 – SELL TO BIDDER	OPTION 2 – BUILD OUT
Funding risk	Additional working capital to be funded by bidder	Additional working capital to be funded by the Council
Revenue / profit risk	Risk shared Partial incentivisation for bidder Forward fund arrangements for affordable packages likely to transfer	No transfer of risk Forward fund arrangements for affordable packages likely to transfer
Construction risk	All transfers (subject to contract)	No transfer of risk
Development / planning / land risk	All transfers albeit requiring Council resource to resolve outstanding planning/land issues	No transfer of risk

Post development risk	All transfers (subject to contract)	No transfer of risk
Management risk	Substantial transfer of delivery risk (subject to contract) but the incentivized nature of the deal would require client side resource	Partial transfer to new Development Manager. Will still require significant client-side resource.
Reputational risk	Partial transfer (residual risk because of former ownership and status as public body)	No transfer of risk
Control risk	Very limited control for LBC (some controls possible through sale contract)	Full control for LBC
Land/portfolio transactional risk	Risk of exclusivity with one party; lack of competitive tension	Transactional risk associated with sale of the six sites where development not underway
Plot transactional risk (consumer or bulk)	All transfers (subject to contract)	No transfer of risk
Counterparty risk	bidder covenant strength TBC (PWC providing report) Limited exposure to London development / sales market	Scope and form of contract with new DM team TBC.

For each of the above, mitigations will need to be put into place to reflect the risk involved. The largest risk of build out is management failure and collapse of Brick by Brick. The cost of additional support to Brick by Brick to mitigate this risk has been priced into the both sets of figures.

Based on the modelling work by PwC the effective “price” or potential loss of value to the Council of that risk transfer is £19 million. Savills estimate of the price of the risk transfer is between £15.7 million and £28.4 million.

- 3.16 There is no disputing the fact that the build out option has higher levels of risk than the sale option and that the latter would enable the Council to concentrate resources which could otherwise be utilised on the delivery of other parts of the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan. The Council has to decide on the balance of risk and reward and fully consider the reduced level of loan write offs from building out the 23 sites.

On the one hand there is the greater certainty offered by the sale option (as illustrated in the Savills' report) but which comes with additional potential costs incurred in terms of loan write-off; whether this is outweighed by the potential reward accompanying the risks in the build out option is a key consideration.

On balance, although the build out option has a higher element of risk, a number of those risks can be mitigated. On that basis, together with the potential of a higher return, it is recommended that the sale option and offer from the bidder is rejected. Savills' in their advice have suggested that the Council go back to the bidder and see if there is any improved offer available. This has been done and no improved offer has been received. Accordingly the sale offer is not recommended for acceptance.

Next Steps

- 3.17 The Cabinet could chose to see if it is possible to obtain another purchaser for the company. PwC estimate that to do that to the stage of the current bidder's offer would take in the region of 8 weeks. That would then need to be assessed by the Council. By the time that had been undertaken, based on the scheme completion dates shown in para 3.7, and the time required for further due diligence, most of the sites would be completed. In addition, on the basis of the Savills' assessment that the bid is structured in line with how other purchasers might bid, it is very uncertain as to whether a marketing exercise would produce a substantially better financial outcome.
- 3.18 If the Cabinet accepts the recommendation to build out as described in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.10, Brick by Brick will need to release from its programme (and the build out) land that has been transferred to the Company together with any other adjacent sites that the Company has acquired which are now not being built out. This land will then be marketed by the Council. The 6 sites affected by this are shown in para 3.7 "as not on site". In addition, the company will need to engage additional management support to ensure that the build out occurs in a cost effective way and a risk reduced manner. This will need to be undertaken in a timely manner with full support from the Council.
- 3.19 Under the Articles of Association the company is required to operate in accordance with its Business Plan, as approved and updated by the Council as shareholder. The adoption of this proposed course of action will therefore take effect as a variation to the current Business Plan. In light of the level of investment the Council has made via loans to the Company, monthly reports will be required to be made updating the Council of the financial position, giving progress on sites, sales and any key contractual issues. This will form the basis of a proposed quarterly report to Cabinet.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 No formal consultation has been made on this report, other than factual accuracy checks with external third parties including with the Directors of Brick by Brick.
- 4.2 Officers have worked closely with colleagues on the Improvement and Assurance Panel who have provided considerable advice on the options. They have also suggested follow up work with outside parties which has been undertaken. Thanks need to be placed on record for the advice that has been provided.

5. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

- 5.1 This report has been submitted to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee for comment prior to submission to the Cabinet.

6 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Since the original report by PwC the Council has incurred direct external costs of £215,000.
- 6.2 In the event of the sale of the Company, additional revenue costs of £250,000 are likely to be incurred in terms of additional financial, technical and legal costs as part of the due diligence and sale process. In addition the Council will need to provide additional support from existing staff. In the build out option the costs of additional support are estimated at £160,000. In either case these costs can be met from an earmarked reserve.
- 6.3 The key financial exposure for the Council in relation to Brick by Brick is the £161 million of loans that it has provided to the company which includes accrued interest income. In both options the accrued interest will be repaid however in both options there will be unpaid debt interest-. As of 2021/2022 the Council has now started to provide for Minimum Revenue provision (MRP) within its General Fund revenue budget for the amount that the Council assess to be at risk of non-payback. The MTFS includes a provision for the revenue effects of writing off of £31 million of loans to Brick by Brick, after allowing for the provision of the capital costs of the redevelopment of Fairfield Halls. Additional unbudgeted MRP costs of between nil and £1.85 million p.a could be incurred depending upon the eventual level of debt unrecovered. These costs could be reduced by the sale of sites not transferred to Brick by Brick but which have been subject to planning applications . The transfer and sale of the six unbuilt sites will result in any consolidated debt on those sites within the loan agreement being reclassified under the Loan agreement with Brick by Brick as Category B debt, which will be lower priority and will no longer accrue further interest. This will require the existing loan agreement to be modified, and in line with previous delegations it is recommended that authority to modify the loan agreement be granted to the the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and that any such modifications be reported in the quarterly report to Cabinet.

Approved by: Chris Buss, Interim Director of Finance Investment and Risk.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 External legal advice has been sought in relation to this report. Under the Council's general power pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council may exercise its rights as sole shareholder of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd to take the steps identified in this report. Under the Articles of the company, the matters addressed are within the scope of "reserved matters", i.e. matters for which the company needs shareholder approval and where the Council (as shareholder) may direct the company (and its directors).
- 7.2 In making decisions under this report, Members will need to be mindful of the Council's financial position, its fiduciary duties and the requirement to have regard to all relevant factors and to disregard irrelevant ones. The Council must act in accordance with the principles of Wednesbury reasonableness, meaning to make decisions that a rational person might make, having regard to all relevant considerations.
- 7.3 In particular, Members should (i) weigh up the risks and benefits under the main options presented (as well as taking into account the other options that may be available but which are ruled out), (ii) take note of the risks under the recommended approach and especially the financial exposure that may accrue by way of the writing off of a portion the consolidated loan made to the company.
- 7.4 Detailed Legal advice is included as Appendix 4. In that advice attention is drawn to paragraph 5 which reminded the Council of general principles that apply to decision-making (as also described above). The advice also touched on the fact that on any sale of a company the offer made will be subject to due diligence and agreement of commercial terms. Accordingly, the offer made for the purchase of the company carries the inherent risk that either it may not get to completion, or that the offer price might be reduced. Moreover, any sale would be subject to certain warranties (made by the Council as seller) and therefore which involve a residual risk post-sale; an example being as to whether the company has outstanding tax or other undisclosed financial liabilities.

Approved by Nigel Channer, Interim Head of Commercial & Property Law on behalf of Doutimi Aseh, the Interim Director of Law & Governance

8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no immediate HR considerations in this report for Council employees or staff. If any should arise these will be managed under the Council's policies and procedures.

Approved by Gillian Bevan, Head of HR Resources, on behalf of the Director of Human Resources

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no equalities impacts arising from this report. However the implications of the issues raised and how they are addressed may have an effect on the medium-term financial plan. Any subsequent savings plans that have a staffing impact or impact on vulnerable and/or groups that share a protected characteristic will be subject to agreed HR procedures, formal consultation and equality analysis.

Approved by: Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager, Resources Department

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 10.1 There are no environmental impacts arising from this report

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 11.1 There are no Crime and disorder reduction impacts arising from this report

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 12.1 The reasons for the decision are embedded within the report. As stated, there is a balance of risk and reward to be considered and on analysis, the additional potential costs incurred in terms of loan write off under the sale option outweigh the risks of the build out option. This assessment is based on the professional opinion of officers with the benefit of expert independent professional advice. The recommendations presented for consideration by Members are made in the context of the loans to Brick by Brick and the costs of the alternative options, and are considered therefore to be those that will achieve a best value outcome in the interests of the local taxpayer.

13. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 13.1 The Council had considered earlier a range of options ranging from immediate closure to continued build out of the full portfolio. These were reduced to three options in February. The paper details the review of the remaining options available now to the Council of either building out or selling the company-, the option of remarketing is rejected due to time constraints-.

14. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 **WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

NO

- 14.2 **HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

NO

CONTACT OFFICER: Chris Buss, Interim Director of Finance,
Investment & Risk

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT: All on restricted agenda

Appendix 1 – Offer

Appendix 2 – PwC report on offer and analysis with other scenarios

Appendix 3 – Savills report on offer

Appendix 4 – Legal Advice from Browne Jacobson LLP

Appendix 5 – Lion Green Road analysis

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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REPORT TO:	Cabinet 12 July 2021
SUBJECT:	Feedback from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee review Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company of
REPORT LEAD:	Councillor Sean Fitzsimons Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Hamida Ali Leader of the Council

1. FEEDBACK FROM THE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – 6 JULY 2021

- 1.1. At the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 6 July 2021, the Committee had the opportunity to review the 'Ongoing Review of Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd and the future of the company' report, which is included on the Cabinet agenda for 12 July for decision. Prior to the meeting, on 5 July, the Committee was provided with a briefing on the background to the report from the Council's Section 151 Officer.
- 1.2. From the discussion held by the Committee, it was agreed that the following feedback would be submitted to the Cabinet, to take account of during its consideration of the report.
- 1.3. In formulating its approach to the report, the Committee focussed on three key areas, namely officer confidence in the valuations provided, an evaluation of the risks to the Council presented by the two options outlined and whether there were any alternate options that needed further exploration. The Committee questioned both the Leader of the Council and the Section 151 Officer extensively on these three area, in order to gain reassurance that they had been given appropriate consideration.
- 1.4. Regarding the valuations provided in the report, the Committee was satisfied by the explanation given by the Section 151 Officer on the method used to calculate the valuations, which had taken into account the latest data from the local property market. As such, it could be reasonably assumed that the figures provided were a reasonable estimation of potential values, barring any major, unforeseen change in the market.
- 1.5. Having reviewed the risks associated with both the build out and sale options, the Committee recognised that the recommended build out option did present a greater risk to the Council than selling Brick by Brick to a third party. However, it was recognised that the potential financial return to the Council from the build out option was significantly better than the return from the sale option.
- 1.6. The Committee received reassurance that a third party would be contracted to provide technical and management support to Brick by Brick to complete the build out on the 23 identified sites. It was also reassuring to learn that council officers would be receiving monthly reports on the progress made with the build out, together with a quarterly report to Cabinet and an expectation that the Council would be

notified immediately of any significant changes impacting delivery by Brick by Brick. As this mitigation had been put in place to manage the risks of the build out option, the Committee concluded that it would be reasonable for the Council to pursue this option, as it presented the best opportunity to maximise the return for council tax payers.

- 1.7. Regarding other options considered, the Committee did question whether consideration had been given to retaining the six sites proposed for sale, for development as social housing by the Housing Revenue Account. It was explained to the Committee that given the Council needed to raise funds to repay its debt, the sales option had been recommended. If the sites were retained for development, it would take a number of years for this to be completed and it was unlikely the sites would meet the new principle agreed for the HRA in February 2021, which was to only proceed with acquiring new housing if the potential return was greater than the estimated expenditure.
- 1.8. Although it was accepted by the Committee that five of the six sites should be sold, it was agreed that the sale of the Belgrave and Grosvenor site should be placed on hold pending the completion of the stock survey being undertaken in adjoining council buildings, as this would keep options open for the sale of a wider redevelopment site.
- 1.9. In conclusion, having questioned the Leader and the Section 151 Officer, the Committee agreed that it was broadly supportive of the recommendations set out in the report, but would ask the Cabinet to give further consideration to pausing the sale of the Belgrave and Grosvenor site until the completion of the stock survey.
- 1.10. The Committee would also like to have a briefing on the monthly reporting to be provided by Brick by Brick, to gain reassurance that the risks involved in the delivery of the sites were being adequately reported.
- 1.11. Finally the Committee would like highlight its appreciation for the quality of the report provided. Although it was a technical subject, it was agreed the report was both clear and informative in setting out the grounds for the recommendation.

CONTACT OFFICER: Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer – Scrutiny

Email: simon.trevaskis@croydon.gov.uk

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET 16 AUGUST 2021
SUBJECT:	Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Results
LEAD OFFICER:	Sarah Hayward, Interim Executive Director, Place Stephen Tate, Director for Growth, Employment and Regeneration
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Oliver Lewis, Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration
WARDS:	All

COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2020-2024

Libraries services have saving targets of £504,000 in 2022/23 and as a statutory service public consultation has been conducted to consider options which might be appropriate to deliver the statutory service and how this can be managed within available resources. A first phase of public consultation on a reduction in libraries services was held 14th January to 14th March 2021. Feedback both from residents in the first phase as well as from Scrutiny & Overview Committee meetings on 30th March and 27th May 2021 have shaped a second, more detailed consultation phase, which ran from the 1st June to 26th July 2021.

The report assesses the outcome of the resident engagement across the three proposed options in the second phase, as well as considers the impact for service users. The options considered are:

- To reduce service hours by 21% across the borough
- To outsource all libraries
- Hybrid – reduction in service hours (two days per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries

This aligns with the Council's priorities where:

- We will live within our means, balance the books and provide value for money for our residents.
- We will focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough. We will follow the evidence to tackle the underlying causes of inequality and hardship, like structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice.
- We will focus on providing the best quality core service we can afford. First and foremost, providing social care services that keep our most vulnerable residents safe and healthy. And to keep our streets clean and safe. To ensure we get full benefit from every pound we spend, other services in these areas will only be provided where they can be shown to have a direct benefit in keeping people safe and reducing demand.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

In the Renewing Croydon proposals Libraries were asked to make £504,000 savings from the revenue budget in financial year 2022/23, whilst ensuring delivery of a

statutory service.

This report recommends that Cabinet should recommend to Full Council that it should pursue option one – to implement changes to the statutory Library service by reducing opening hours by an average of 21% across the borough. This would achieve savings of £506,980 whilst delivering a statutory service.

FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: This is not a key decision

Reason for late dispatch: The second phase of the libraries consultation concluded on the 26th June. Additional time was required to allow for consultations responses to be summarised and analysis undertaken.

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to :

- 1.1 Consider the outcome of the consultation for second phase and the considerations arising from the consultation as detailed within the report and appendices to the report including in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Equality Assessment and the recommended option following consultation;
- 1.2 Consider the assessment regarding delivery of a statutory Library Service in accordance with the requirements of Section 7 of the Libraries and Museums Act 1964 if option one is recommended to Full Council for approval;
- 1.3 Agree to recommend to Full Council that it:
 - 1.3.1 Consider the outcome of the consultation and the consultation responses as set out in Appendix 1 and the assessment of those responses.
 - 1.3.2 Consider the equalities assessment at Appendix 2 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements under Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 as detailed in paragraph 10;
 - 1.3.3 Consider the assessment regarding the Council's ability to deliver a statutory library service in accordance with the requirements of Section 7 of the Libraries and Museums Act 1964 if the recommended option is agreed;
 - 1.3.4 Having due regard to the contents of Appendices 1 and 2 and the assessment referenced in 1.3.3, agree that it implement changes to the statutory Library service by reducing hours by an average of 21% across the borough as detailed in paragraphs 3.13 achieving £506,980 of savings.
- 1.4 Note that a delegation will be sought from Full Council regarding the implementation of the recommended option and further engagement with service users of the boroughs' 13 Libraries regarding the implementation at individual sites.

1.5 Note the intention for officers to commence further work to assess income generating opportunities and efficiencies within the Libraries service as detailed in paragraphs 5.4.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the activities undertaken and the conclusions from the second phase of the libraries consultation for members' consideration. The report considers the feedback received from residents and assesses, across three proposed options in the second phase with regards to the council's legal obligations and equalities duties. After careful consideration the report recommends that Cabinet should recommend to Full Council that it should pursue option one – to implement changes to the statutory Library service by reducing hours by an average of 21% across the borough, achieving £506,980 of savings.
- 2.2 The libraries consultation was undertaken in two distinct phases. The first phase ran from 14th January to 14th March 2021, feedback from which alongside the Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommendations from the 30th March and the 27th May 2021 shaped the second phase consultation. The second phase of consultation ran from 1st June to the 26th July 2021 and asked for residents preference from three options:
- Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough
 - Outsource all libraries
 - Hybrid – reduction in service hours (two days per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries
- 2.3 The report reviews the activities undertaken by the Council leading up to and during the second phase of consultation. It will review how the Council has actively engaged with residents during a period of national lockdown and easing of social distancing restrictions, including public consultation through digital webinars, face to face events and a survey.
- 2.4 The report and appendices provide both quantitative and qualitative analysis from the two webinars, fourteen face to face consultation events as well as from the 1,411 completed consultation survey responses.
- 2.5 This report has set out how the Council has listened to and reflected upon the needs of the communities in light of the consultation and the considerations set out above and within the body of this report, including in relation to how this addresses the statutory requirements in Section 7 of the Libraries and Museums Act 1964 ("The 1964 Act"). This report also sets out how the recommendations aim to best support the overall health and well-being of the area, and ensuring that what the Council does provide social value in light of the current circumstances.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Public library services are funded and either run or commissioned by local government. Library authorities such as the Council have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (“the 1964 Act”) ‘to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons’ for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7). The Act allows for joint working between library authorities and councils may also offer wider library services (for example, loaning devices, running activities or providing access to Wi-Fi and computers).

In providing this service, councils must, among other things:

- encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (in accordance with section 8(3))

3.2 Section 10 of the 1964 Act also allows the Secretary of State to investigate a complaint that a library authority has failed to carry out its duties under the 1963 Act and to issue an order requiring it to carry out those duties.

3.3 It is noted that there are no children centres within Croydon libraries, therefore there are no considerations arising or potential impacts on any Children’s centres in the borough as a result of the proposals in this report.

3.4 Croydon Council solely owns thirteen libraries across the borough, and jointly owns Upper Norwood Library with Lambeth Council. These libraries are relatively evenly distributed throughout the borough. The borough is divided into north, central and south; with each area containing a large hub library, medium sized branch libraries, and smaller local libraries.

3.5 Upper Norwood Library Hub is outside of the scope of this consultation because the building is leased to Upper Norwood Library Trust and the library service is run by Lambeth Council.

3.6 The Library Plan 2019-28 which was agreed at July 2019 Full Council, sets out the vision and outcomes for Croydon’s library service over the forthcoming years. The recommendations contained in this report do not intend to change the vision of the plan, which is to:-

- **Inform** – connecting residents to information, activities and services that will benefit them.
- **Involve** – a service that is shaped by residents and easily adapts to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.
- **Inspire** – creative library spaces that offer residents opportunities to have fun, learn and connect with others.

This vision is delivered through four outcomes:-

- A library service designed around the needs of our residents and communities
- Croydon libraries as the ‘front door’ of the Council enabling services to be delivered locally

- Libraries at the heart of Croydon's cultural offer celebrating the written and spoken work in particular
- Modern, welcoming, inclusive and accessible library facilities and buildings.

Full details of the Libraries Plan can be found here:

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Library%20Plan%202019%20-%202028.pdf>

- 3.7 In November 2020, the Council outlined the Renewing Croydon vision to ensure that the Council lives within its means. The libraries service was asked to make savings of £504,000 in the financial year 2022/23, whilst retaining its commitment for capital investment in libraries to improve the fabric and infrastructure to enhance services for residents.
- 3.8 In December 2020, a meeting with colleagues from the Department of Communities, Media and Sport (DCMS) was held to discuss the process for reducing libraries service provision in the borough. This outlined the requirement of a two-stage process of public consultation. The first stage should include a formative proposal, and be subject to meaningful feedback from residents, businesses, community groups, and both members and non-members of the library. The second phase should be more specific, focusing upon a few options, and provide full details of the impact that the changes will have on the service. The Council adopted this recommended approach.
- 3.9 The first phase of public consultation started in 14th January 2021 and concluded on 14th March 2021. At this formative stage the proposal identified five of the smallest libraries that could be closed with the least impact on the overall service. The consultation asked residents for their feedback on closure or suggestions for alternative options for those five libraries that could change the libraries offer, to achieve the required savings whilst still delivering the statutory service.
- 3.10 Following resident feedback in the first phase and recommendation from a scrutiny meeting on 30th March 2021, six options were presented to Cabinet on 17th May 2021, alongside resident feedback, option appraisals and equality impact assessments. The six options examined were:
- Close five libraries
 - Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough
 - Five community run libraries
 - Outsource all libraries
 - Hybrid – reduction in service hours (one day per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries
 - Hybrid – reduction in service hours (two days per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries
- 3.11 Following consideration of the options and supporting information Cabinet recommended to proceed to a second phase to consult on three options. Details of the consideration and supporting documents, including the Cabinet paper can be found here:-
- <https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=11362#mgDocuments>
- 3.12 On the 27th May the Scrutiny & Overview Committee considered a call-in request of the Cabinet decisions made as a result of the 17th May Cabinet report.

Following discussion, the members of the committee concluded that no further action was necessary, and the decision could proceed as intended. Details of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting can be found here:-

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=11636>

3.13 Following conclusion of the call-in request second phase of the consultation commenced on the 1st June and concluded on the 26th July. The three options consulted on were:

- **Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough**

Under this option all libraries would remain Council-run and would be open two fewer days per week, except the central library which would open five days per week.

Savings would be achieved by a 25% reduction in staff and a 21% reduction in opening hours across all thirteen libraries.

Library opening days would be adjusted to ensure that at least one library in each area (north, central, and south) was open and staff available each day (Monday to Saturday). The reduction would be minimised in busier libraries, where possible.

- **Outsource all libraries**

This would involve an open procurement process for a £2,898,500 contract. It is likely that the service would be delivered in much the same way as it is under the Council. The operator could achieve savings through efficiencies and income generation. Likely areas of efficiency savings could be made in the book fund by utilising different contracts, through more customer self-service, reductions in maintenance, utilities costs and business rate relief (80% discount for charitable organisations). There might be adjustments to the operating hours in line with the savings, i.e. closed over lunchtimes. It is also feasible that there would be more paid events and activities to generate income back into the service.

A full tendering exercise would be required to engage with any interested organisation and to satisfy procurement legislation. It is anticipated that this would take between six and twelve months to complete the procurement and mobilise, therefore, savings would not be achieved in this financial year.

- **Hybrid – reduction in service hours (two days per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries**

This option would involve eight libraries staying in council control and open two fewer days a week meaning a reduction of opening hours by 22% across all Croydon libraries.

The other five - Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley, and South Norwood libraries - would be leased to community groups, with the Council providing some staff two days a week, as well as books and IT support.

Savings would be achieved by a reduction in staffing levels by 25%. In addition, further savings would be generated from a reduction in business rates and utilities through the lease, reducing the impact on staff numbers. The staffing savings would be expected to be delivered in-year and would be managed by the Council providing more control over the delivery. However, it is likely to take

longer to achieve the buildings savings due to the need to effectively procure these community run services.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The first phase of the libraries public consultation ran from 14th January to 14th March 2021. This was a formative process that allowed residents to provide feedback on options to close up to five libraries, consider community run opportunities, or to look at other models that would achieve the savings target. Details of this consultation are set out in paragraphs 3.9 – 3.11 above.
- 4.2 The second phase commenced on 1st June, running for eight weeks, to 26th July 2021 and consulted on the three options set out in paragraph 3.13 above. The consultation was designed to enable residents to ask questions to understand the options, ahead of completion of a survey. Supporting information, as well as answers to frequently asked questions and details of ways to respond to the consultation were provided on the Council website and can be found here: - <https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/project/695>
- 4.3 Due to the Covid social distancing restrictions that were in place at the start of June the first consultation events were online webinars, taking place on 12th and 15th June 2021. The webinars provided an opportunity for residents to ask questions directly to Council staff across all three options and set out any particular concerns that they might have had. A total of seventy residents attended the webinars across two sessions. A set of 'frequently asked questions' with answers were produced from the webinars which were published on the council website alongside the publication of the transcript from the 12th June 2021 webinar (see link in 4.2 above).
- 4.4 From 2nd to 16th July 2021, library staff held fourteen face to face consultation events, scheduled during library opening hours and set up outside library buildings in compliance with COVID restrictions. The purpose of the events were to meet library customers, especially those who were not online, to make them aware of the consultation options and take questions and feedback. Ward Councillors were invited to join officers. Staff spoke to 343 residents at:
- Sanderstead Library – 02/07/2021 – 11:00-12:30
 - Purley Library – 02/07/2021 – 14:00-15:30
 - South Norwood Market – 03/07/2021 – 10:00-16:00
 - Norbury Library – 05/07/2021 – 09:30-11:00
 - Broad Green Library – 05/07/2021 – 12:30-14:00
 - Thornton Heath Library – 07/07/2021 – 11:00-12:30
 - South Norwood Library – 07/07/2021 – 13:30-15:30
 - Coulsdon Library – 09/07/2021 – 11:00-12:30
 - Bradmore Green Library – 09/07/2021 – 14:30-16:00
 - Ashburton Library – 12/07/2021 – 09:30-11:00
 - Shirley Library – 12/07/2021 – 12:30-14:00
 - Selsdon Library – 13/07/2021 – 10:30-12:00
 - New Addington Library – 13/07/2021 – 13:30-15:00
 - Central Library – 16/07/2021 – 12:00-14:00

4.5 A number of reoccurring themes emerged both from the face to face events, the webinars and completed surveys.

4.6 Some themes can and will be incorporated into our new operating model to improve services, for example:-

- *Better publicity about opening hours and activities;*
- *Call on Resident's Associations and other community networks for support*
- *Pleased with digital services but request support sessions for use of online resources*
- *Interested in volunteering to support the libraries*

We will follow up these suggestions to improve library services and continue to discuss service improvements with local residents and community groups

4.7 Some of the responses indicated the importance of ensuring that residents understood the supporting information, for example:-

- *Concern that library closures during COVID lockdown were permanent closures*
- *Concern that local libraries would close - it's important for wellbeing, a lifeline, respite, brings community together*

We addressed these issues at the time when meeting in person, when addressing questions from webinars and correspondence to the libraries consultation email inbox. We also responded by updating our online frequently asked questions to ensure residents were appropriately briefed prior to responding to the survey. This Cabinet paper also provides clarification about proposed actions, including the intentions to continue the discussions with local residents to ensure they are clear about future plans

4.8 Some themes related specifically to the option one reduction by 21% which will provide a focus for continued dialogue with residents during implementation.

- *When you reduce hours, you must be open on Saturdays and evenings or you discriminate against working people and students*
- *Could the community provide support by providing relevant activities and making the building available out of hours?*
- *We do not feel safe with the concept of Open+ and feel this will discriminate against women and young people*

4.9 In addition to the webinar and face to face events, residents could complete a survey which asked for their preferred option. The survey also provided an opportunity for residents to leave comments not in response to specific questions – these responses examined as part of this consultation. The survey could be completed online, during the face to face meetings, or in hard copy and either returned by post, by handing in to a library or council building.

4.10 In total there were 1,411 returned survey forms and the table below presents the analysis of feedback on the three presented options.

4.11 In analysing the results from the survey, taking the choices of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' together, 55.9% of respondents chose option one, making this the most preferred option. Option three, was the second choice, at 24.6%, with option two in third place registering 17.0% of respondent choices.

4.12 Conversely, when considering the options with which survey respondents 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed', option one remained the most favourable option, with option two remaining the least favourable.

	OPTION 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough? 987 respondents		OPTION 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 2: Outsource the management of all 13 libraries? 957 respondents		OPTION 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 3: Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8 libraries? 939 Respondents	
Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly agree	183	18.54%	32	3.34%	42	4.47%
Agree	369	37.39%	131	13.69%	189	20.13%
Disagree	159	16.11%	191	19.96%	231	24.60%
Strongly disagree	211	21.38%	481	50.26%	312	33.23%
Not sure	65	6.59%	122	12.75%	165	17.57%

4.13 Respondents also had the opportunity to leave a comment across any subject area. In total 4,243 comments were made, providing views on the impact of each of the options as well as comments and ideas for future service delivery. Themes were similar to those received during the face to face consultation events set out in paragraphs 4.5.1 to 4.5.3.

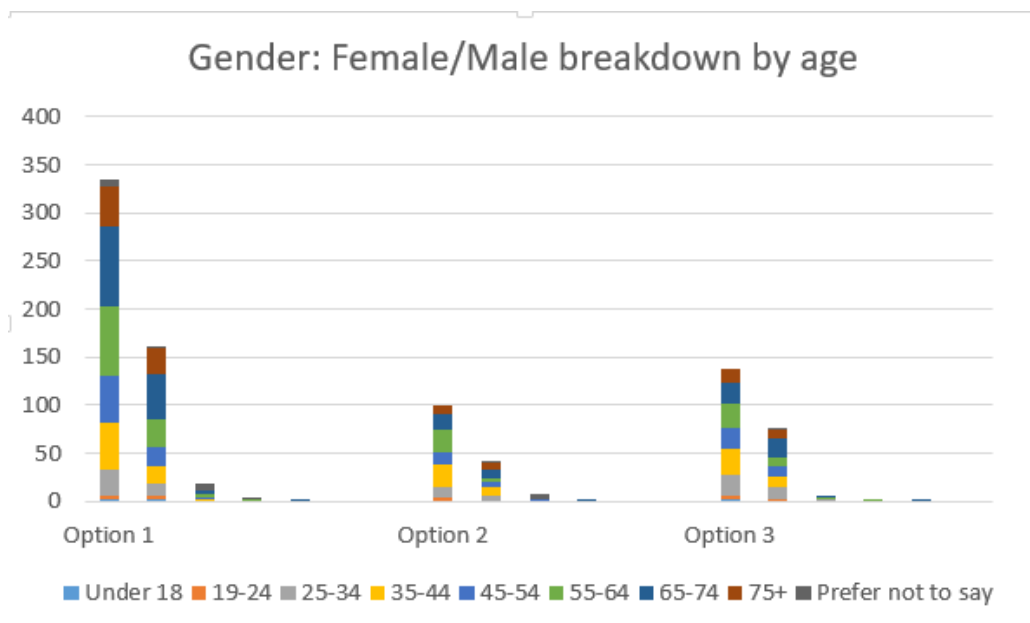
4.14 The detailed feedback can be found attached in appendix one – Croydon Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Summary July 2021. The full Equalities Assessment is attached at appendix two, with summary information provided below. Additionally, full Equalities Impact Assessments were undertaken and published alongside the 17th May Cabinet report (details in paragraph 3.11 above).

4.15 The survey respondents came from all areas of Croydon, as illustrated below: When asked 'which area/ward of Croydon do you live in?', 913 respondents said:

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Addiscombe East	44	4.82%
Addiscombe West	28	3.07%
Bensham Manor	4	0.44%
Broad Green	21	2.30%
Coulsdon Town	39	4.27%
Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood	15	1.64%
Fairfield	16	1.75%
Kenley	19	2.08%
New Addington North	14	1.53%
New Addington South	11	1.20%
Norbury and Pollards Hill	44	4.82%
Norbury Park	8	0.88%
Old Coulsdon	75	8.21%
Park Hill and Whitgift	18	1.97%
Purley and Woodcote	60	6.57%
Purley Oaks and Riddlesdown	20	2.19%
Sanderstead	75	8.21%
Selhurst	16	1.75%
Selsdon and Addington Village	28	3.07%
Selsdon Vale and Forestdale	29	3.18%
Shirley North	27	2.96%
Shirley South	43	4.71%
South Croydon	48	5.26%
South Norwood	54	5.91%
Thornton Heath	41	4.49%
Waddon	23	2.52%
West Thornton	8	0.88%
Woodside	25	2.74%
Prefer not to say	33	3.61%
Other	27	2.96%

4.16 The EIA noted that proposals were considered likely to have an impact on certain age groups, including the youngest and oldest adults, mothers, school children, adults seeking jobs. Of all respondents, 907 provided information on age groups and 911 provided information on gender (Female, Male, Prefer to Self-describe, Transgender, Prefer not to say) in the table below:

4.17 The breakdown for each option broken down by gender and age presented in the chart below:



4.18 The illustration shows the greatest number of individuals, and the largest percentage of all age groups expressed a preference for option one. Of the 552 respondents who said they ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the option one Reduce Service hours by 21% across the borough, 497 provided information on gender, 335 (67%) were women and 162 (33%) were men, which is in proportion to all respondents. These respondents, both male and female, acknowledge an impact on reduction in hours, but most expressed a preference for reduced hours over the other options, as illustrated above, and preferred to keep all library buildings open for services and activities under Council control.

4.19 Regarding Maternity and Pregnancy, there was feedback from the survey and from face to face meetings highlighting the potential for a significant negative impact to reducing service hours if the opening hours were not accessible. Accessible hours would include Saturdays and evenings for working mothers, and local mothers wanted to be involved in decisions about opening hours and the scheduling of activities, because this group could not easily travel to a nearby open library when their local library was closed. To mitigate this impact, the Council will continue to engage with communities in implementing the reduction of hours at specific libraries.

4.20 When asked ‘Your ethnic origin?’, 911 respondents said:

Response from respondents who “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” with options 1-3 Respondents can Agree with all options	Option 1: Reduction by 21% (521 responses)	Option 2: Outsource to partner (150 responses)	Option 3: 5 Community run libraries; 8 reduced hours (223 responses)
White	379	97	157
Asian	42	21	30
Black	39	9	10
Mixed	24	6	12
Other	6	5	3
Prefer not to say	31	12	11

- 4.21 Reviewing the data available, there is a significant preference across all ethnic groups for option one: Reduce opening hours by 21% across all libraries, with some agreeing that either outsourcing or community managed options are viable alternatives. In the free text responses to options one and two, respondents urged the Council to seek support from the community, and to ensure there was more community involvement and resident engagement with libraries in future, and a co-production approach to libraries service development. The Council will continue to work with community groups with the aim of addressing this aspiration.
- 4.22 The overall feedback regarding the impact of the options for disabled library users was that option one would be the only acceptable option of the three, but a reduction in services and opening hours would have a significant impact on the wellbeing of residents with a disability. It was noted that residents with mobility issues could not easily travel to other libraries, especially not to those without parking nearby. Opening hours needed to allow for quiet times which were more disabled friendly, activities and volunteering opportunities. To mitigate the impact, the Council will continue to engage with residents with a disability during our planning to implementing reduce hours across the specific library sites.
- 4.23 Although the offer of the Home Library Service and digital services were a mitigation for some residents, they did not replace an open local library, accessible to those with disability, providing library staff, books and activities. There will be future engagement with this group during implementation.
- 4.24 The overall feedback was that option one - reduce service hours by 21% across the borough - would be the only acceptable option of the three, but a reduction in services and opening hours would have a potential significant impact on residents with certain protected characteristics, including age (older adults, babies, children and mothers), maternity/pregnancy, disability and ethnicity. There will be future engagement with this groups about opening hours and activities during implementation to ensure equalities concerns are monitored and mitigated. For full details see appendix two.
- 4.25 The Council remains statutorily responsible for overseeing and ensuring the delivery of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under Section 7 of the Libraries and Museums Act 1964. What comprises a comprehensive and efficient library service will differ from authority to authority depending on the needs of the community and in light of the Council's transformational needs and the outcome of the consultation with and involvement from the community.
- 4.26 The 1964 Act requires that in fulfilling this duty under S7(1) the Council shall in particular have regard to the desirability—
- (a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and
- (b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service,

and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and

(c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

- 4.27 Having due regard to the outcome of the consultation – both the first and second phase; the Libraries Plan 2019-2028 and the data it was based on (7th May 2019 Cabinet report - <https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=5058> and 15th July 2019 Council report - <https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=5796> ; the assessment in the 17th May 2021 Cabinet report <https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=11362>) including in relation to the usage of libraries; the Public Sector Equalities Duty, the equalities impact assessment and equalities considerations detailed in this report and Appendix 2 and the details set out elsewhere in this report it is considered that the recommendations within this report would best ensure the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient library service in accordance with Section 7 of the 1964 Act. This report and its recommendations has set out how the Council has discussed its approach with DCMS, listened to and reflected upon the needs of the community in light of the consultation and the considerations set out above and within the body of this report. This report also sets out how the recommendations aim to support the overall health and well-being of the area, and ensuring that what the Council does provides social value in the current circumstances.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 If the recommendations are agreed by Cabinet and then Full Council to progress with option one, there are a number of activities that need to be undertaken to deliver the service change.
- 5.2 The first activity will be to start a staff restructure process that will redesign the service hierarchy to reflect the reduction in hours by an average of 21%. At this stage it is anticipated that the staffing complement will need to be reduced by an estimated 15.99 FTE posts. There are currently 5.01 FTE vacancies within the existing establishment that will minimise the impact of the changes on staff. It is expected that the restructure will need to be undertaken towards the end of the financial year 2021/22. The restructure will follow a full consultation process with staff and unions.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the new timetable would be introduced from 1st January 2022. This would reduce the statutory libraries service hours from 566.5 hours per week to 446 hours per week. The Council will continue to engage with residents, targeting certain specific groups in order to respond to particular concerns around accessibility to the libraries service, building upon the findings of the Equalities Impact Assessment that accompanied the 17th May 2021 cabinet paper and the updated equalities impact assessment at Appendix 2. Staffed hours would be

reduced to 356 hours per week, and would be anticipated to be supplemented with 90 hours per week of Open+ hours. This technology is currently installed in Selsdon and Norbury libraries, with plans for installation in Coulsdon, Purley and Thornton Heath libraries in the coming months. Customers would be registered for Open+ and briefed on accessing services outside staffed hours.

- 5.4 Engagement work in each library community, which started during the consultation periods with residents, community organisations and other Council services, will continue, with the aim that the use of the library buildings continues during the closed days. This will help to provide services to local communities, while also providing unstaffed access to self-service book issues and returns, computer access and printing.
- 5.5 Following feedback from residents, the service will look to generate additional income from renting the spaces either on a long term arrangement or for ad hoc events and activities. More work will take place over the next few months with other services, charity and voluntary sector organisations, and community groups to maximise and diversify the use of the library buildings. In particular, working with community groups and residents, we want to maximise opportunities for greater use. Our priority remains delivering our core civic and community offer as a library service embedded within localities.

6 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

- 6.1 The libraries consultation was discussed at Scrutiny and Overview Committee on the 30th March 2021, the feedback from which helped shape the proposals in the cabinet paper of 17th May 2021.
- 6.2 Scrutiny and Overview Committee agreed to make the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Regeneration for further consideration:-
 1. The Committee recommends that any future consultation documents on the libraries service clearly outlines the Council's vision for libraries and how it had informed the process.
 2. The Committee recommends that further work is undertaken to prepare a detailed appraisal of any options put forward for the next stage of the consultation, to ensure that those responding could make an informed decision. This should include consideration of:-
 - hybrid options
 - a co-design approach for the redevelopment of the future library service
 3. The assessment criteria for the options appraisal also needed to be clearly defined at the start of the process and published with the second phase consultation
- 6.3 Full details of the meeting and recommendations can be found here:-
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=11192>
- 6.4 On the 27th May the Scrutiny & Overview Committee considered a call-in request of the Cabinet decisions made as a result of the 17th May Cabinet report.

Following discussion, the members of the committee concluded that no further action was necessary, and the decision could proceed as intended to phase two consultation. Details of the meeting can be found here:
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=11636>

7 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations

	Current Year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast		
	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Revenue Budget Available	£3,320,000	£3,320,000	£2,813,020	£2,813,020
Expenditure Income	£0 £0	£0	£0	£0
Effect of decision from report	£0	-£506,980	£0	£0
Expenditure Income	£0 £0	£0	£0	£0
Remaining Budget		£2,813,020		
Capital Budget available				
Expenditure Income				
Effect of decision from report				
Expenditure Income				
Remaining Budget				

7.2 The effect of the decision

Implementing the recommended changes will achieve £506,980 of savings from the libraries revenue budget. These savings are generated through the reduction of 15.99 FTE, which will be in place from 1st April 2022.

Additional income is likely through the rental of space in the library buildings. Details of this additional income will be calculated over the coming months

through work with other services, charity and voluntary sector organisations, and community groups.

7.3 Risks

In the event of a judicial review being brought against the Council then savings would likely be deferred until the conclusion of the investigation. If the challenge was successful then any changes to the service and, therefore, the savings would not be able to be implemented.

7.4 Options

The options considered are set out in section 13, below.

7.5 Future savings/efficiencies

Any future savings would be subject to further meaningful consultation with residents.

Income generating opportunities are being explored by the libraries service. These will include rental and hire of space in the library building. Other opportunities being explored are ticketed skills based summer camps for children in library buildings.

Approved by: Matthew Davies, Deputy S.151 Officer

8 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that the legal requirements for a proper consultation exercise are known as the Sedley requirements that were adopted in R v Brent London Borough Council, ex parte Gunning (1985) 84 LGR 168.

8.2 The Sedley requirements are that:

- a. Consultation must be made at a time when proposals are at a formative stage.
- b. Sufficient reasons for the proposal must be given to allow intelligent consideration and response.
- c. Adequate time must be given for a response.
- d. The product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising proposals.

8.3 Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (PLMA 1964) places library authorities, such as the Council, under a duty to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof".

8.4 In fulfilling its duty under Section 7(1) , a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability—

(a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in

number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and

(b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and

(c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

8.5 Section 10 also allows the Secretary of State to investigate a complaint that a library authority has failed to carry out its duties under the PLMA 1964 and to issue an order requiring it to carry out those duties.

8.6 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out a general duty requiring those subject to the duty to have "due regard" to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups.

8.7 Children Act 2004 (section 11): Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (CA 2004) requires councils to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Approved by Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

9 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

9.1 A restructure of the libraries service is required to achieve savings of £508,980. This will be delivered by reducing the number of posts by 15.99 FTE.

9.2 A full restructure will be undertaken after the agreement of the changes to the libraries service, with the aim of the new structure being in place for 1st April 2022. The process will be undertaken in accordance with the councils HR policies and recognised trade unions will be fully consulted.

9.3 The risk of redundancy will be mitigated through the holding of existing vacancies. The service currently has 5.01 FTE vacancies. In addition, employees will also be able to apply for voluntary severance, if a scheme is available at this time.

Approved by: Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

10 EQUALITY IMPACT

- 10.1 The Equality Act (2010) introduced the public sector duty which extends the protected characteristics covered by the public sector equality duty to include age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief. Under the public sector equality duty the Council has a duty to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.
- 10.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 10.3 Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that decision makers must be able to evidence that they have taken into account any impact of the proposals under consideration on people who share the protected characteristics before decisions are taken.
- 10.4 As set out in the report to cabinet in May, and Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken on all options being considered prior to public consultation. This considered the potential positive and negative impacts on protected characteristics. This assessment has been updated following the public consultation and can be found in the appendices. The views of different protected characteristic groups are set out and have informed amendments to the proposal to mitigate any impact.
- 10.5 The libraries service will continue to engage with groups to understand the impact of the final recommended option and implementation, and consider any further mitigating actions that may be required.

Approved by: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership

11 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 11.1 There are no environmental impact as a result of this report.

12 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 12.1 There are no implications on existing crime from this report.
- 12.2 Libraries are seen as safe spaces for residents, particularly children and young people, to attend. Reduced staffed hours will limit access to these safe spaces. By working with other services, charity and voluntary sector organisations, and community groups it is hoped that access to library buildings can be maximised.

13 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 13.1 The libraries service was asked to make savings of £504,000 in the financial year 2022/23, whilst retaining its commitment for capital investment in libraries to improve the fabric and infrastructure to enhance services for residents.
- 13.2 As a statutory service public consultation must be undertaken and after advice from DCMS colleagues this was undertaken in a two phased approach.
- 13.3 As detailed above the libraries consultation was undertaken in two distinct phases. The first phase ran from 14th January to 14th March 2021, which alongside the Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommendation from the 30th March and the 27th May 2021 shaped the second phase consultation. The second phase of consultation ran from 1st June to the 26th July 2021 and asked for residents preference from three options:
- a) Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough
 - b) Outsource all libraries
 - c) Hybrid – reduction in service hours (two days per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries
- 13.4 Results from the second phase of consultation as detailed in section four above and supported by appendix one and two identifies option one as the preferred option by residents. Therefore this paper recommends that Cabinet should recommend to Full Council that it should pursue option one – to implement changes to the statutory Library service by reducing hours by an average of 21% across the borough, achieving £506,980 of savings.

14 OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 14.1 Two further options were considered as part of the second phase consultation. This paper recommends that these options are discounted. This is because the consultation identified that option one was the preferred option by consultation respondents and could deliver a statutory service.
- 14.2 During both consultation phases respondents did however express interest in aspects of option three, particularly around volunteering, community involvement and opportunities around better use of library buildings as identified in appendix one. The Council will continue to engage with residents to identify the potential of developing these options further.

15 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

15.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'

NO

15.2 HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?

NO

No Data Protection Impact Assessment has been completed for this report as the recommendations do not result in the processing of personal data.

Approved by: Stephen Tate, Director of Growth, Employment and Regeneration

CONTACT OFFICER: Robert Hunt, Interim Head of Assets & Involvement, tel: 0208 726 6000 ext. 63309

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Appendix one – Croydon Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Summary July 2021

Appendix two – Equality Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

Croydon Libraries consultation – Phase 2 (1st June – 26th July 2021): Summary of feedback

Options for our future library service

This is a summary of the feedback received from residents following the Phase 2 public consultation on three options proposed for changes to the library service which would also achieve a target of £500,000 savings target outlined in detail in the cabinet paper.

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29167/Libraries%20Public%20Consultation%20Phase%20Two.pdf>

Option one: reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough

Under this option all libraries remain council-run and open two fewer days per week, except the central library that would open five days per week. Savings would be achieved by a 25% reduction in staff and a 21% reduction in opening hours across all 13 libraries. Library opening days would be adjusted to ensure that at least one library in each area (north, central, and south) was open and staff available each day (Monday to Saturday).

Option two: the council would work in partnership with an organisation to outsource the management of all 13 libraries

Under this option a partner organisation would be sought through an open procurement process for a £2,898,500 contract. It is likely that the service would be delivered in much the same way as it is under the council. The operator could achieve savings through efficiencies and income generation. It is anticipated that this would take between 6 and 12 months to complete the procurement and mobilise, therefore, savings would not be achieved in this financial year.

Option three: includes five community-run libraries and reducing opening hours for eight libraries

Under this option eight libraries would stay in council control and open two fewer days a week, and the other five - Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley, and South Norwood libraries - would be leased to community groups, with the council providing some staff two days a week, as well as books and IT support. This would mean a reduction of opening hours by 22% across all Croydon Libraries. Savings would be achieved by a reduction in staffing levels by 25%. In addition, further savings would be generated from a reduction in business rates and utilities through the lease, reducing the impact on staff numbers. The staffing savings would be expected to be delivered in-year, however it is likely to take longer to achieve the buildings savings due to the need to effectively procure these community run services.

The information is presented in sections below and should be read together with Appendix 2 Equalities Impact Assessment.

1. **Summary of Publicity and Social Media (page 2)**
2. [Survey approach and messaging \(page 6\)](#)
3. [Summary of Feedback \(page 11\)](#)
4. [Profile of Respondents \(page 22\)](#)
5. [Further impact analysis \(page 28\)](#)
6. [Summary Conclusion \(page 30\)](#)

1. Summary of Publicity and Social Media:

1.1. Publicity for Consultation Survey, 2 webinars, 14 in person drop-in sessions

- Survey Posters and leaflets available in all libraries and posted in 'Select & Collect' book reservation bags
- All Phase 1 respondents who provided and consented to contact were sent an email by from libraries consultation email address
- All library members received an automated email message about the library consultation via Symphony library catalogue (approximately 100,000 members on library membership database)
- Publicity in YourCroydon, Council Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Posts on Croydon library service social media: Website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Library Social Media	Posts	Impressions/Reach	Engagements/Likes
Facebook	5	3163	152
Instagram	2	494	22
Instagram Stories	3	181	n/a
Twitter	6	2952	67

1.2. 2 webinars on Saturday 12th June and Tuesday 15th June 2021 at start of consultation: details advertising the events and slides, transcripts and recordings posted here: <https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/project/695>

1.3. 14 Face to face meetings from 2nd – 16th July: advertised on posters and leaflets in every library, leaflets, emails to community groups and emails from Ward Councillors and community groups to their networks. Council officers spoke to over 340 residents, discussing the options, answering questions, and collecting feedback.

1.4. Print Publicity:

Image (see details adjacent) featured twice on back page of Croydon Guardian,

Local Groups including local Residents' Associations provided paper copies to residents who were not available to access the online survey and engaged with officers at the face to face meetings. These contacts are greatly valued and will be continued and developed following this consultation.

1.5. Online Newsletters:

Croydon Libraries Newsletter and the Croydon Culture Newsletters, featured news of the survey, webinars and drop in events in both June and July newsletters

Have your say on our future library service

Join our drop-in sessions to speak to council staff about the consultation or to get a paper copy survey

Friday 2 July	11:00 - 12:30 14:00 - 15:30	Sanderstead Library Purley Library
Saturday 3 July	10:00 - 16:00	South Norwood Market
Monday 5 July	09:30 - 11:00 12:30 - 14:00	Norbury Library Broad Green Library
Wednesday 7 July	11:00 - 12:30 13:30 - 15:30	Thornton Heath Library South Norwood Library
Friday 9 July	11:00 - 12:30 14:30 - 16:00	Coulsdon Library Bradmore Green Library
Monday 12 July	09:30 - 11:00 12:30 - 14:00	Ashburton Library Shirley Library
Tuesday 13 July	10:30 - 12:00 13:30 - 15:00	Selsdon Library New Addington Library
Friday 16 July	12:00 - 14:00	Clocktower Atrium, Central Library

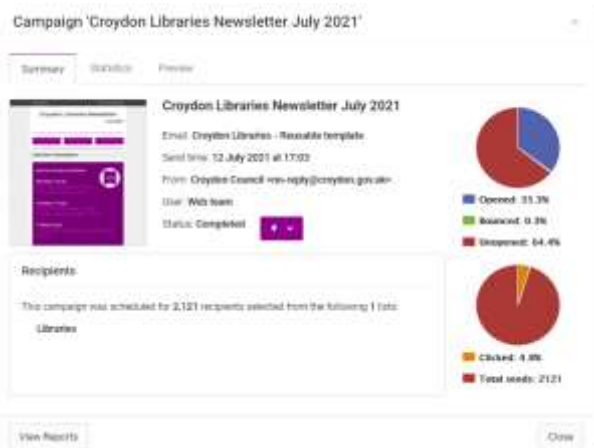
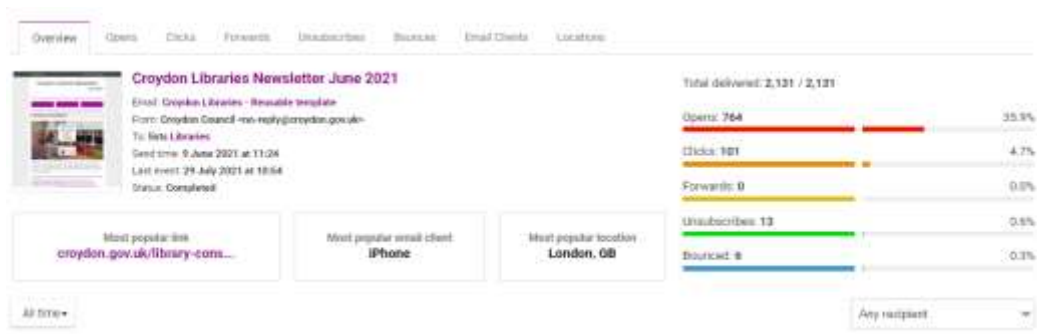
Complete the survey online at:
croydon.gov.uk/library-consultation

Closes 26 July

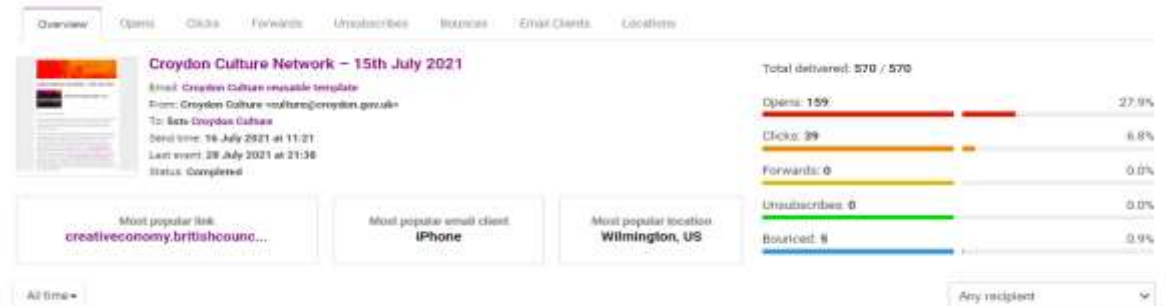
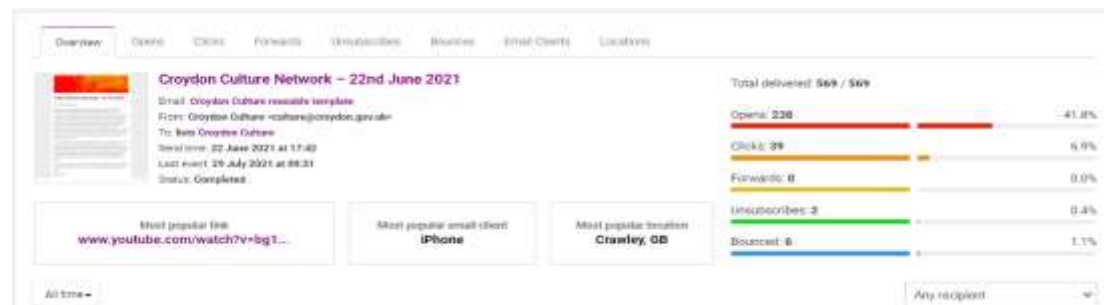


CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk

Croydon Libraries Newsletter (monthly): Sent to 2121 registered recipients by email on 9th June and 12th July, promoting the survey, webinars, and in person drop in sessions. In both months 35% opened the newsletter and 4.7% clicked through to the website.



Cultural Network Newsletter (monthly): Sent to 570 registered recipients by email on 22nd June and 19th July, promoting the survey, webinars, and in person drop in sessions. 41% opened the June newsletter and 27% opened the July newsletter, and in both months 6.9% clicked through to the website.



2. Approach to Consultation Survey and Messaging

A Libraries Consultation webpage was created with links to all the background information required. Residents were invited to provide feedback by completing the online survey, or by returning a paper survey form to their local library, or by telephone consultation with a member of library staff.

- Online survey: <https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/project/695>
- Paper copy on request from any Croydon library or email librariesconsultation@croydon.gov.uk
- Request the survey and consultation information in a different format or language by emailing librariesconsultation@croydon.gov.uk
- Alternatively, phone 020 7884 5159 and leave a message including your contact details, or email librariesconsultation@croydon.gov.uk and we will get back to you as soon as possible. The survey could be completed over the telephone.

2.1. Consultation messaging and background information published 1st June 2021 on the Library Consultation website to provide background information, including feedback on Phase 1 consultation when ideas were in a formative stage, and how that was developed into the Phase 2 options. The following background information document was available both online and in print, posted out to residents who requested a paper copy of the survey, and made available during the 14 drop in sessions.

The original document is included here (below) because it is the specific detailed information shared with residents to which they referred when providing their survey feedback:

Croydon Libraries consultation – Phase 2

Our library service in Croydon means so much to our residents across the whole borough, something made very clear to us in the 2,510 responses received in the first phase of consultation about the future of our library service:

https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/kms/dmart.aspx?strTab=ConsultationTimeline&PageType=item&filter_SurveyId=678

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their views and ideas for the service. This feedback has helped us work through all of the options available to achieve the savings needed for 2022/23, while maintaining a statutory library service; see how in the table below:

You said, we're doing

You told us	What we're doing
Library buildings play an important role in our community, and closing them will impact deprived areas and children, young people and the elderly will be the most impacted.	Closing library buildings is not an option in any of our three new options. Our early proposals were based around closing the libraries with the highest future repair and maintenance costs and lowest visitor numbers – Bradmore Green, Shirley, Sanderstead, South Norwood and Broad Green. Since our phase one consultation, we've identified funding to meet the repair costs. This money, from the ring-fenced Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which councils can charge to limit the impact of new developments, would also cover the fit-out costs of the new South Norwood library.
Others want longer hours/more convenient times to meet their needs	CIL funding also provides the opportunity for the roll-out of Open+ technology to more libraries across the borough, allowing those registered to use their library cards to access buildings out-of-hours. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3eq7xFXums
Many suggested reducing hours to reduce costs	Reducing building opening hours reduces staffing costs. This is reflected in options 1 and 3 to help make the savings needed.
Many respondents recommended we look into sharing/hiring/leasing space to raise money.	With each of the options we will continue to explore income generating options, with any income made invested back into the service.
Look into the option of community and volunteer run libraries/buildings.	During the first phase of consultation a number of community groups and individuals approached us expressing an interest in partnering with the service. Following these discussions, our new option three includes leasing buildings to community groups.

Concern about losing library staff.	Staffing costs are the biggest part of the library service budget, so a reduction in staff to achieve the savings might be unavoidable.
Consider sharing the buildings with the local community.	Since the phase one consultation we have been talking with community groups, schools, businesses and individuals about their ideas for how the buildings could be used out of library hours. This is an ongoing conversation and will be possible with any option that we progress.

Options for our future library service

Following a meeting of our council's cabinet where it was agreed to start the second phase of public consultation on proposed changes to the service, we now want to hear people's views on the following options developed to make the £500,000 savings target outlined in detail in the cabinet paper.

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29167/Libraries%20Public%20Consultation%20Phase%20Two.pdf>

Option one: reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough

Under this option all libraries remain council-run and will be open two fewer days per week, except the central library that would open five days per week.

Savings would be achieved by a 25% reduction in staff and a 21% reduction in opening hours across all 13 libraries.

Library opening days would be adjusted to ensure that at least one library in each area (north, central, and south) was open and staff available each day (Monday to Saturday). The reduction would be minimised in busier libraries, where possible.

Opening hours	Under this option all libraries (except central library) will be open with library staff two fewer days per week. For example Ashburton Library that is currently open 44.5 hours a week would reduce to 24 hours a week. For Croydon Central Library a one day reduction is proposed meaning it would be open five days per week. See more detail: https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29175/Appendix%208%20Options%20Opening%20Hours.pdf
Accessibility	Open+ technology will be used in six libraries: currently installed in Selsdon & Norbury Libraries to be activated once COVID restrictions allow. To be installed in South Norwood (new library), Coulsdon, Purley, and Thornton Heath Libraries, providing 150 hours of unstaffed operating hours, limiting the reduction in weekly operating hours to 21%.
Service managed by	Croydon Council

Books and digital	Croydon Library Service will continue to provide, access to over 6 million books as part of The Libraries Consortium, plus 24/7 digital library and the Home Library Service. Croydon Libraries will continue to provide full fibre broadband; the network and equipment at all 13 libraries was updated January 2020.
When would this be implemented?	Spring 2022
Equality impact	The Equalities Impact Assessment for this option identifies that there would be a moderate impact upon the following protected characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Gender • Race • Pregnancy & maternity https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29169/Appendix%202%20Equalities%20Impact%20Assessment%20Reduce%20service%20hours%20by%2021%20across%20the%20borough.pdf

This option will include the opportunity for shared use to meet a local community need e.g. homework clubs, knitting clubs, and paid-for use of the building e.g. training sessions, when it's not in use.

Option two: the council would work in partnership with an organisation to outsource the management of all 13 libraries

This would involve an open procurement process for a £2,898,500 contract. It is likely that the service would be delivered in much the same way as it is under the council. The operator could achieve savings through efficiencies and income generation. Likely areas of efficiency savings could be made in the book fund by utilising different contracts, through more customer self-service, reductions in maintenance and utilities costs, business rate relief (if charitable organisation 80% discount). There may be adjustments to the operating hours in line with the savings, i.e. closed over lunchtimes. It is also feasible that there will be more paid events and activities to generate income back into the service.

A full tendering exercise would be required to engage with any interested organisation and to satisfy procurement legislation. It is anticipated that this would take between 6 and 12 months to complete the procurement and mobilise, therefore, savings would not be achieved in this financial year.

Opening hours	This would be discussed with the organisation who takes over the management of the libraries. It is likely that the service would be delivered in much the same way as it is under the council. There may be adjustments to the operating hours in line with the savings, i.e. closed over lunchtimes.
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	See more detail: https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29175/Appendix%208%20Options%20Opening%20Hours.pdf
Accessibility	Open+ technology will be used in six libraries: currently installed in Selsdon & Norbury Libraries to be activated once COVID restrictions allow. To be installed in South Norwood (new library), Coulsdon, Purley, and Thornton Heath libraries providing 150 hours of unstaffed operating hours, limiting the reduction in weekly operating hours to 21%.
Service managed by	Partner organisation
Books and digital	Initially, Croydon Library Service will continue to provide books and IT services, including 24/7 digital library and Home Library Service. The partner might provide alternative or additional services.
When would this be implemented?	Autumn 2022
Equalities impact	The Equalities Impact Assessment for this option identifies that there would be a low impact upon all the protected characteristics. https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29171/Appendix%204%20Equalities%20Impact%20Assessment%20Outsource%20all%20libraries.pdf

Option three: includes five community-run libraries and reducing opening hours for eight libraries

This option would involve eight libraries staying in council control and open two fewer days a week meaning a reduction of opening hours by 22% across all Croydon Libraries.

The other five - Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley, and South Norwood libraries - would be leased to community groups, with the council providing some staff two days a week, as well as books and IT support.

Savings would be achieved by a reduction in staffing levels by 25%. In addition, further savings would be generated from a reduction in business rates and utilities through the lease, reducing the impact on staff numbers. The staffing savings would be expected to be delivered in-year and would be managed by the council providing more control over the delivery. However, it is likely to take longer to achieve the buildings savings due to the need to effectively procure these community run services.

Opening hours	Proposal to reduce opening hours at eight libraries by two days per week.
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	<p>For example Ashburton Library that is currently open 44.5 hours a week would reduce to 32 hours a week.</p> <p>Five libraries - Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley and South Norwood would be leased to a community organisation who would facilitate access to books, IT, and would run activities and events. Library staff would continue to manage the book collection on site and be available parttime to lead activities such as rhymetimes. It is hoped, but not guaranteed, that community groups would be able to operate on similar opening hours to the current libraries provision.</p> <p>By reducing opening hours there would be an overall reduction in weekly staffed operating hours of 270.5 hours, which is a 48% reduction.</p> <p>See more detail: https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29175/Appendix%208%20Options%20Opening%20Hours.pdf</p>
Accessibility	Open+ technology will be used in six libraries: currently installed in Selsdon & Norbury Libraries to be activated once COVID restrictions allow. To be installed in South Norwood (new library), Coulsdon, Purley, and Thornton Heath Libraries providing 150 hours of unstaffed operating hours, limiting the reduction in weekly operating hours to 21%.
Service managed by	Community groups would lease the building from the council and be responsible for utilities, repairs and maintenance. They would be responsible to the community as a whole, and deliver activities and support services as part of their responsibilities.
Books and digital	Croydon Library Service will continue to provide books and IT services.
When would this be implemented?	Summer 2022.
Equality impact	The Equalities Impact Assessment for this option identifies that there would be a low impact upon all the protected characteristics https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29173/Appendix%206%20Equalities%20Impact%20Assessment%20Hybrid%20reduction%20in%20service%20hours%20two%20days%20per%20week.pdf

You can find more details for each of these options:

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29174/Appendix%207%20Options%20following%20libraries%20consultation%20April%202021.pdf>

Have your say

We want to hear your views on the options for our future library service. We'd also like to hear any ideas you may have.

Complete the online survey before midnight on 26 July 2021

<https://getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/project/695>

Request a paper copy from any Croydon library or email librariesconsultation@croydon.gov.uk and return it by 21 July 2021

Request the survey and consultation information in a different format or language by emailing librariesconsultation@croydon.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can phone 020 7884 5159 and leave a message including your contact details, or email librariesconsultation@croydon.gov.uk and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Other options considered

Close five libraries

These early proposals were based around closing the smallest libraries with the highest future repair and maintenance costs and lowest usage. The libraries were Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley, and South Norwood.

Local feedback received during phase one of the consultation highlighted the importance of the local library buildings and the impact closing them would have on the local community. Since this initial consultation, the council has identified external funding to meet these five libraries' repair costs. With this in mind and the fact that this option does not meet the full savings target now, we do not see this as a possible option.

Five community-run libraries

Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley, and South Norwood libraries become community managed buildings. Community organisations would lease the building from the council to offer community space, and take responsibility for building running costs. Croydon Libraries will continue to provide books and IT services, with 0.5 FTE staff presence at each site.

This option does not meet the full savings target so is not a possible option.

Mix of community-run libraries and reducing opening hours at all libraries by one day a week

This option proposed to reduce opening hours at eight libraries by one day per week. The other five (Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley and South Norwood) would be fully staffed two days per week, with community organisations occupying the buildings during the remainder of the week.

This option does not meet the full savings target so is not a possible option.

See more detail:

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29167/Libraries%20Public%20Consultation%20Phase%20Two.pdf>

Open+ technology

Croydon Libraries will be offering Open+ technology to bring our customers extended self-service opening hours at selected libraries: Selsdon Library, Norbury Library and the new South Norwood Library when it opens. We have also received funding for three more installations in Coulsdon, Purley and Thornton Heath Libraries.

The Croydon Open+ pilot has been delayed due to Covid-19. It will be rolled out in Selsdon and Norbury Libraries once Covid-19 restrictions lift.

Open+ technology will, in most cases, extend opening hours to 8am - 8pm allowing access to libraries on days they were previously closed, including Sundays. This additional access will provide opportunities for those who would usually struggle to get to a library during standard opening hours the chance to borrow books and use the computers. Opening hours will depend on where the library is located and will be reviewed with customers once up and running, after Covid-19 restrictions have lifted.

Open+ is available to adults 18+ and young people from 16-years-old can register with parental consent. All children under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian when using the library via Open+, unless they are attending with another adult for homework club or other activity agreed with library staff.

During Open+ extended opening hours visitors can access the library using a registered library card and entering a pin at the access panel located by the entrance.

During Open+ extended opening hours you can borrow, renew and return items using self-service kiosks; use a PC or WiFi to access the internet, eBooks or other online resources, and collect book reservations.

CCTV will be in operation during extended opening hours for your safety and security, and this service will be monitored by Croydon security staff. There will be an emergency phone number available.

When the library is due to close, the system will broadcast two warning messages and dim the lights. Once the last customer has left the system will turn off the lights and close down computers and WiFi.

When customers register for Open+, Library staff will provide a full briefing on how to use the technology. Customers will be asked to agree to a code of conduct which covers the safe and considerate use of the space.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3eq7xFXums>

3. Summary of Consultation Feedback

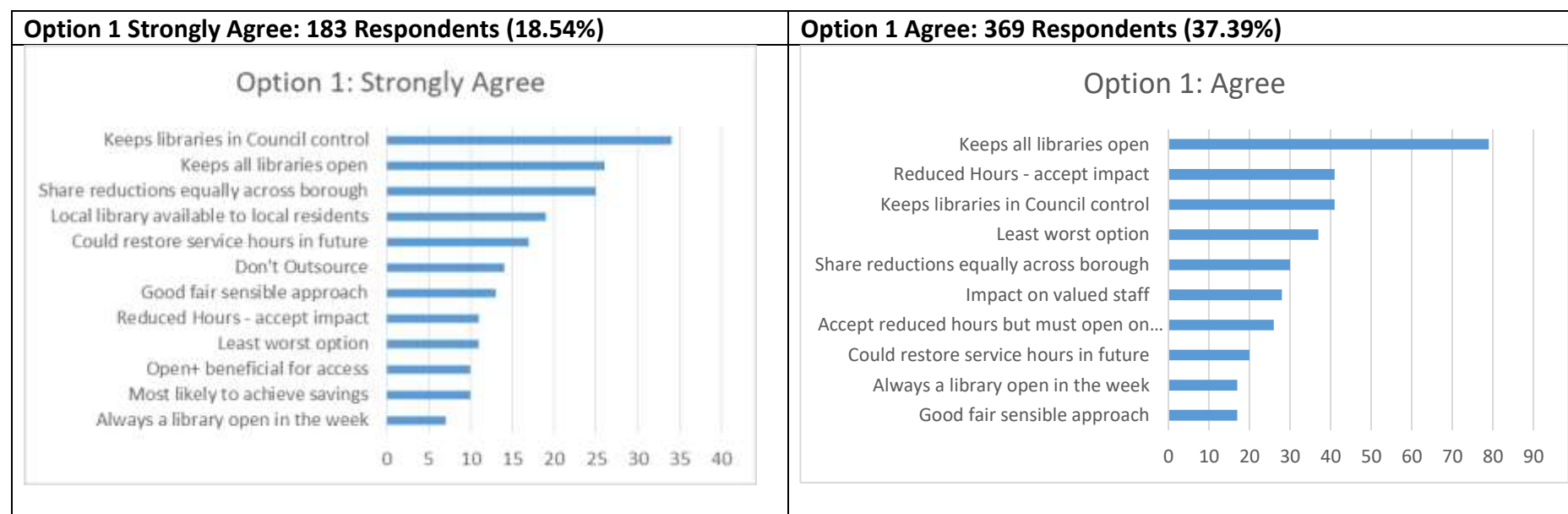
- Online/paper survey accessed by 1,411 respondents
- Webinars; Recordings and FAQs from the two sessions
- Face to face discussions with 343 residents at meetings in all libraries
- Spring Parks Residents Association (SPRA) Response to the Consultation March 2021, resubmitted for July 2021
- 3 emails and 1 letter submission

3.1. Summary of Survey Feedback returns after 26th July 2021: 1,411 accessed the survey

OPTION 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough? 987 respondents			OPTION 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 2: Outsource the management of all 13 libraries? 957 respondents		OPTION 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 3: Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8 libraries? 939 respondents	
Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Strongly agree	183	18.54%	32	3.34%	42	4.47%
Agree	369	37.39%	131	13.69%	189	20.13%
Disagree	159	16.11%	191	19.96%	231	24.60%
Strongly disagree	211	21.38%	481	50.26%	312	33.23%
Not sure	65	6.59%	122	12.75%	165	17.57%

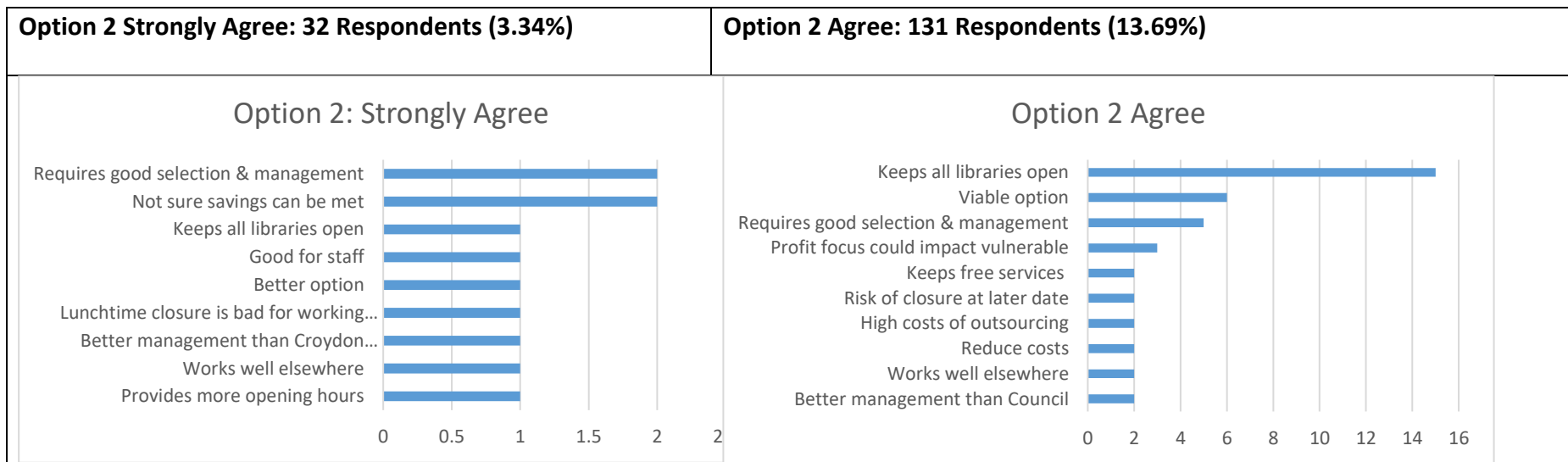
3.2. For each of the three options residents were also invited to provide their comments in a free text box. There were 4,243 free text comments which were analysed by recurring themes which are highlighted below.

OPTION 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough? 987 respondents: Breakdown of free text responses by main themes: Feedback from over 50% of residents responding to the Phase 2 Libraries Consultation expressed a preference for a Council managed service and felt that a distribution of reduced hours across all libraries was a fair approach.



Option 1 Disagree: 159 Respondents (16.11%)	Option 1 Strongly Disagree: 211 Respondents (21.38%)																																												
<p style="text-align: center;">Option 1: Disagree</p> <p>This horizontal bar chart displays the reasons for 'Option 1: Disagree' among 159 respondents. The x-axis represents the number of respondents, ranging from 0 to 70. The y-axis lists eight reasons. The most cited reason is 'No reductions - increase hours' with approximately 65 respondents, followed by 'Negative impact on communities' with about 52 respondents.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reason</th> <th>Count (Approximate)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No reductions - increase hours</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Negative impact on communities</td> <td>52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consult community on opening hours</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Risk of further reductions & possible closure</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Council Management - no confidence</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cannot travel to next nearest library</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Post COVID need more opening hours</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open+ not secure or beneficial</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Reason	Count (Approximate)	No reductions - increase hours	65	Negative impact on communities	52	Consult community on opening hours	28	Risk of further reductions & possible closure	10	Council Management - no confidence	10	Cannot travel to next nearest library	10	Post COVID need more opening hours	10	Open+ not secure or beneficial	10	<p style="text-align: center;">Option 1: Strongly Disagree</p> <p>This horizontal bar chart displays the reasons for 'Option 1: Strongly Disagree' among 211 respondents. The x-axis represents the number of respondents, ranging from 0 to 140. The y-axis lists ten reasons. The most cited reason is 'No reductions - increase hours' with approximately 130 respondents, followed by 'Negative impact on communities' with about 115 respondents.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reason</th> <th>Count (Approximate)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No reductions - increase hours</td> <td>130</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Negative impact on communities</td> <td>115</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consult community on opening hours</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Council Management - no confidence</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Risk of further reductions & possible closure</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Impact on valued staff</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open+ not secure or beneficial</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income generation</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cannot travel to next nearest library</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Volunteers - not dependable resource</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Post COVID need more opening hours</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open+ beneficial for access</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Reason	Count (Approximate)	No reductions - increase hours	130	Negative impact on communities	115	Consult community on opening hours	35	Council Management - no confidence	20	Risk of further reductions & possible closure	15	Impact on valued staff	15	Open+ not secure or beneficial	10	Income generation	10	Cannot travel to next nearest library	10	Volunteers - not dependable resource	5	Post COVID need more opening hours	5	Open+ beneficial for access	5
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<p>Option 1 Not Sure: 65 Respondents (6.59%)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Option 1: Not Sure</p> <p>This horizontal bar chart displays the reasons for 'Option 1: Not Sure' among 65 respondents. The x-axis represents the number of respondents, ranging from 0 to 20. The y-axis lists four reasons. The most cited reason is 'Consult community on opening hours' with approximately 19 respondents, followed by 'Negative impact on communities' with about 10 respondents.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reason</th> <th>Count (Approximate)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Consult community on opening hours</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Negative impact on communities</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No reductions - increase hours</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not enough information</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Reason	Count (Approximate)	Consult community on opening hours	19	Negative impact on communities	10	No reductions - increase hours	8	Not enough information	6																																		
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OPTION 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 2: Outsource the management of all 13 libraries? 957 respondents. Breakdown of free text responses by main themes. Reasons for Option 2: it works well for other boroughs, it keeps all libraries open as before and maintains staff levels.



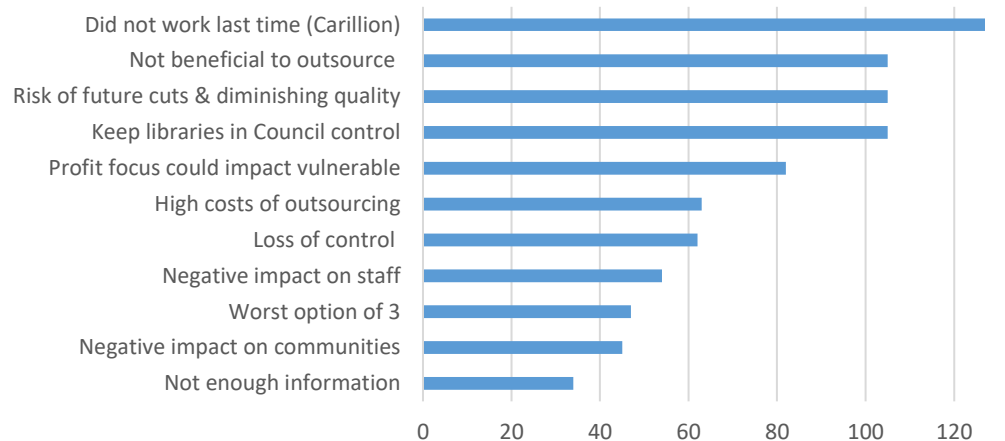
Option 2 Disagree: 191 Respondents (19.96%)

Option 2 Strongly Disagree: 481 Respondents (50.26%)

Option 2: Disagree



Option 2: Strongly Disagree

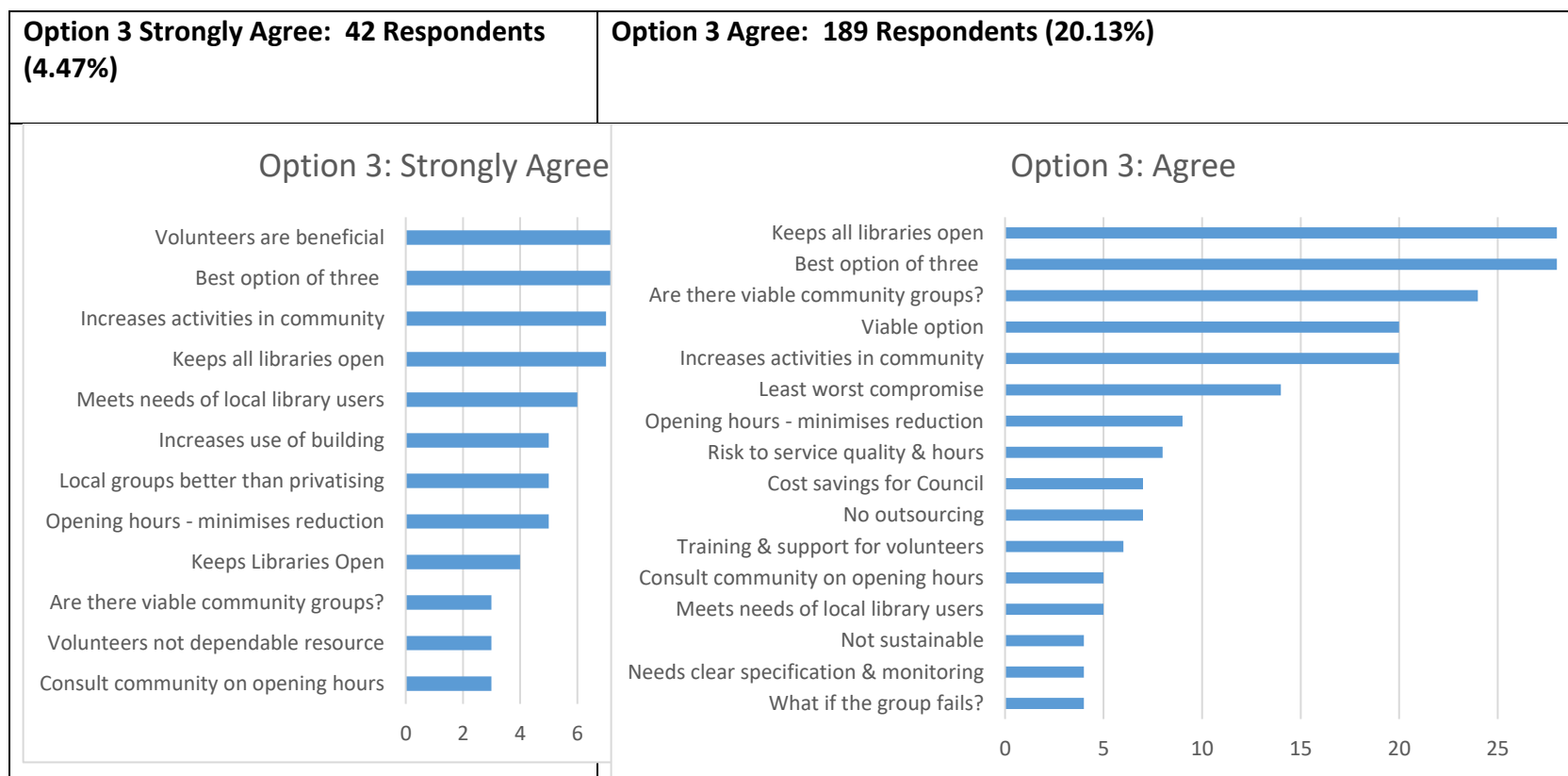


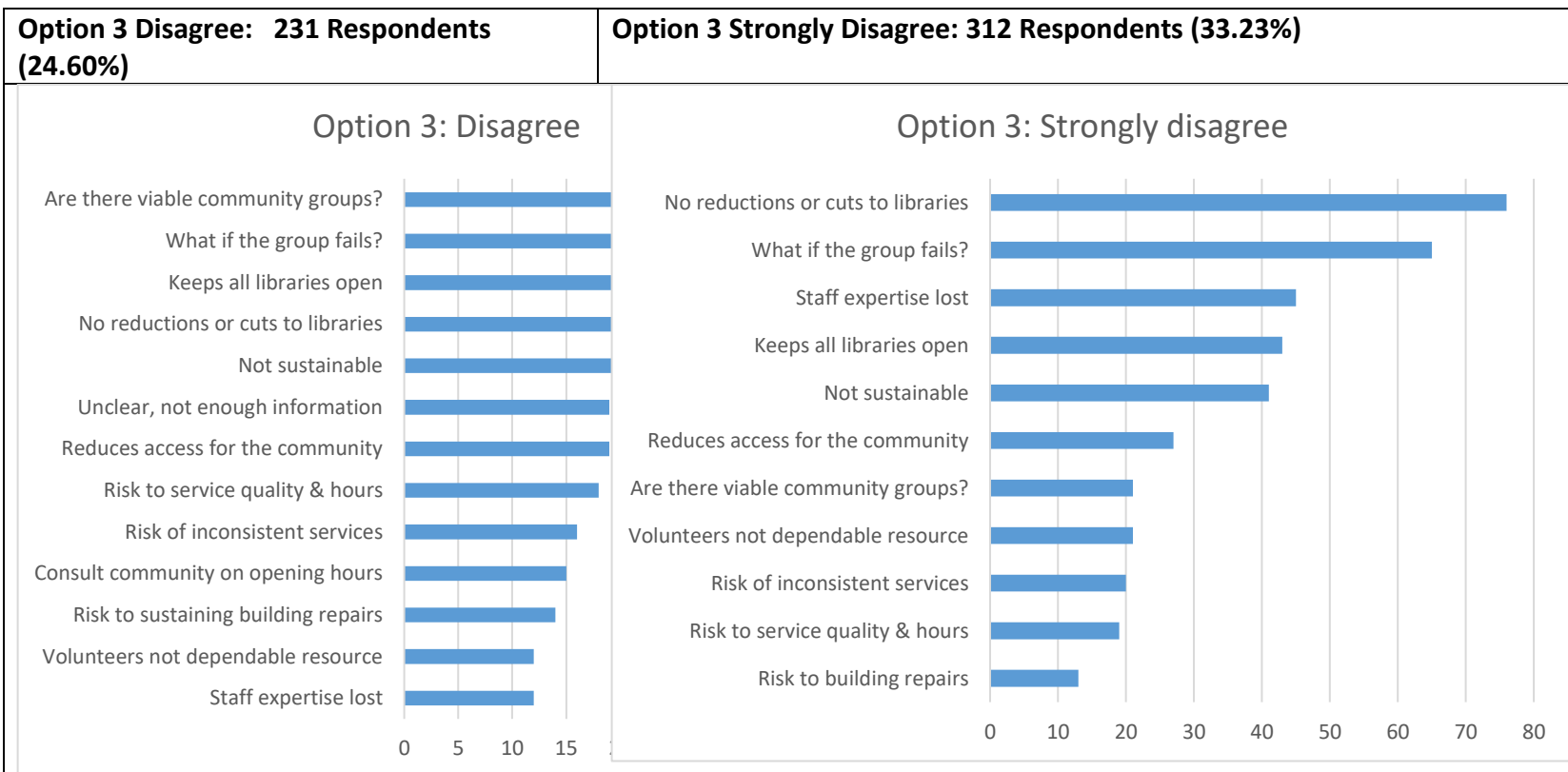
Option 2 Not Sure: 122 Respondents (12.75%)

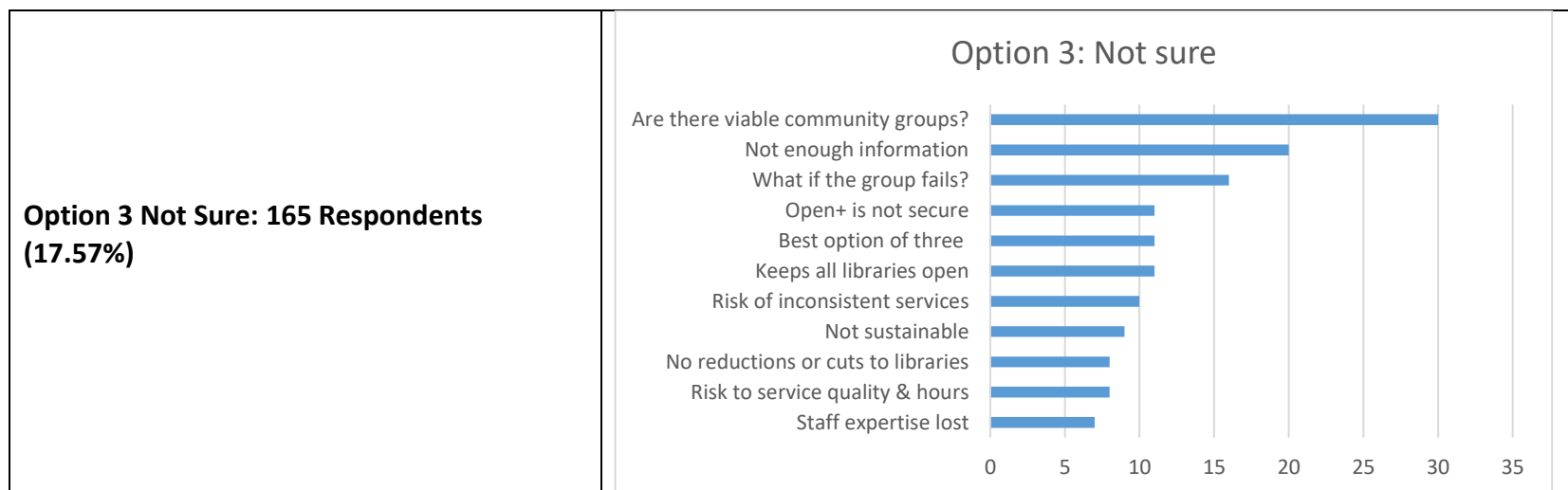
Option 2: Not Sure



OPTION 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 3: Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8 libraries? 939 Respondents. Breakdown of free text responses by main themes. Reasons for Option 3: benefits of working closely with the community







3.3 A comparison of the comments by common themes linked to “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” for each options were compared to get a better overview of impact:

Themes emerging from respondents who said they Strongly Agree or Agree with:	Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough? 987 respondents in total 552 respondents:		2: Outsource the management of all 13 libraries? 957 respondents in total 163 respondents:		Option 3: Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8 libraries? 939 Respondents in total 231 respondents:	
	Strongly Agree (183)	Agree (369)	Strongly Agree (32)	Agree (131)	Strongly Agree (42)	Agree (189)
<i>Number of mentions of major themes from feedback</i>						
Benefits						
Keeps All Libraries Open	26	79	1	15	4	19
Share reductions equally across borough	25	30				

Local library available to visit for local people - meets needs of local library users	19	14			6	5
Flexible: Council could restore service in future to current hours of opening	17	20			1	2
Good option Sensible fair decision/Opt 2 Better wider choice/Opt 3 Best is community run	13	17	1	6	13	48
"Least Worst Option"	11	37				14
Achievable or most secure option						
Achieves Savings "greatest chance"	10	11		2	1	7
Safeguards investment in IT/TLC	6	4				
Most "secure"	5	3				
Option 1 Keeps activities free Option 3 increases activities in community	2	2			7	20
Least disruptive	2	4				1
Quickest to implement	1	6				
Option 2: Concern over high cost of outsourcing and not sure savings can be met			2	2		
Hours of Opening						
Option 1: Reduced Hours have an impact but it is acceptable reduction as best option	11	41				1
Option 1: There should always be a library open in the borough/ Vary open days varied	8	18				
Reduction accepted but must open on Saturdays	5	26				
Reduction accepted but must open evenings	3	12				
Reduction accepted but must provide marketing	4	11				
Reductions accepted now but not in future		2				
Central Library - must be open 6 days	1	1				
Central Library - 5 days ok	3	6				
Consult Community on Opening Hours		2			3	5
Option 2 and Option 3: Minimise reduction or increase opening hours			1		5	9

Predict Downward spiral - further reduction in opening hours lead to future closures		4				4
Open+ Technology: unstaffed access to libraries						
Open+ beneficial for access	10	16	2			
Open+ not beneficial. Unsafe; will lead to decrease in usage	3	3				1
Future of Staff						
Risk of losing paid staff Option 1: valued; mitigate reduction Option 2: good for staff Option 3: paid staff work with volunteers	5	28	1	1	1	1
Volunteers						
Volunteers - good for service	2	3			13	
Volunteers - can be liability	1	1			3	
Will there be support & training for volunteer groups?						6
Management: Council, Outsource Partner, Community Group						
Maintain Council Control - services/assets Option 1: Don't Outsource Option 3: "Local groups better than privatising"	34	41		1	3	7
Council Management - no confidence/ poor especially re contracts or community management	2	0	1	2		2
Outsourcing and Community managed libraries work well in other boroughs			1	2	1	2
Risk: What if community group fails? Unsustainable						8
Risk of finding viable & fair partner Option 2: consider Non-profit organisation, avoid companies that are "money greedy" Option 3: Is there a group that can take on a lease?			3	8	3	27

Option 3 - risk of different levels of service quality and H&S measure; needs clear specification & monitoring; difficult to implement						12
Option 3: Community management should be a temporary measure					2	3
Option 2 - innovation possible				1		
Unclear about options 2 & 3 - Option 1 is more certain/Opt 2 too many unknowns	3	5		1		
Use of Library Buildings						
Option 2: Buildings could be rejuvenated and benefit community				1		
Option 3: Community groups could increase use of buildings for community activities					5	2
Income Generation						
Income Generation/Room Hire & Paid for events	1	6		1		2
Other themes						
Why reduce library services? Choose reductions elsewhere		16				2
Use of digital resources instead of libraries, especially after COVID	3	5				

4. Profile of Survey Respondents:

4.1. Respondents by Ward and Age

913 Respondents provided Ward information: See below breakdown of Ward details by age of respondents where given

907 Respondents provided age information: Respondents to Phase 2 Libraries Consultation were primarily adults, but much feedback came from parents, teachers and others on behalf of children. Feedback suggested many were parents with small children who favoured reduced hours in principle as long as opening hours included Saturdays. Other adults agreed with reduced hours as long as open days were properly publicised and included some evening hours for working adults.

Wards – Age Ranges	Under 18	19-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Prefer not to say	Grand Total	Percentage of Respondents
Addiscombe East		1	6	5	6	11	11	3	1	44	4.82%
Addiscombe West			5	7	2	3	9	1	1	28	3.07%
Bensham Manor					2	1	1			4	0.44%
Broad Green			4	6	1	5	3	1	1	21	2.30%
Coulsdon Town			2	9	5	7	10	5	1	39	4.27%
Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood				7	1	1	4	2		15	1.64%
Fairfield				2	7	2	3	2		16	1.75%
Kenley			2	2	4	3	5	2	1	19	2.08%
New Addington North		1	2	2	4	2	2		1	14	1.53%
New Addington South	1		2	1	2	2	1	1		10	1.20%
Norbury and Pollards Hill	2	2	5	8	7	5	11	2	2	44	4.82%
Norbury Park			3		3	1		1		8	0.88%
Old Coulsdon			2	5	10	10	19	26	2	74	8.21%
Other			4	2	5	7	6	2	1	27	1.97%

Park Hill and Whitgift				3	3	3	6	3		18	6.57%
Prefer not to say	1	3	9	2	2	4	1	1	10	33	2.19%
Purley and Woodcote			4	13	8	12	13	9	1	60	8.21%
Purley Oaks and Riddlesdown				3	4	6	7			20	1.75%
Sanderstead	1	2	3	7	6	15	28	9	4	75	3.07%
Selhurst		1	1	5	3	1	2	1	1	15	3.18%
Selsdon and Addington Village			2	4	4	6	5	4	3	28	2.96%
Selsdon Vale and Forestdale			1	1	6	6	7	6	1	28	4.71%
Shirley North		1	1	3	3	3	8	4	4	27	5.26%
Shirley South		1	1	1	5	8	16	8	3	43	5.91%
South Croydon	2	1	8	8	10	9	5		4	47	4.49%
South Norwood	1		7	21	5	12	5	2	1	54	2.52%
Thornton Heath			6	9	5	11	6	2	1	40	0.88%
Waddon	1		1	3	3	9	5	1		23	2.74%
West Thornton		1	3	1		1	2			8	3.61%
Woodside			2	9	3	4	3	1	3	25	2.96%
Grand Total	9	14	86	149	129	170	204	99	47	907	
Percentage of Respondents	0.99%	1.54%	9.48%	16.43%	14.22%	18.74%	22.49%	10.92%	5.18%		

4.2. 911 respondents provided information on Gender

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Male	293	32.16%
Female	559	61.36%
Transgender male	1	0.11%
Transgender female		
Gender variant / non-conforming		
Prefer not to say	52	5.71%
Prefer to self describe	6	0.66%

4.3. See below the breakdown by age, gender by each Consultation Option:

	OPTION 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough						OPTION 2: Outsource the management of all 13 libraries?					OPTION 3: Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8					
Age Group	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Prefer to self describe	Transgender male	Grand Total	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Transgender male	Grand Total	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Prefer to self describe	Transgender male	Grand Total
Under 18	2	3				5	1	1	1		3	2	1				3
19-24	4	2				6	3				3	4	1				5
25-34	26	14				40	11	5			16	21	12	2			35
35-44	49	17	3	1		70	24	8			32	27	11	1	1		40
45-54	50	20	1			71	12	7	1		20	22	12				34
55-64	71	29	3	2		105	23	2	1		26	25	8	1	1		35

65-74	83	47	4		1	135	16	10		1	27		23	20	2		1	46
75+	42	27				69	9	7			16		14	10				24
Prefer not to say	8	2	8	1		19		2	5		7			1				1
Grand Total	335	161	19	4	1	520	99	42	8	1	150	138	76	6	2	1	223	

4.4. Ethnicity

911 Respondents provided ethnicity information and detailed information is below, followed by a summary comparison with Croydon population project for 2021:

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	576	63.23%
White Irish	14	1.54%
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	0.11%
Any other White background	57	6.26%
White and Black Caribbean	7	0.77%
White and Black African	3	0.33%
White and Asian	12	1.32%
Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	20	2.20%
Indian	37	4.06%
Pakistani	9	0.99%
Bangladeshi	4	0.44%

Chinese	6	0.66%
Any other Asian background	23	2.52%
Black African	20	2.20%
Black Caribbean	28	3.07%
Any other Black background	8	0.88%
Arab		
Other	16	1.76%
Prefer not to say	70	7.68%

The library service contacted local community groups representing different ethnic groups as part of the communication plan for the consultation, but the ethnicity profile does not reflect Croydon's overall profile. The library service needs to engage further with local groups of all races during implementation. A comparison with the comparative percentages of race compared to Croydon overall percentage below demonstrates the need to engage further.

All Respondents (911)	Number	Percentage	Croydon Overall Percentage
White	648	71%	46.1%
Asian	79	9%	19.9%
Black	56	6%	23.9%
Mixed	42	5%	7.8%
Other	16	2%	2.3%

Prefer not to say	70	8%	0%
	911	100%	100%

Comparing responses for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” for each option by ethnicity:

All respondents (911)	Number	Percentage	Option 1 (521 Responses)	Percentage of 911	Option 2 (150 responses)	Percentage of 911	Option 3	Percentage of 911
White	648	71%	379	42%	97	11%	157	17%
Asian	79	9%	42	5%	21	2%	30	3%
Black	56	6%	39	4%	9	1%	10	1%
Mixed	42	5%	24	3%	6	1%	12	1%
Other	16	2%	6	1%	5	1%	3	0%
Prefer not	70	8%	31	3%	12	1%	11	1%

4.5. 891 Respondents provided information on their religious beliefs

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
None	266	29.85%
Christian	443	49.72%
Hindu	21	2.36%
Sikh	4	0.45%
Muslim	20	2.24%
Jewish	1	0.11%
Buddhist	10	1.12%
Any other religion	18	2.02%
Prefer not to say	108	12.12%

5. Further Analysis on Impact: Age, Maternity/Pregnancy and Disability

The Equalities Impact Assessment identified that for specific residents with protected characteristics there might be a more significant impact, and so it was important to analyse responses in detail to plan mitigations.

5.1. Age Groups

Options 1 and 2: Reduction in opening hours is likely to have a disproportionate impact on some age groups:

- Families with young children (time, logistics, cost)
- Adults without digital access; jobless (especially in Broad Green and South Norwood)
- Seniors who have told us it is difficult to travel (cost, fear of crime, fear of injury)
- School children after school and school organized visits (not reflected in data; in free text)

Feedback from over 50% of residents responding to the Phase 2 Libraries Consultation expressed a preference for Option 1 because it would mean a Council managed service and felt that a distribution of reduced hours across all libraries was a fair approach. However, the actual opening hours needed to be convenient for the community and further engagement with residents is essential for implementation.

5.2. Maternity & Pregnancy:

Option 1 Reduce library service hours by 21%: Respondents from this group chose “disagree” and “strongly disagree” because they did not want any reduction in hours; if this option went ahead, they wanted regular rhymetimes and opening hours that were mother & child friendly, and offered Saturdays and evenings for working mothers. Please see comments below which will be taken into account when implementing the new opening hours, and the library service will seek further discussion with this group.

- *Keep rhyme time at all libraries [Strongly agree option 2] The times need to be friendly so family's and older people can attend*
- *Negative impact as our childcare providers rely on the library to entertain and educated the kids in their care*

- *As a working mum in full time employment, this option will narrow my chances of finding a suitable time to go and browse in my local library. [Strongly disagree Option 2]*
- *As a mum, I had the benefit of mum and baby classes and sessions at both the local and central library. With reduced working hours, it would be difficult to access such services that were beneficial in facilitating contact and connection with others at a similar life stage. [Disagree with Option 2, Not Sure Option 3]*
- *The libraries are an essential resource for many- certainly myself whilst pregnant and post pregnancy. Without being able to meet other mums or access resources at the library, my post partum anxiety would have been worse. I also know of children who rely on library resources to help them with their education- their parents cannot afford to buy them books or access to the internet. [Strongly disagree with option 2, Agree with option 3]*

Option 2 Outsource libraries: Some respondents preferred this option because it kept all libraries open and some pointed out that it worked in other boroughs. Other respondents were concerned that an organisation dependent on profit would not be focussed on the community and would start charging for baby and toddler activities.

Option 3 Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8 libraries: Many respondents preferred this option because they felt a community run library would provide more activities for mothers and toddlers, but were not pleased about reduced hours in the other libraries. Some respondents expressed concern that community run libraries, with a dependency on local volunteers, would not be sustainable and that the libraries would eventually close.

5.3. Disability

The Phase 2 Libraries Consultation sought feedback from disabled residents through the options survey, two webinars and 14 face to face events.

Option 1 Reduce Service hours by 21%: this option was preferred over the other options, but many saying reduced access to the library set out in this option will have a negative impact on vulnerable and disabled residents. They disagreed or strongly disagreed with all three options on the basis that any reduction in service would have a negative impact on them. The comments below will be taken into account when implementing the new opening hours, and the library service will seek further discussion with this group.:

- *I am disabled and live very close to the library and any change of location or cut in Services will detrimentally impact me, who are so dependant upon this site.*
- *My daughter has a disability and reading helps her a lot. That it is known there will be a moderate impact on those with disabilities and other characteristics says to me the library must not reduce their hours*
- *as a disable resident the library is an important hub for my services and sanity*
- *closed days might be the quieter days which are more disabled friendly”*

It was noted that residents with mobility issues could not easily travel to other libraries, especially not to those without parking nearby. Although Home Library Service and digital services were a mitigation for some residents, they did not replace an open local library, accessible to those with disability, providing library staff, books and activities.

There are over 1,000 registered library members who have stated they have a disability (see Table 1 in Appendix), and they are registered in all library branches, so the impact is across the entire service. If reduced, the service will work with disabled residents in each branch to ensure the opening hours are suitable for people with disability

6. Summary Conclusion

In conclusion this document has presented the consultation responses from second phase of the consultation. This document, as well as the results of first phase of the consultation, alongside the Equalities Impact Assessment and the Library Plan, plus the Library Plan 2019-2028, will be used to help inform the cabinet decision on 18th August 2021.

July 2021

Equality Analysis Form

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term '**proposed change**' broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria).

2. Proposed change

Directorate	PLACE
Title of proposed change	PLA Sav Libraries Phase 2 Option 1 Reduce Service Hours by 21% across the borough
Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	Robert Hunt/Joan Redding

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

Libraries Consultation Phase 2, Option 1: Reduce Service hours by 21% across the borough.

Under this option all libraries remain Council-run and will be open two fewer days per week, except the central library which would reduce by one day and remain open five days per week.

Savings will be achieved by a reduction in staffing levels by 15.99 FTE (25%), from 63.65 FTE to 47.66 FTE. This would achieve savings of £506,980/annum. These savings will be delivered by 1st April 2022 through a staffing restructure, and will be managed by the Council providing more control over the delivery.

By reducing opening hours there will be an overall reduction in weekly staffed operating hours of 270.5 hours, which is a 48% reduction. This will be mitigated by the introduction of additional unstaffed hours in neighbouring libraries, utilising Open+ technology in six libraries. This mitigation will introduce 150 hours of unstaffed operating hours, limiting the reduction in weekly operating hours to 21%. Library opening days would be adjusted to ensure that at least one library in each area (north, central, south) was open and staff available each day (Monday to Saturday).

The Libraries Consultation is in two parts, Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 sought feedback from residents when proposals were at the formative stage. A survey asked residents for feedback on what they valued about the library service, what impact closing or an alternative operating model such as community managed provision at 5 local libraries would have on them and their community, and to suggest alternative options. When the survey closed on 14 March 2021 there were 2,510 respondents from the following Croydon libraries (some used more than one). Highlighted below are the libraries proposed for closure or community management in the Phase 1 consultation:

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Ashburton Library	332	15.43%
Bradmore Green Library	309	14.37%
Broad Green Library	152	7.07%

Central Library	1015	47.19%
Coulsdon Library	328	15.25%
New Addington Library	64	2.98%
Norbury Library	138	6.42%
Purley Library	310	14.41%
Shirley Library	377	17.53%
Sanderstead Library	467	21.71%
Selsdon Library	335	15.57%
South Norwood Library	414	19.25%
Thornton Heath Library	257	11.95%
Prefer not to say	9	0.42%
None of them	37	1.72%

From the feedback, four options and two hybrid options were identified:

- Option 1: Close five libraries
- Option 2: Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough
- Option 3: Five community run libraries
- Option 4: Outsource all libraries to a social enterprise or charitable organisation
- Option 5: Hybrid – reduction in service hours (one day per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries
- Option 6: Hybrid – reduction in service hours (two days per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries

The feedback for each of these options was analysed and an Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for each option. Evidence was considered from a range of sources: Croydon Observatory data, Library Management System Data, Libraries Consultation feedback, Library events data and Library staff feedback on events participation. This information was compiled into the cabinet paper:

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s29167/Libraries%Public%20Consultation%20Consultation%20Phase%20Two.pdf>

This feedback was considered by Cabinet on 17 May, and reviewed by Scrutiny, and the following options went forward for Phase 2 public consultation:

Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough

Option 2: The Council will work in partnership with an organisation to outsource the management of all 13 libraries

Option 3: Five community-run libraries and reducing opening hours for eight libraries

Phase 2 Consultation took place from 1 June – 26 July and received 1,411 responses. All three of the proposals have a potential impact on all Croydon libraries across the borough, and so residents were asked to indicate their ward. The following wards were represented in the feedback:

Which area/ward of Croydon do you live in?		
This single response question was answered by 913 respondents.		
Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Addiscombe East	44	4.82%
Addiscombe West	28	3.07%
Bensham Manor	4	0.44%
Broad Green	21	2.30%
Coulsdon Town	39	4.27%
Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood	15	1.64%
Fairfield	16	1.75%
Kenley	19	2.08%
New Addington North	14	1.53%
New Addington South	11	1.20%
Norbury and Pollards Hill	44	4.82%
Norbury Park	8	0.88%
Old Coulsdon	75	8.21%
Park Hill and Whitgift	18	1.97%
Purley and Woodcote	60	6.57%
Purley Oaks and Riddlesdown	20	2.19%
Sanderstead	75	8.21%
Selhurst	16	1.75%
Selsdon and Addington Village	28	3.07%
Selsdon Vale and Forestdale	29	3.18%
Shirley North	27	2.96%
Shirley South	43	4.71%
South Croydon	48	5.26%
South Norwood	54	5.91%
Thornton Heath	41	4.49%
Waddon	23	2.52%
West Thornton	8	0.88%
Woodside	25	2.74%
Prefer not to say	33	3.61%

Other	27	2.96%
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Feedback from residents was against any service reduction, but if a reduction had to be made, most indicated a preference for Option 1, with 55.93% saying they “agree” and “strongly agree” they want Council managed libraries with reduced hours in preference to outsourcing (17%) or a community managed libraries (24.6%).

This is an updated Equalities Impact Assessment on Phase 1 option 2/Phase 2 Option 1: Reduce Service hours by 21% across the borough.

3. Impact of the proposed change

Important Note: It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic.

Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments <http://www.croydonobservatory.org/> Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

3.1 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

Table 1 – Positive/Negative impact on proposal Option 2 to Reduce Service hours by 21% across the borough

For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. . If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.

Protected characteristic group(s)	Positive impact	Negative impact	Source of evidence
Age	If the service hours	<p>All Croydon: Croydon has 386,710 residents (ONS Estimates 2019):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22.2% (85,672) aged 0-15 	Library Membership Data

were reduced by 21% across all libraries, there would be no library closures, and this would save £506,980/annum. The libraries would stay under Council management.

- 64.1% (247,841) aged 16-64
- 13.8% (53,197) 65 and over

According to ONS Mid year estimates, Croydon has the 4th largest number of young people aged 0-17 years old in London. One in four of Croydon’s population is aged 0-17 years based on ONS MYE 2019. The number of looked after children in Croydon is the highest in London.

Croydon Library membership: Croydon Libraries have 104,249 registered library members, which is 26.96% of the Croydon population. The majority of library members are Croydon residents, and those who are not residents all work or study in Croydon. Below is a summary broken down by age ranges.

Age Range	Library Members+	% of library members by age group	Croydon Population*	% of Croydon Population by age
0-09	15,140	14.52%	54,952	14.21%
10-19	21,153	20.29%	47,985	12.41%
20-29	14,216	13.63%	44,820	11.59%
30-39	16,030	15.37%	59,423	15.37%
40-49	13,752	13.19%	53,552	13.85%
50-60	9,885	9.48%	53,052	13.72%
60-69	6,815	6.54%	35,305	9.13%
70-79	4,789	4.59%	22,819	5.90%
80+	2,485	2.38%	14,802	3.83%
Total	104,265		386,710	

*Croydon Population by age Source : ONS, Mid Year Population Estimates, 2019, released June 2020. <https://www.croydonobservatory.org/1-age/>
 +Although it is more usual to provide an “Active borrowers” figure for library membership, representing users who have borrowed a book or used a computer in the last year, this is not possible after a year of COVID lockdown closures.

Library membership is in proportion with the age groups of overall population of Croydon. The highest percentage of registered members are primary school aged children and young people. They represent 20% of library membership, with 44% of all Croydon young people aged 10-19 having a library membership.

Below is Library membership by library:

February 2021; Croydon Observatory data; Libraries Consultation Phase 1 (14/1-14/3 2021); 7 Webinars ; Events spreadsheet; participation summaries from library staff; Libraries Consultation Phase 2 (1 June – 26 July 2021); 15 face to face events

Age	Central	Ashburton	Bradmore Green	Broad Green	Coulsdon	New Addington	Norbury	Purley	Sanderstead	Seisdon	Shirley	South Norwood	Thornton Heath	Total
0-09	4662	932	459	610	1039	788	953	850	579	1190	418	923	1737	15140
10-19	7006	1484	367	974	833	1281	1701	977	488	1339	837	1169	2692	21153
20-29	7078	582	117	378	444	897	907	482	155	694	393	581	1507	14216
30-39	7679	610	197	440	742	896	946	637	274	849	330	857	1573	16030
40-49	6218	592	208	356	685	683	806	646	299	934	313	692	1318	13752
50-59	4477	436	182	188	423	544	539	436	181	731	301	501	940	9885
60-69	2918	303	176	75	382	269	374	324	161	751	329	234	505	6815
70-79	1666	226	202	26	382	146	241	254	197	788	311	126	195	4789
80-89	596	77	100	9	170	57	85	131	93	412	162	46	65	2056
90+	95	16	31	4	22	11	10	27	17	93	35	10	11	429
	42395	5258	2039	3060	5122	5572	6562	4764	2444	7781	3429	5139	10543	104265

Activities for all age groups:

Events & Activities 2019-20	All Libraries		
	Events	Attendees	New joiners
Children and Young People (0 to 17)	3103	51611	2845
Adults (18 to 49)	1881	13183	811
Older People (50+)	1094	5507	142
Family	183	3664	41
Annual Total Events	6261	73965	3839

From Library Events monthly: Please note these figures are lower than usual given COVID lockdown by Quarter 4

Activities by age group include:

- Babies/toddlers: weekly Rhymetimes (singing&playing, social for parents); Bookstart – earliest literacy support
- Toddlers/pre-school: weekly Storytimes, Bookstart, sessions with King's College Hospital promoting dental health
- Pre-school/Primary: Craft activities, Summer Reading Challenge, homework sessions, Lego Club, Code Club, Homework club, Chatterbooks reading groups, National Storytelling Week, World Book Day, Class visits, special author events
- Secondary: Study space, Work experience, Volunteering (Duke of Edinburgh, Summer Reading Challenge), Poetry (Instapoetry),

- Adults: free internet access & free WiFi, space for work and study, CV/employment support, business support, job clubs, volunteering
- Adults with learning difficulties/autism: Books Beyond Words reading group, Volunteering
- Adults/Older Adults: Reading Groups, Digital IT skill support, Craft clubs, Knit & Knatter, Coffee mornings, Talks, Volunteering, language (ESOL) classes, Ancestry, Information Sessions (Housing, Warmer Homes, Health topics)

Phase 2 Libraries Consultation:

The Option 1 proposal for 21% reduction in service hours does have a significant potential impact on all ages across the borough. Although it means all library buildings would remain open, it also means all libraries would operate on reduced hours. Library opening hours would be co-ordinated across the borough to ensure there was always an open library in each area of North, Central and South. Regular activities would be rescheduled to ensure they were provided on the open days in each library. Open+ technology would allow some libraries to extend unstaffed opening hours to registered members. There is potential for a partner (other Council service, charity and voluntary sector, or community group) to share the building and make a self-service library available during unstaffed hours. The service would continue to offer a Home Library service offering book deliveries to residents who could not travel to a library.

Respondents to Phase 2 Libraries Consultation survey were primarily adults, but much feedback came from parents, teachers and others on behalf of children.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Under 18	9	0.99%
19-24	14	1.54%
25-34	86	9.48%
35-44	149	16.43%
45-54	129	14.22%
55-64	170	18.74%
65-74	204	22.49%
75+	99	10.92%
Prefer not to say	47	5.18%

See below the breakdown by age, gender by each Consultation Option:

	OPTION 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough						OPTION 2: Outsource the management of all 13 libraries?					OPTION 3: Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8					
Age Group	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Prefer to self describe	Transgender male	Grand Total	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Transgender male	Grand Total	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Prefer to self	Transgender male	Grand Total
Under 18	2	3				5	1	1	1		3	2	1				3
19-24	4	2				6	3				3	4	1				5
25-34	26	14				40	11	5			16	21	12	2			35
35-44	49	17	3	1		70	24	8			32	27	11	1	1		40
45-54	50	20	1			71	12	7	1		20	22	12				34
55-64	71	29	3	2		105	23	2	1		26	25	8	1	1		35
65-74	83	47	4		1	135	16	10		1	27	23	20	2		1	46
75+	42	27				69	9	7			16	14	10				24
Prefer not to say	8	2	8	1		19		2	5		7		1				1
Grand Total	335	161	19	4	1	520	99	42	8	1	150	138	76	6	2	1	223

From free text feedback, although few agreed with any service reduction, the majority of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed preferred Option 1 because it retained Council control, provided more certainty for savings, and provided an opportunity for community support for extending the existing service. Feedback suggested parents with small children favoured reduced hours in principle as long as opening hours included Saturdays. Other adults agreed with reduced hours as long as open days were properly publicised and included some evening hours for working adults. Other respondents said this option meant valued activities were maintained in the local area, such as local volunteering and work experience opportunities to local young people (Duke of Edinburgh & work experience), and meant the established reading groups, craft groups, Knit & Knatter groups could remain in their local venue.

Residents told us the new reduced opening hours would have a significant impact on their access to their local libraries because they could not travel to another library, and needed convenient opening hours, including Saturdays and evenings. Open+ as a mitigation received a mixed response, with some concerned over security.

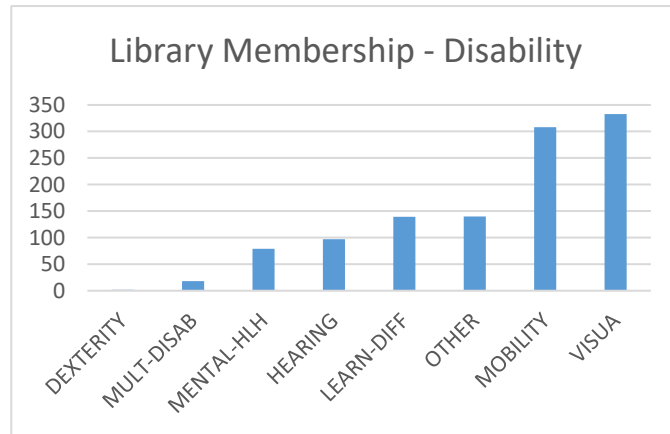
At the face to face meetings, residents emphasised the importance of staffed opening hours that allowed for mother and baby activities, quiet times for vulnerable adults, enough open time for regular activities such as book groups, more access for IT for

		<p>those not online, and especially Saturday and evening opening hours. Open+ was discussed as a mitigation, with some expressing concern over security.</p> <p>Summary: A reduction of 21% of service hours for Croydon library services will have a potential impact on at least one in four of all Croydon residents of all ages (26%).</p> <p>Based on the evidence above, and recent feedback, any reduction in opening hours is likely to have a disproportionate impact on some age groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families with young children (time, logistics, cost) • Adults without digital access; jobless (especially in Broad Green and South Norwood) • Seniors who have told us it is difficult to travel (cost, fear of crime, fear of injury) • School children after school and school organized visits (not reflected in data; in free text) <p>Feedback from over 50% of residents responding to the Phase 2 Libraries Consultation expressed a preference for a Council managed service and felt that a distribution of reduced hours across all libraries was a fair approach. However, the actual opening hours needed to be convenient for the community and further engagement with residents is essential for implementation.</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	<p>If the service hours were reduced by 21% across all libraries, there would be no library closures, and this would save £506,9</p>	<p>Information about Disability in Croydon (Croydon Observatory):</p> <p>Statistics on Croydon residents with disability is from 2011 (Census 2011) which says that day-to-day activities are limited a little for 7.9% of residents, and limited a lot for 6.7% of residents.</p> <p>Library Database: Out of 104,249 library members, 30% completed information about disability and 29% declared no disability. Of the 1% (1116) who said they had a disability, there is a breakdown below showing the largest group Visual impairment 30% and Mobility (27.6%):</p> <p>12.5% (140) of library members known to have a disability are members of the libraries which were originally proposed to close or transfer to a community model (see Table below).</p>	<p>Library Membership Data February 2021; Croydon Observatory data; Libraries Consultation Phase 1 (14/1-14/3 2021); 7 Webinars; Events spreadsheet; participation</p>

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Disability	Respondents	Percentage
Dexterity	2	0.2%
Hearing	97	8.7%
Learning Difficulty	139	12.5%
Mental Health	79	7.1%
Mobility	308	27.6%
Multi-disability	18	1.6%
Visual	333	29.8%
OTHER	140	12.5%
Grand Total	1116	

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15 face to
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events



Volunteering: there are local disabled volunteers across all libraries, supporting Summer Reading Challenge, coffee mornings, reading groups. They have said they could not travel elsewhere and a reduction in hours that kept all the libraries open would enable them to continue volunteering. Many of these volunteers visited the Phase 2 tour of face to face events to reinforce the importance of their local libraries and the benefits of volunteering.

Books Beyond Words: reading group for adults with learning disability or autism who attend in small groups with their carers and read specialized picture books. Sessions include drawing or colouring and sometimes drama in response to the stories. There are storybooks as well as books with topics such as visiting the doctor. Travel to sessions requires parking and easy access which means the group meeting at Bradmore Green could not move to Coulsdon or Purley. By reducing opening hours and keeping all libraries open, the library would remain open for this activity.

Libraries Consultation Survey:

Of 1,397 respondents who completed the disability information, 14.68% said their disability limited them in some way, with 50 (3.58%) respondents limited a lot. Details below with ages.

Age Range	No Disability	Prefer not to say	Yes, limited a little	Yes, limited a lot	Grand Total
Under 18	11		1		12
18-30	50	3	11	4	68
31-40	294	23	21	4	342
41-50	224	15	25	6	270
51-60	176	10	21	7	214
61-70	192	16	29	13	250
71-80	95	1	31	6	133
81+	8	2	8	5	23
Prefer not to say	17	42	4	2	65
(blank)	13		4	3	20
Grand Total	1080	112	155	50	1397
	77.31%	8.02%	11.10%	3.58%	

There were 213 (12.21% respondents) who told us they had no other options for travel to their next nearest library, and of those the numbers who told us about a disability is in the table below:

Yes, limited a little	26	12%
Yes, limited a lot	19	9%

For residents with a disability who cannot travel to a library, but still want to borrow books, there is a Home Library Service which delivers books to their homes, which would be considered an effective mitigation. For those who are online, libraries also offer a digital library service with over 40,000 eBooks and eAudiobooks, thousands of eNewspapers and hundreds of eMagazines.

The Phase 2 Libraries Consultation sought feedback from disabled residents through the options survey, two webinars and 14 face to face events. See below Survey Respondents who commented on disability in relation to the three options:

OPTION 1	Fem ale	Ma le	Prefer not to say	Grand Total	OPTION 2	Fem ale	Ma le	Prefer not to say	Grand Total	OPTION 3	Fem ale	Ma le	Prefer not to say	Grand Total
Strongly agree	6			6	Strongly agree				0	Strongly agree	1			1
Agree	8		2	10	Agree	4			4	Agree	4			4
Disagree	7			7	Disagree	6			6	Disagree	5	1	1	7
Strongly disagree	5	2		7	Strongly disagree	9	2	1	12	Strongly disagree	8			8
Not sure	2			2	Not sure	2		1	3	Not sure	3	1	1	5
Grand Total	28	2	2	32	Grand Total	21	2	2	25	Grand Total	21	2	2	25

The number of respondents is significantly smaller than Phase 1, but the survey results indicate a preference for Option 1 Reduce Service hours by 21% over the other options, many saying this option will have a negative impact on vulnerable and disabled residents. From this group there are also a significant number of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree with all the options, and they do not agree with any reduction in service, want the savings to come from elsewhere, and some think their local library might still close. In the survey free text feedback, 5 residents commented specifically on their own disability and the impact of the options on them: four white women aged 25-64 and one black Caribbean man aged 55-64. They were from across Croydon: New Addington South, Selsdon and Addington Village, Addiscombe West, Norbury and Pollards Hill and Thornton Heath.

They disagreed or strongly disagreed with all three options on the basis that any reduction in service would have a negative impact on them:

- *I am disabled and live very close to the library and any change of location or cut in Services will detrimentally impact me, who are so dependant upon this site.*
- *I am disabled. Huge impact on me. Council fails to consider: Disabled) Elderly) all given Council has a Statutory Duty For. Homeless) Domestic Violence (now Act)). Overall I do not want libraries to have reduced hours at all.*
- *My daughter has a disability and reading helps her a lot. That it is known there will be a moderate impact on those with disabilities and other characteristics says to me the library must not reduce their hours*
- *as a disable resident the library is an important hub for my services and sanity*
- *closed days might be the quieter days which are more disabled friendly”*

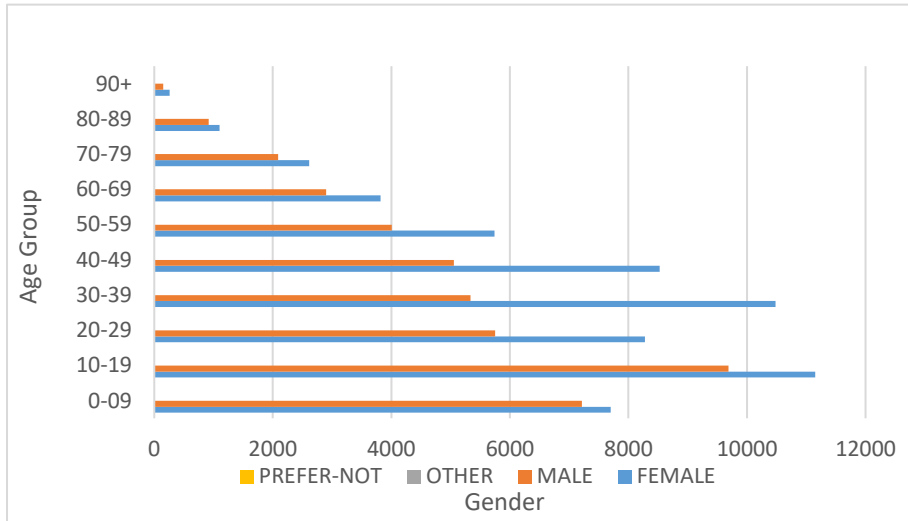
During the face to face visits there were 9 residents in total (7 women/2 men) with mobility disability, who attended the drop ins at Ashburton, Norbury, Thornton Heath, Coulsdon, Bradmore Green, Shirley , New Addington and Purley Libraries. Some disabled visitors made us aware that the timings of our visits was difficult for them. All came with strong messages of concern, summarized below:

- All nine disagreed with any reduction in library services – some thought libraries might still be closing and reassurance was given and options clarified at the event

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of local accessible library to mental and physical wellbeing of residents with a disability – much missed during COVID closure • Need opening hours that allow for quiet times, activities and volunteering opportunities for disabled adults • Difficult to attend a morning drop in session for someone with disability • Digital library and Home Library Service make books accessible, but do not replace the value of physical access to activities and books <p>The overall feedback was that Option 1 Reduce Service hours by 21% across the borough would be the only acceptable option of the three, but a reduction in services and opening hours would have a significant impact on residents with a disability. It was noted that residents with mobility issues could not easily travel to other libraries, especially not to those without parking nearby. Although Home Library Service and digital services were a mitigation for some residents, they did not replace an open local library, accessible to those with disability, providing library staff, books and activities.</p> <p>There are over 1,000 registered library members who have stated they have a disability (see Table 1 in Appendix), and they are registered in all library branches, so the impact is across the entire service. If reduced, the service will work with disabled residents in each branch to ensure the opening hours are suitable for people with disability.</p>																																																																									
<p>Gender</p>	<p>If the service hours were reduced by 21% across all libraries, there would be no library closures, and this would save £506,980/annum.</p>	<p>All Croydon: Croydon has 386,710 residents (ONS Estimates 2019):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 187,875 (48.6%) are Male • 198,835 (51.4%) are Female <p>Library Database: Of 104,249 library members, there is information about gender for 102,793, illustrated below: 59,666 (58%) Female and 43,112 (42%) Male:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Range</th> <th>FEMALE</th> <th>MALE</th> <th>OTHER</th> <th>PREFER-NOT</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-09</td> <td>7702</td> <td>7216</td> <td></td> <td>8</td> <td>14926</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-19</td> <td>11150</td> <td>9689</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>20839</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20-29</td> <td>8276</td> <td>5749</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td>14026</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30-39</td> <td>10482</td> <td>5335</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>15820</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-49</td> <td>8526</td> <td>5054</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>13581</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-59</td> <td>5740</td> <td>4009</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td>9750</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-69</td> <td>3816</td> <td>2901</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>6718</td> </tr> <tr> <td>70-79</td> <td>2613</td> <td>2088</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>4701</td> </tr> <tr> <td>80-89</td> <td>1101</td> <td>917</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>90+</td> <td>260</td> <td>154</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>414</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>59666</td> <td>43112</td> <td>3</td> <td>12</td> <td>102793</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Range	FEMALE	MALE	OTHER	PREFER-NOT	Total	0-09	7702	7216		8	14926	10-19	11150	9689			20839	20-29	8276	5749	1		14026	30-39	10482	5335	1	2	15820	40-49	8526	5054		1	13581	50-59	5740	4009	1		9750	60-69	3816	2901		1	6718	70-79	2613	2088			4701	80-89	1101	917			2018	90+	260	154			414	Total	59666	43112	3	12	102793	<p>Library Membership Data February 2021; Croydon Observatory data; Libraries Consultation Phase 1 (14/1-14/3 2021); 7 Webinars; Events spreadsheet; participation summaries from</p>
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The libraries would stay under Council management.

library staff Libraries Consultation Phase 2 (1 June – 26 July 2021); 15 face to face events



Phase 2 Consultation: Gender summary:

There significant majority of respondents identify as women.

This single response question was answered by 911 respondents.		
Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Male	293	32.16%
Female	559	61.36%
Transgender male	1	0.11%
Transgender female		
Gender variant / non-conforming		
Prefer not to say	52	5.71%
Prefer to self describe	6	0.66%

Visitors to the 15 face to face drop in visits included 38% men and 62% women.

Of the 552 respondents who said they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the Option 1 Reduce Service hours by 21% across the borough, 497 provided information on gender, 335 (67%) were women and 162 (33%) were men, which is in proportion to all respondents. These respondents, both male and female, acknowledge an impact on reduction in hours, but think a reduction is preferable to the other options, and prefer to keep all library buildings open for services and activities under

		Council control. From this feedback, Option 1 does not appear to have a disproportionate impact on one particular gender group -- See Maternity and Pregnancy below	
Gender Reassignment	Savings	<p>Due to the inclusive nature of libraries nationally, and of the partner organisations that operate within libraries, it is part of Croydon Libraries' service plan to provide activities and resources that are inclusive of gender identity. In addition to providing books specific to the transgender community, the annual Cultural Calendar for Croydon Libraries always includes Transgender Day of Remembrance in November, LGBTQ History Month in February and Pride in summer, hosting speakers, poetry, talks, art and books on display in all branch libraries. For many years Croydon Central Library has hosted the Rainbow Reading Group as well as the annual LGBTQ History Month display from CAGS (Croydon Area Gay Society est 1971)</p> <p>In Phase 1 Libraries Consultation it was not certain from the demographic report that there were residents from the transgender community who provided feedback, so Croydon Libraries invited participation in Phase 2 public consultation from local Croydon groups, including TransPals, The Bridge, and CAGS.</p> <p>Phase 2 consultation asked for feedback and recorded one transgender male and 6 residents who preferred to self-describe. Going forward, as part of a continuation of community engagement, libraries will continue to seek opportunities to engage with residents from the transgender community.</p> <p>If libraries hours were reduced, there would be no reduction in books, information displays, and inclusive space and activities to raise awareness of issues for the transgender community.</p>	Reviewed in Phase 2
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Savings	<p>The Library service does not collect information regarding marriage and civil partnership because it is not required for the service and would exceed GDPR limits for collecting data.</p> <p>Consideration of the characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships need only be in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination. In this regard, the proposed implementation plan would not in any way exclude individuals who are legally married or in a civil partnership. Therefore, this characteristic should not be disproportionately affected under any of the proposals.</p>	
Religion or belief	If the service hours were reduced by 21% across all libraries, there would	<p>Libraries nationally are inclusive, and encourage visitors and partners who operate in libraries to welcome residents of all faiths. It is part of Croydon Libraries' service plan to provide activities and resources that are inclusive of all religious communities and to celebrate a diverse range of religious holidays throughout the year.</p> <p>Library members are not required to share information about their religion or belief, so there is no comparative data on the library database. Phase 1 Libraries Consultation did not include details of religious belief, so in order to measure the equalities impact, Phase 2 Libraries Consultation requested feedback on faith which was provided by 891 respondents listed below.</p>	Library Membership Data February 2021; Croydon Observatory data; Libraries Consultation Phase 1 (14/1-

	<p>be no library closures, and this would save £506,980/annum. The libraries would stay under Council management.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>PHASE 2 Consultation Response</th> <th>Number of Respondents</th> <th>Percentage of Respondents</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>None</td> <td>266</td> <td>29.85%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>443</td> <td>49.72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hindu</td> <td>21</td> <td>2.36%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sikh</td> <td>4</td> <td>0.45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td>20</td> <td>2.24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jewish</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buddhist</td> <td>10</td> <td>1.12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Any other religion</td> <td>18</td> <td>2.02%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prefer not to say</td> <td>108</td> <td>12.12%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>There was no feedback from respondents to indicate that if library hours were reduced, there would be an equalities impact on the basis of religion or belief. The reduction in hours would not impact on the range of books, information displays, and inclusive space and celebrations to highlight the diverse range of faiths in Croydon. Going forward, as part of a continuation of the community engagement initiated during Phase 2 of the consultation, libraries will continue to seek opportunities to engage with residents from faith communities.</p>	PHASE 2 Consultation Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	None	266	29.85%	Christian	443	49.72%	Hindu	21	2.36%	Sikh	4	0.45%	Muslim	20	2.24%	Jewish	1	0.11%	Buddhist	10	1.12%	Any other religion	18	2.02%	Prefer not to say	108	12.12%	<p>14/3 2021); 7 Webinars ; Events spreadsheet; participation summaries from library staff Libraries Consultation Phase 2 (1 June – 26 July 2021); 15 face to face events</p>
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<p>Race</p>	<p>If the service hours were reduced by 21% across all libraries, there would be no library closures, and this would save £506,9</p>	<p>The Croydon Borough Profile “population continues to grow from long-term international migration and 17.1% of the population is made up of non-UK born residents according to ONS 2018 estimates”.</p> <p>Library Management System Of the 104,249 library members, only 36,455 (35%) library members provided information on ethnicity. See below a breakdown of library membership by race for each of the libraries that were originally proposed to close, and there is more information for all thirteen Croydon libraries available by clicking on the link. Please note that not all library users who visit and take part in activities are registered on the system.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Race</th> <th>All Libraries</th> <th>% of All Libraries</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>13581</td> <td>18.30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>5756</td> <td>17.08%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td>8149</td> <td>13.35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed</td> <td>1404</td> <td>16.74%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>1065</td> <td>7.32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prefer Not</td> <td>6500</td> <td>13.68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>36455</td> <td>15.80%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Race	All Libraries	% of All Libraries	White	13581	18.30%	Asian	5756	17.08%	Black	8149	13.35%	Mixed	1404	16.74%	Other	1065	7.32%	Prefer Not	6500	13.68%	Total	36455	15.80%	<p>Library Membership Data February 2021; Croydon Observatory data; Libraries Consultation Phase 1 (14/1-14/3 2021); 7 Webinars ; Events spreadsheet; participation</p>						
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Phase 2 Libraries Consultation: breakdown of overall response

During the consultation period there was considerable promotion of the survey, the webinars and the face to face visits to BAME communities from Councillors, local community groups and local staff. During the face to face visits to all libraries, officers had an opportunity to speak to 343 individuals, 237 (69%) white, 67 (20%) Asian and 39 (11%) Black, which was slightly higher proportion than the number who completed the survey.

All respondents (911)	Number	Percentage
White	648	71%
Asian	79	9%
Black	56	6%
Mixed	42	5%
Other	16	2%
Prefer not	70	8%

A more detailed breakdown below:

Your ethnic origin (911 Respondents):		
Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	576	63.23%
White Irish	14	1.54%
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	0.11%
Any other White background	57	6.26%
White and Black Caribbean	7	0.77%
White and Black African	3	0.33%
White and Asian	12	1.32%
Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	20	2.20%
Indian	37	4.06%
Pakistani	9	0.99%
Bangladeshi	4	0.44%
Chinese	6	0.66%
Any other Asian background	23	2.52%

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Black African	20	2.20%
Black Caribbean	28	3.07%
Any other Black background	8	0.88%
Arab		
Other	16	1.76%
Prefer not to say	70	7.68%

In terms of equalities, and because the response from the community was much less representative of the population or library membership, it was important to ensure the proposed final option reflected the preferences of all ethnic groups. See below a breakdown by ethnicity of those respondents who said they “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” with Options 1, 2 and 3:

Response from respondents who “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” with Options 1-3 Respondents can Agree with all options	Option 1: Reduction by 21% (521 responses)	Option 2: Outsource to partner (150 responses)	Option 3: 5 Community run libraries; 8 reduced hours (223 responses)
White	379	97	157
Asian	42	21	30
Black	39	9	10
Mixed	24	6	12
Other	6	5	3
Prefer not	31	12	11

Reviewing the data available, there is a significant preference across all ethnic groups for the option 1: Reduce opening hours by 21% across all libraries, with some agreeing that either outsourcing or community managed options are viable alternatives. In Options 1 & 2 free text responses, respondents urged the Council to seek support from the community, and to ensure there was more community involvement and resident engagement with libraries in future, and a co-production approach will be taken to the service development of libraries.

Sexual Orientation
If the service hours were reduced by 21% across

Due to the inclusive nature of libraries nationally, and of the partner organisations that operate within libraries, it is part of Croydon Libraries’ service plan to provide activities and resources that are inclusive of all LGBTQ communities. In addition to providing books specific to the LGBTQ community, the annual Cultural Calendar for Croydon Libraries always LGBTQ History Month in February and Pride in summer, hosting speakers, poetry, talks, art and books on display in all branch libraries. For many years Croydon Central Library has hosted the Rainbow Reading Group as well as the annual LGBTQ History Month display from CAGS (Croydon Area Gay Society est. 1971)

Reviewed as part of Phase 2

	<p>all libraries, there would be no library closures, and this would save £506,980/annum The libraries would stay under Council management.</p>	<p>A reduction in library hours would not be a reduction in books, information displays, and inclusive space and activities to raise awareness of issues for the LGBTQ community.</p>	
<p>Pregnancy or Maternity</p>	<p>If the service hours were reduced by 21% across all libraries, there would be no library closures, and this would</p>	<p>All Croydon Libraries provide books and information on pregnancy health and child development and nutrition, to support residents in this category. There are also regular free activities led by library staff for mothers and fathers with babies and toddlers, such as Baby Bounce and Rhymetime, activities which have a positive impact: new parents benefit from as they build social networks and get support from other parents; babies and toddlers are introduced to singing, their first books, and parents say it's an opportunity for all to bond and socialize.</p> <p>Library Activities for children and families: The Library service collects participation figures by age group for regular activities. From April 2019 – March 2020, there were 6,261 activities across all 13 Croydon libraries, and of those, 3,103 (50% of all activities) were for children including 1,786 rhymetimes for toddlers plus 183 activities for families with young children. There were over 51,000 attendees for children's events pre-COVID in 2019-20, making up 70% of all library event attendees.</p> <p>Activities for children and families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babies/toddlers: weekly Rhymetimes (singing&playing, social for parents); Bookstart – earliest literacy support • Toddlers/pre-school: weekly Storytimes, Bookstart, sessions with King's College Hospital promoting dental health 	<p>Libraries Consultation Phase 1 (14/1-14/3 2021); 7 Webinars ; Events spreadsheet; participation summaries from library staff</p>

save £506,980/annum
The libraries would stay under Council management.

- Pre-school/Primary: Craft activities, Summer Reading Challenge, homework sessions, Lego Club, Code Club, Homework club, Chatterbooks reading groups, National Storytelling Week, World Book Day, Class visits, special author events
- Marketplace events supporting parenting and healthy eating inviting Council, public health and community organisations into libraries for events and activities after rhymetimes.

Libraries Consultation:

In Phase 1, Survey and Webinar feedback identified the importance of local libraries to the wellbeing of mothers and babies, the value of the access to early years books, and the benefits of activities on child development and the wellbeing of parents.

Phase 1 Survey Respondents expressed strongly that the original proposals to close the smaller libraries would disproportionately impact local mothers and their babies & toddlers who would find it difficult to travel to other libraries because of cost, time, no parking, wish to stay local, choice (don't like larger libraries). 83.20% of respondents told us they walked to their local library now, and if they had to travel to the next nearest, 12.21% (213), the majority women aged 31-50, said they would have no other options. In addition to the activities and resources on offer, there would also be a decrease in the number of local baby changing facilities in the area.

In Phase 2, Option 1 (formerly Phase 1 Option 2), reduce service hours by 21% across the borough would mitigate against library closures by keeping the libraries open for services and activities, but the Phase 2 consultation feedback was that reduction in service hours would likely have a disproportionate impact on mothers and babies, reflected in feedback from the survey and face to face meetings.

In Phase 2, Maternity & Pregnancy – there were specific references drawn from general concern for vulnerable residents:

Option 1	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Grand Total	Option 2	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Grand Total	Option 3	Female	Prefer not to say	Grand Total
Strongly Agree				0	Strongly Agree			1	1	Strongly agree	1		1
Agree		1		1	Agree	1			1	Agree			
Disagree	1		1	2	Disagree		1		1	Disagree		1	1
Strongly disagree	1		1	2	Strongly disagree	2		1	2	Strongly disagree	1		1
Not sure	2			2	Not sure				0	Not sure			
Grand Total	4	1	2	7	Grand Total	3	1	2	6	Grand Total	2	1	3

Most respondents who disagreed with the proposals did not want any library service reductions, “please cut spending elsewhere,” and expressed the importance of libraries and library staff to the local community, the importance of books to

Libraries Consultation Phase 2 (1 June – 26 July 2021); 15 face to face events

literacy and achievement at the earliest stage, and the need for universally free and accessible activities, especially rhyme times, at all libraries, for families in Croydon. Although there are not many respondents, there are clear messages about the importance of the mother and baby group activities such as rhymetimes for the wellbeing of both mothers and babies, how much these activities were missed during COVID lockdown, and the importance of accessible opening hours for working mothers.

Feedback from the survey and from face to face meetings said that there would be a negative impact to reducing hours if there was an expectation that pregnant women and mothers with young children could travel to alternative library, for the same reasons given in Phase 1: additional cost, inadequate public transport (2 buses), insufficient or costly parking, no time for additional journey especially time constraints around the school run, logistics of travel with young children on public transport, fear of travel because of personal mobility, fear of crime on transport and in alternative communities. Other objections were pollution from additional car journeys, preference for local library, did not like noisy or busy alternative library.

In conclusion, the reduced opening hours are likely to have a significant impact on residents within this protected characteristic, and the library service would ensure there is engagement with this group when deciding opening hours, will include regular Saturday and at least one evening opening, and will ensure rhymetimes are available at every library. The impact of Option 1 would need to be monitored to ensure the library service was accessible.

3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:		
Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings	Information source	Date for completion
Feedback from individuals with protected characteristics who use affected libraries: what library services do they use; most valued services and/or activities; impact on them and on their community – Feedback on options	Libraries Consultation Phase 1 finished 14 March 2021 Report to Cabinet	Phase 1 April 2021 Phase 2 consultation June to July 2021
To what extent is it reasonable to assume residents can travel 1.2-1.3 miles to use a larger library with more facilities	Libraries Consultation Phase 1 finished 14 March 2021	April 2021
Ideas for cost neutral alternatives to closing the libraries from local residents to benefit all local residents. All viable options will be considered for inclusion in options report which will comprise an equalities review and further consultation with residents	Libraries Consultation, Email, Webinars, Workshops, Other Council departments and Community groups	April 2021

	Options to Cabinet 17 May 2021 followed by Phase 2 Libraries Consultation	
Feedback on options from LGBTQ+ community on impact, positive or negative, on gender identity or sexual orientation	Libraries Consultation Phase 2: collected data as part of survey feedback	July 2021
Feedback on options from the diverse range of Croydon’s religious communities	Libraries Consultation Phase 2: collected data as part of survey feedback	July 2021

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit <https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation>

3.3 Impact scores

Example

If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact)
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood (2) x Severity (2) = 4**

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Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

Severity of Impact	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	Likelihood of Impact			

Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
6 – 9	High
3 – 5	Medium
1 – 3	Low

Equality Analysis

Table 3 – Impact scores: These will be reviewed following Libraries Consultation on basis of that feedback

Column 1 PROTECTED GROUP	Column 2 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to score the likelihood of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. 1 = Unlikely to impact 2 = Likely to impact 3 = Certain to impact	Column 3 SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to score the severity of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. 1 = Unlikely to impact 2 = Likely to impact 3 = Certain to impact	Column 4 EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE Calculate the equality impact score for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group. Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.
Age	2	2	4
Disability	3	3	9
Gender	2	2	4
Gender reassignment	1	1	1
Marriage / Civil Partnership	1	1	1
Race	2	2	4
Religion or belief	1	1	1
Sexual Orientation	1	1	1
Pregnancy or Maternity	3	3	9

Equality Analysis

4. Statutory duties

4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups

Important note: If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

Important note: Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

Table 4 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts This will be reviewed following outcome of Libraries Consultation after 14 March 2021; and after the decisions taken on options in Cabinet 17 May 2021; and following Phase 2 Consultation 1 June – 26 July

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.				
Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Disability	Access to their existing local library services; travel to larger library Follow-up after Survey: 198 respondents (approx. 8% of all respondents) told us they had a disability which limited them to some degree, 47 limited a lot.	Investigating individuals affected for each of the 5 libraries; met individuals with disabilities and discussed impact at face to face meetings in July 2021 Reducing opening hours by 21% would be preferred of three options, but would still have a significant	Joan Redding,	April 2021 July 2021 September 2021

	<p>213 (9% overall) respondents told us they could not travel to their nearest alternative library. Of those, 13% had a disability.</p> <p>If they could not use their local library they would not be able to access the activities and volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Phase 2 consultation: Survey respondents: 32; Face to face meetings 9. Respondents said a reduction in opening hours would have a significant impact and they could not travel to an alternative library nearby if their local library was closed</p>	<p>impact on them. They could not travel easily to an alternative library open elsewhere in North/Central/South every day exc Sunday, and valued their local library for book groups, local activities and volunteering.</p> <p>Open+ technology would allow extending unstaffed open hours in selected libraries and Home Library Service (books delivered to homes) is an option for residents with a disability who cannot travel to a library.</p> <p>Community engagement to follow consultation to develop a service and opening hours accessible for residents with disability post-COVID.</p>		
Race	<p>Possible disproportionate impact on reducing hours at Broad Green Library under review</p> <p>Follow-up after survey: There would be a disproportionate impact on BAME communities in Broad Green and South Norwood, without local alternatives. Respondents suggested a reduction of staffed service hours at these libraries would worsen existing deprivation for these communities</p>	<p>Libraries Consultation and webinars; In reducing opening hours by 21% libraries would not be closed and there would be an open library in North/Central/South every day exc Sunday.</p> <p>Regular activities would be concentrated on open days.</p> <p>Open+ technology would allow extending unstaffed open hours in selected libraries</p> <p>Following face to face meetings at each library and meetings with</p>	<p>Joan Redding, Liz Hollowood</p>	<p>April 2021 July 2021 September 2021</p>

Equality Analysis

		community leaders, engage with local community to review the service and activate buildings when unstaffed providing access to self-service library		
Sex (gender)	Possible disproportionate impact on women who are larger group of active users and were larger could of respondents (see Maternity & Pregnancy)	Libraries consultation and webinars; Phase 2 consultation, webinars and face to face meetings. Reducing opening hours by 21% would be a mitigation; there would be an open library in North/Central/South every day exc Sunday. Regular activities would be concentrated on open days. Open+ technology would allow extending unstaffed open hours in selected libraries See impact under Age and Maternity Phase 2 consultation – engage more men Following face to face meetings at each library and meetings with community leaders, engage with local community to activate buildings when unstaffed providing access to self-service library	Joan Redding,	April 2021 July 2021 September 2021
Gender reassignment	Follow-up after survey: not asked as part of survey; no feedback	Reviewed as part of Phase 2 Libraries Consultation	Joan Redding, Lucy Lawrence	April 2021 July 2021 September 2021

		For Phase 2 consultation will be contacting local Croydon groups, including TransPals, The Bridge, CAGS, Aurora, the LGBTQ Croydon Council staff forum.		
Sexual orientation	Follow-up after survey: not asked as part of survey; no specific feedback	<p>Reviewed as part of libraries Consultation</p> <p>For Phase 2 consultation will be contacting local Croydon groups, including TransPals, The Bridge, CAGS, Aurora, the LGBTQ Croydon Council staff forum.</p> <p>Community engagement to follow consultation. Library activities continue to focus on relevant book stock, displays and activities</p>	Joan Redding	<p>April 2021</p> <p>July 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p>
Age	<p>Disproportionate impact on mothers with babies and young children, school age children, jobless adults without digital access and seniors</p> <p>Follow-up after survey: If services were closed or reduced, there could be a disproportionate impact on the following age groups if the proposed closure took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families with young children (time, logistics, cost) Adults without digital access; jobless (cost, time) 	<p>Libraries consultation and webinars; Phase 2 consultation, webinars and face to face meetings</p> <p>Reducing opening hours by 21% would keep local libraries open; there would be an open library in North/Central/South every day exc Sunday, although not all could travel. Regular activities would be concentrated on open days. Open+ technology would allow extending unstaffed open hours in selected libraries</p>	Joan Redding	<p>April 2021</p> <p>July 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p>

Equality Analysis

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors who have told us it is difficult to travel (cost, fear of crime, fear of injury) School children after school and school visits (not reflected in data; in free text) 	Community engagement to follow consultation to help build up the service for all age groups post-COVID.		
Religion or belief	<p>Possible impact considered after Phase 1</p> <p>Follow-up after survey: not asked as part of survey; no feedback from residents to survey, webinars or staff</p>	<p>As part of libraries consultation, contacted all temples, mosques, and churches.</p> <p>Phase 2 consultation – included question in survey and will contact same organisations again for feedback</p> <p>Community engagement to follow consultation to help build up the service for all faith groups post-COVID.</p>	Joan Redding	<p>April 2021</p> <p>July 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p>
Pregnancy or maternity	<p>Disproportionate impact on mothers and babies/toddlers</p> <p>Follow-up after survey:</p> <p>If services were closed or reduced, there could be disproportionate impact on families with young children because they would find it difficult to travel to alternative library (logistics, cost, time – school run). Working mothers need evenings and Saturdays</p>	<p>As part of Phase 1 libraries consultation contacted nurseries and children’s centres.</p> <p>As part of Phase 2 consultation, promoted consultation to same groups, liaised with Children’s Centres and met parents at face to face drop in groups.</p> <p>Reducing opening hours by 21% would keep local libraries open; there would be an open library in</p>	Joan Redding	<p>April 2021</p> <p>July 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p>

		<p>North/Central/South every day exc Sunday. Not all could travel. Regular activities would be concentrated on open days. Open+ technology would allow extending unstaffed open hours in selected libraries</p> <p>Community engagement to follow consultation to help build up the services for families post-COVID, especially to agree opening hours.</p>		
Marriage/civil partnership	Follow-up after survey: not asked as part of survey; no specific feedback	<p>Reviewed as part of Libraries Consultation No significant feedback in Phase 2 consultation –</p> <p>Community engagement to follow consultation to help build up the services for families post-COVID.</p>	Joan Redding,	<p>April 2021 July 2021 September 2021</p>

6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter **X** in column 3 (**Conclusion**) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.

Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision.	
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form	X
Continue the proposed change	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.	
Stop or amend the proposed change	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet		Meeting title: Cabinet Date: 16 August 2021

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision	
Equalities Lead	Name: _____ Date: _____ Position: _____
Director	Name: _____ Date: _____ Position: _____

Equality Analysis

Table 1: Disability summary for all libraries from Library Management System – represents 1% of all members

DISABILITY	Ashburton	Bradmore Green	Broad Green	Coulsdon	Croydon Central	Croydon Home Service	New Addington	Norbury	Purley	Sanderstead	Selsdon	Shirley	South Norwood	Thornton Heath	Total
Dexterity					1									1	2
Hearing	2	5	1	8	39		4	6		2	16	3	7	4	97
Learning Difficulty	4	7	4	7	52		16	10	2	2	7	4	9	15	139
Mental Health	1	1	1	2	57	1	3	5			2	4	1	1	79
Mobility	15	5		11	174	44	8	7	3	2	19	7	4	9	308
Multiple Disability				1	14		1				1		1		18
Visual	12	12	4	18	114	9	16	15	14	9	69	15	9	17	333
Other	4	2	1	8	52	12	8	8	3	2	15	5	11	9	140
Grand Total	38	32	11	55	503	66	56	51	22	17	129	38	42	56	1,116

Equality Analysis

Table 2: Ethnicity Summary of library members for all libraries (Library Management System) 2020

RACE	Ashburton Library	Bradmore Green Library	Broad Green Library	Coulsdon Library	Croydon Central Library	Home Library Service	New Addington Library	Norbury Library	Purley Library	Sanderstead Library	Selsdon Library	Shirley Library	South Norwood Library	Thornton Heath Library	Grand Total
White British	520	793	83	1683	3362	70	758	255	613	431	1124	497	279	274	10742
White Irish	14	12	3	34	107	4	17	11	7	10	16	11	17	13	276
White Gypsy					1										1
White - Other	73	34	47	202	1286	5	93	152	101	65	133	76	128	167	2562
Asian Bangladeshi	13	1	13	14	99		3	22	8	5	8	13	15	16	230
Asian British	1			1	58				2	2	4	3		6	77
Asian Chinese	16	2	8	38	127		6	12	22	12	27	8	12	14	304
Asian Indian	91	17	225	149	1310	2	19	137	105	63	110	61	30	163	2482
Asian Other	59	28	215	102	773		39	117	74	26	58	45	36	97	1669
Asian Pakistani	49	8	62	63	363		27	167	43	18	33	23	32	106	994
Black African	128	15	105	134	1965		493	244	76	17	103	112	315	485	4192
Black British	1	1	1	5	129		1		4		4	10	3	37	196
Black Caribbean	101	16	63	75	1098	6	119	190	44	17	65	66	212	319	2391
Black Other	55	19	26	53	879		32	39	68	6	32	12	72	77	1370
Mixed Other	35	11	6	64	240	1	10	38	18	18	21	12	22	24	520
Mixed - White & Asian	6	13	2	41	73		2	12	16	9	12	11	11	1	209
Mixed - White & Black African	16	5	8	25	114		13	17	11	6	8	12	20	16	271
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	21	10	4	43	165		25	28	14	4	18	19	32	21	404
Other - Arab				1	16									5	22
Other	8	11	18	32	631	1	146	33	29	12	40	17	20	45	1043

Equality Analysis

Prefer not to say	298	32	64	85	2697	3	304	291	192	74	177	117	602	1564	6500
Total	1505	1028	953	2844	15493	92	2107	1765	1447	795	1993	1125	1858	3450	36455

REPORT TO:	Appointments Committee 21 September 2021 Full Council 11 October 2021
SUBJECT:	Review of temporary chief officer cover arrangements
LEAD OFFICER:	Asmat Hussain Interim Executive Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer
<p>FINANCIAL IMPACT:</p> <p>There is no additional expenditure arising directly from the recommendations contained in this report beyond the salaries that are being paid to the individuals providing cover in these essential roles</p>	
<p>1. RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>Members of the Appointments Committee are recommended to:-</p> <p>1.1 Agree, in accordance with paragraph 3.3(1) and (2) of Part 4J (Staff Employment Procedure Rules) of the Constitution, to delegate to the Head of Paid Service the decision whether or not to extend current temporary cover arrangements for the Chief Officer posts set out in recommendation 1.2. for a further period of up to six months, to 31 March 2022, pending the permanent recruitment processes via the Appointments Committee. The delegation to be subject to the usual notification requirements in paragraph 3.3.3 and notifying any extension of the temporary appointments to the next meeting of full Council.</p> <p>1.2 Note that the chief officer roles in consideration are :- 1.2.1 Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education 1.2.2 Assistant Chief Executive</p> <p>1.3 In addition the Committee is asked to agree to convert the current fixed term contract for the Director of Children’s Social Care, to a permanent contract, following contract discussions for this role.</p>	

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 In accordance with paragraph 3.3 of the Staff Employment Procedure Rules (Part 4J) in the Council’s Constitution, the appointment of Chief Officer posts is a matter reserved for an Appointments Committee, unless specifically delegated by them. The Head of Paid Service may make temporary appointments of chief officers up to six months, with notification to the next full council meeting.

- 2.2 The council comprehensive set of improvement activities, as detailed in the Croydon Renewal Plan are progressing and to ensure a continuous focus on delivery, there needs to be robust management of the organisation. There are currently a number of temporary cover arrangements in place at chief officer level that are due to conclude at the end of September 2021. These are in place primarily pending the reorganisation of the top 3 tiers of the council's management. Cover is in place to ensure continuity and support for all staff teams pending the permanent recruitment process of the new agreed structure.
- 2.3 The Council has made significant improvements in the matching and ring-fencing process and has concluded a procurement process for the Recruitment Partner for the vacant gaps in the top 3 tiers of council management. It is therefore necessary for good operational and business efficiency that the cover arrangements are extended to provide continuity and ensure progress on key projects is not delayed.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 In September 2020 a number of fixed term appointments and secondments were made at chief officer level from internal resources, to maintain Director level accountability for a number of key areas of service. The appointment of the Councils new Head of Paid Service and approved Organisational Redesign of Croydon, the Council is now progressing the permanent recruitment and there is still a period of temporary cover.
- 3.2 The posts in question are:-
- 3.2.1 Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education. The extension of the temporary arrangements is for a further period of up to 6 months to 31st March 2022, pending permanent recruitment
 - 3.2.2 Assistant Chief Executive, the extension of the temporary arrangements is for a further period of up to 6 months to 31st March 2022, pending permanent recruitment
- 3.3 Whilst the planned recruitment is underway the organisation needs some managerial stability to maintain service delivery. Staff confidence in management arrangements is crucial as is a sense of continuity, where possible in the short term.
- 3.4 The current temporary post holders are currently fully engaged in the planning and delivery of the budget of their services and are providing operational oversight and guidance to the services. There are no concerns about their performance.
- 3.5 The Improvement and Assurance Panel have welcomed the Council approved Organisational Redesign of Croydon and ensure that the Council has appropriate interim arrangements whilst that concludes.

- 3.6 In taking the decision to delegate the decision to extend the temporary arrangements for a further period of up to 6 months, to 31 March 2022, to the Chief Executive officer in this instance, will ensure quick reassurance for the staff concerned and the organisation more generally.
- 3.7 The recommendation to convert the current fixed term contract to a permanent contract arrangement for the Director of Children's Social Care, reflects a good business case to ensure stability for the service in its improvement journey. The appointment was made from a full Appointment Committee's unanimous decision on 10th March 2021 to recruit permanent to the role. At the request of the successful candidate a fixed term contract was entered into, subject to review. Subsequently the postholder has indicate their willingness to convert to a permanent contract as originally proposed as part of the recruitment exercise and Appointment Committee decision on 10 March 2021. This role is highlighted as hard to recruit to nationally and the current postholder is performing well and a permanent commitment is a positive step for service stability. Approval is sought for the conversion to a permanent role.

4. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

There are no additional finance requests beyond payment of salaries that are committed in the budget to cover these fixed-term contract extensions.

Approved by: Matthew Davies, interim Deputy Section 151 Officer

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the interim Director of Law and Governance that the Council may generally appoint such staff as it considers necessary for the proper discharge of its functions on such reasonable terms and conditions, including remuneration, as the Council thinks fit.
- 5.2 The function of appointment of a member of staff of the authority must generally be discharged, on behalf of the authority, by the Head of Paid Service or by an officer nominated by the Head of Paid Service. However, paragraph 3.3(1) of the Staff Employment Procedure Rules in Part 4J of the Constitution provides that with regard to the appointment of Chief Officers the function will usually be carried out by the Appointments Committee.
- 5.3 The definition of 'Chief Officer' in Part 4J of the Constitution includes interim appointments to Chief Officer positions such as the posts set out in paragraph 1.2 of the recommendations contained in this report.
- 5.4 Separately, paragraph 3.3(2) of the Staff Employment Procedure Rules in Part 4J in the Constitution delegates to the Head of Paid Service authority to make temporary appointments of Chief Officers for a period of up to 6 months subject

to the notification requirements in paragraph 3.3.3 to ensure that the Leader and any other Cabinet Members have no objections to the offer of appointment before an offer of appointment is made to him/her. Such temporary appointments must also be notified to the next meeting of full Council.

- 5.5 The proposal is to seek approval from the Committee to delegate to the Head of Paid Service authority to decide whether or not a further extension of the temporary appointments to the posts identified in paragraph 1.2 of the recommendations for a further period of up to 6 months, to 31 March 2022, subject to usual notification requirements to the Leader and Cabinet Members and the next meeting of full Council should be agreed.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the interim Director of Law and Governance.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

There are no additional human resources impacts beyond those described in the body of the report.

Approved by: Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

7. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations contained within this report will not directly involve the processing of data.

Approved by: Elaine Jackson, Interim assistant Chief Executive

CONTACT OFFICER:

Katie Wallace, Head of Recruitment

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

None

REPORT TO:	GENERAL PURPOSES AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 16 September 2021
SUBJECT:	Recruitment and appointment of independent Chair of General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC)
LEAD OFFICER:	Asmat Hussain, Executive Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer (Interim)
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/ POLICY CONTEXT:	
The appointment of an independent Chair of General Purposes and Audit Committee is in response to a recommendation of the non-statutory rapid review and as such forms part of the Croydon Renewal Plan.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	
The cost of allowance payments to the Independent Chair will be contained within existing revenue budgets.	

RECOMMENDATION
General Purposes and Audit Committee is recommended to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of this report 2. Agree to recommend to Full Council the approach to arrangements for the two current non-voting members of GPAC – either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A: To replace current provision for two independent co-opted members with a requirement for one independent co-opted member, in the form of the Chair. The term of office for the current two members will terminate following a decision of Full Council to make the necessary changes to the Constitution to implement the new arrangements. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option B: To retain one independent co-opted member alongside the independent Chair, with effect from a decision of Full Council to implement the new arrangements. 3. Endorse the proposed changes to the Constitution set out in section 4.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the process taken to recruit an appropriately skilled Independent Chair for the Committee, following the

decision by Full Council in May that a recruitment process should be commenced.

- 1.2 Following interviews on 20 September, it is proposed to bring a proposal to appoint to Full Council on 11 October. Proposals to change the Constitution to enable the appointment and other related adjustments will be made as part of a wider set of proposals for constitutional changes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The non-statutory rapid review recommended that the Council give consideration to appointing a Chair from outside the majority group to its General Purposes and Audit Committee. Full Council, at its meeting on 8 March, heard from the Leader, Cllr Hamida Ali, that consideration was being given to the appointment of an independent Chair.
- 2.2 Subsequently, Full Council, at its meeting of 4 May, delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources and (then) Deputy Monitoring Officer, with the Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and s151 officer, to take necessary actions to commence a recruitment process for an independent Chair of GPAC, including:
 - Preparation of a role profile including the proposed level of remuneration
 - Establishment of a Member-led recruitment and selection process for the recruitment and formal appointment of the Chair.
- 2.3 Council required a further report to its July meeting to update Members on progress and seek approval for the necessary changes to the Constitution to enable an Independent Chair to be formally appointed to GPAC. Due to a delay in the search for potential candidates and other work commitments and priorities, no report was made to the July meeting.

3. UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- 3.1 The Constitution has no provision within it for the recruitment of an Independent Chair of GPAC. In light of the unique nature and significance of the role, and in accordance with the delegation to her, the Interim Executive Director of Resources and (then) Deputy Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and s151 Officer considered that it was appropriate to use the Appointments Committee to shortlist and interview candidates and to make a recommendation to Full Council, not least as it had been indicated to Council in May that the recruitment and selection process would reflect practices used by Appointments Committee in recruiting senior staff.
- 3.2 The Chair will be a non-voting member of the Committee. The recruitment process and contractual terms for the Independent Chair mirror previous recruitment processes for independent members of GPAC (who are co-opted, non-voting members) in the following ways:
 - Co-opted members may not be either members or officers of the Council;

- The vacancy may be advertised on the Council's website or more widely if considered beneficial;
- In making recommendations for appointment, the Appointments Committee will be mindful of any potential conflicts of interest between the co-opted member's paid employment and their role on the Committee;
- Co-opted members may be disqualified during their term of office if they do not attend three consecutive meetings of the committee or if they are elected a Member of the Council or become an officer. It is the responsibility of the co-opted member to inform the Council if a circumstance arises which they believe would disqualify them from membership. They may resign during their term of office.
- Co-opted members are required to comply with the Code of Conduct for Co-opted Members: failure to do so may lead to their appointment being terminated.
- The role and duties of a co-opted member are:
 - Be expected to attend all meetings of the Committee to which they have been appointed and read the agenda papers
 - Bring an external perspective to the work of the Committee by utilising their knowledge and experience
 - Be expected to represent the whole community and not just one sector or viewpoint
 - Act independently of party politics and lobbying interests
 - Be expected to treat other Committee Members, officers and external parties with respect
 - Comply with the Committee procedure rules, rules of debate and the Code of Conduct for Co-optees
 - Be required to recognise that they may encounter sensitive information and to act with discretion and keep any confidential information confidential.

3.3 No offer of appointment will be made to anyone who would be disqualified from being a Member of the Council.

3.4 The Council commissioned Starfish, via the Adecco agency framework, to run the executive search and recruitment process. Starfish have a strong track record of recruiting to 'Chair' roles of this nature. The opportunity was advertised on the Council's website, on Starfish's own website and on LinkedIn. In the search process Starfish contacted over 100 individuals, with a particular focus on the public and not for profit sectors: those targeted were financially astute and at executive level, and were mainly already in Non-Executive Director roles. A targeted search was also carried out within the community of interim s151 officers. The executive search process was carried out on a national basis: additionally, the role was highlighted within Croydon's voluntary and community sector.

3.5 The person specification for the Independent Chair included:

- Appropriate financial training and experience, ideally as a qualified accountant;
- Detailed knowledge and experience of internal control and audit standards in a large, multi-disciplinary organisation, ideally local government/ health;
- Experience of operating within a formal risk management framework;

- Experience of chairing high level meetings to achieve effective outcomes, ideally experience of chairing Audit Committees;
- Evidence of having worked at least 10 years at a senior level;
- Able to demonstrate the ability to develop and manage a good working relationship with politicians and senior managers;
- Ability to manage and present information to groups in politically sensitive environments and to work effectively with colleagues who may have different levels of experience and understanding;
- Able to demonstrate influencing and consensus building skills;
- Assertive in pursuing the correct course of action;
- Enthusiastic, not easily deterred & able to convey enthusiasm to others;
- Committed to excellent public services;
- Understanding and commitment to promoting equality of opportunity in service delivery with an understanding of the issues underpinning these values.

3.6 The role requires up to 9 days per year and the appointment is for an initial 4-year term. The remuneration will be £8,000 per year, which is slightly less than the current Chair's allowance, and therefore is consistent with recommendations of the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors in London (the Panel makes no reference to payments to co-optees).

3.7 The Appointments Committee was convened with the following membership:

- Cllr Hamida Ali
- Cllr Stuart King
- Cllr Joy Prince
- Cllr Callton Young
- Cllr Jason Cummings
- Cllr Stuart Millson

The Committee was supported by the Executive Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer (interim), the Assistant Chief Executive (interim), the Director of Finance Investment and Risk (interim - Richard Ennis) and the Head of HR - Resources.

3.8 Appointments Committee met on 17 August and four candidates were shortlisted who have the relevant skills and experience. Interviews will take place on 20 September and GPAC members will be advised of the outcome.

3.9 General Purposes and Audit Committee is asked to consider arrangements for the two current independent co-opted members of the Committee. The report to Council in May stated that the proposal is 'to end the current arrangements for the two independent, non-voting co-opted members of GPAC' and that it would be necessary to 'agree the ongoing role of existing co-opted members on the committee'. The following options are proposed:

- Option A: To replace current provision for two independent co-opted members with a requirement for one independent co-opted member, in the form of the Chair. The term of office for the current two members will terminate with effect from the Full Council meeting on 11 October.

or

- Option B: To retain one independent co-opted member alongside the independent Chair, with effect from the Full Council meeting on 11 October.

4. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

- 4.1 Subject to the views of this Committee, a report to Full Council on 11 October will include a recommendation that appropriate changes are made to the constitution to enable the appointment of the Independent Chair and all associated changes to terms of reference.
- 4.2 The proposed changes will ensure that the Council's arrangements are consistent with the requirements of section 102(1) of the Local Government Act which enables the appointment of co-optees only to committees which do not have a role in regulating and controlling the finance of the local authority.
- 4.3 Changes will be proposed to the following sections of the constitution:
- i) Article 8 – amend GPAC membership to add the independent Chair and reflect the Committee's recommendation on the ongoing role of co-opted members.
 - ii) Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions, s2.1 – amend Appointments Committee terms of reference to include responsibility for recommendation of the appointment of co-opted Members to Full Council where the role attracts remuneration.
 - iii) Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions, 2.3 – amend GPAC membership to add the independent Chair and reflect the Committee's recommendation on the ongoing role of co-opted members and clarification of arrangements for decisions on non-audit functions.
 - iv) Part 4F- Non-Executive Committee procedure rules, s2.3 – amend to except GPAC from arrangements for annual appointment of Chair and include requirement for external advertisement on a four-yearly cycle.
 - v) Part 6A - Scheme of Members' Allowances Appendix B – add allowance payable to Independent Chair (a slight reduction to the previous allowance for the Chair).
 - vi) Part 6D- scheme of co-option, s6.1 – amend to reflect revised arrangement for independent co-opted Members on the Committee to include the independent Chair and arrangements for their appointment, and reflect the Committee's recommendation on the ongoing role of co-opted members.
- 4.4 The Non-Executive Committee procedure rules currently include a requirement that GPAC appoint a Vice Chair for the duration of the Council year. It is proposed, subject to discussion with the successful candidate for Chair of the Committee, that the Committee elect a Vice Chair within its own membership, with no limitations on their power to act in the absence of the Chair. It is not

proposed that the role of Vice Chair will receive a Special Responsibility Allowance.

- 4.5 Additionally, as part of the wider review of the Constitution, if Council adopts the revised member code of conduct which appears elsewhere on this agenda, consideration will be given as to whether to bring the code of conduct for co-opted (non-voting) members into alignment with the new code of conduct for members.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Interim Executive Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer consulted with the Interim Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and the Assistant Chief Executive to inform the preparation of the job description and person specification for the role of Independent Chair.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The cost of allowance payments to the Independent Chair will be contained within existing revenue budgets.

Approved by: Matthew Davis, Deputy s151 officer

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Interim Director of Law and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer that the power to co-opt persons who are not councillors onto committees appointed by the Council, under section 102(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act", is set out in section 102(3) of the 1972 Act. A committee appointed under Section 101 of the 1972 Act, other than a committee for regulating and controlling the finance of the local authority or of their area, may, subject to section 104 of the 1972 Act, include persons who are not members of the appointing authority.
- 7.3 Section 104 of the 1972 Act will apply to any proposed appointment under Section 102(3) above and provides that a person who is disqualified under Part V of the 1972 Act from being elected or being a member of a local authority shall be disqualified for being a member of a committee (including a sub-committee) of that authority, or being a representative of that authority on a joint committee (including a sub-committee) of the authority and another local authority, whether the committee or joint committee are appointed under this Part of this Act or under any other enactment. Part V of the Act deals, in section 80 with disqualifications from serving as a member of the Council and these requirements are applied to co-optees by virtue of Section 104 so that if any of the circumstances in Section 80 apply (or subsequently apply) to a co-optee, they are disqualified from being a co-optee.

7.4 By virtue of section 13(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, any co-opted member of a committee appointed under section 102(1) of the 1972 Act shall, for all purposes, be treated as a non-voting member of that committee.

7.5 Co-opted members are required to sign an undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct for Non-Voting Co-opted Members before acting as a co-optee.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Interim Director of Law and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

8.1 There are no immediate HR issues arising from this report for Council employees or staff.

Approved by: Gillian Bevan, Head of HR, Resources.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 The post of Independent Chair of GPAC has been advertised within and beyond the borough using channels relevant to potential candidates with the relevant skills and experience. The appointments process is being carried out in compliance with the Council's recruitment and selection policies, to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

10.1 There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

11.1 There are no crime and disorder reduction impacts arising from this report.

12. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no data protection implications arising from the content of this report.

Approved by: Asmat Hussain, Executive Director Resources and Monitoring Officer (Interim).

CONTACT OFFICER: Heather Wills, Governance Improvement Adviser;
heather.wills@croydon.gov.uk

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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