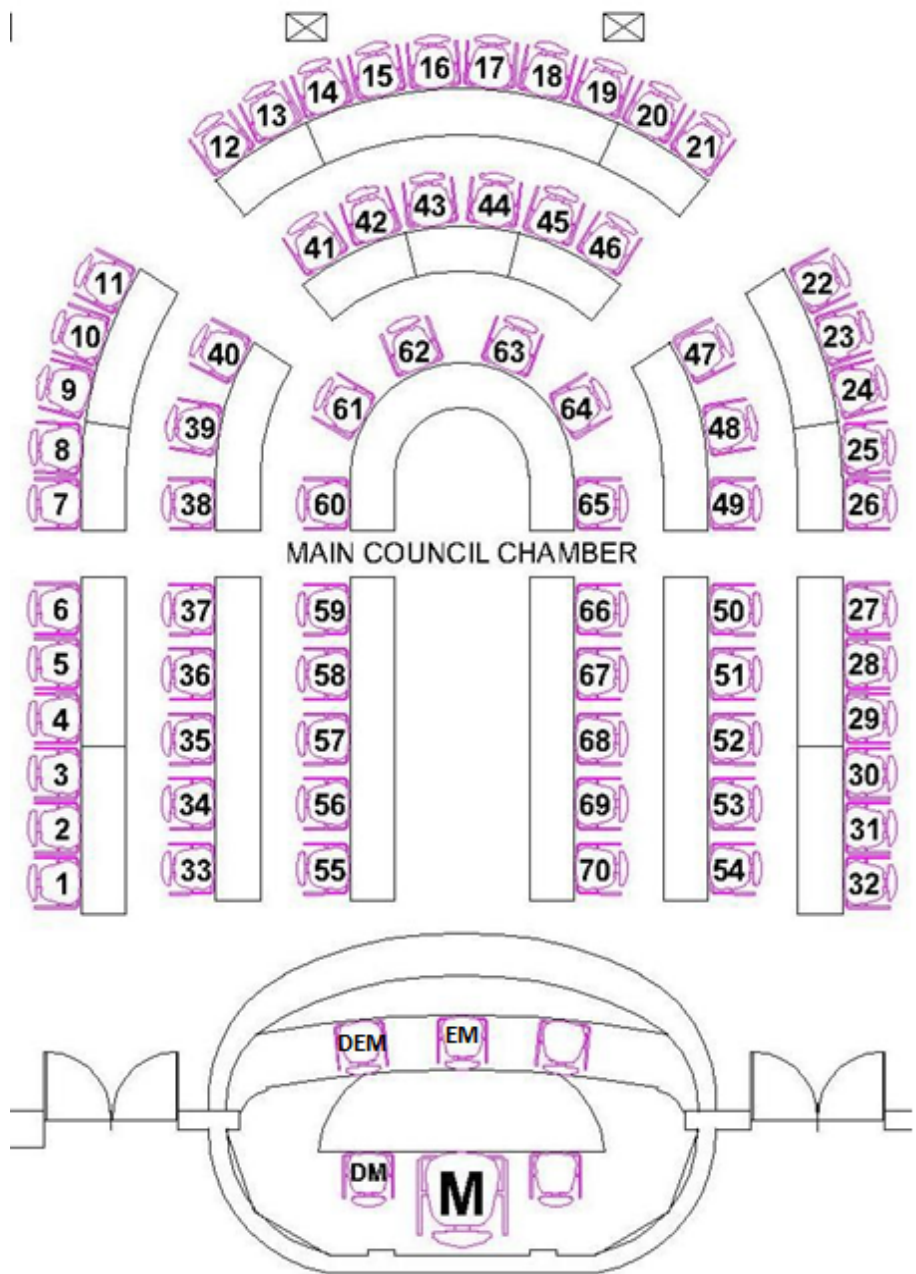




**COUNCIL
AGENDA**
for the meeting
on
11 October 2023 at
6.30 pm

1. Stuart Collins
2. Alisa Flemming
3. Clive Fraser
4. Mohammed Islam
5. Patsy Cummings
6. Sean Fitzsimons
7. Catherine Wilson
8. Matt Griffiths
9. Elily Ponnuthurai
10. Kola Agboola
11. Maddie Henson
12. Manju Shahul-Hameed
13. Mike Bonello
14. Humayan Kabir
15. Patricia Hay-Justice
16. Karen Jewitt
17.
18. Esther Sutton
19. Ria Patel
20.
21. Claire Bonham
22. Adele Benson
23. Sue Bennett
24. Endri Llabuti
25. Mark Johnson
26. Nikhil Sherine-Thampi
27. Helen Redfern
28. Gayle Gander
29. Simon Fox
30. Holly Ramsey
31. Samir Dwesar
32. Luke Shortland
33. Nina Degrad
34. Chris Clark



35. Enid Mollyneaux	56. Chris Herman
36. Amy Foster	57. Janet Campbell
37. Brigitte Graham	58. Callton Young
38. Leila Ben-Hassel	59. Stuart King
39. Louis Carserides	60. Rowenna Davis (Scrutiny Chair)
40. Eunice O-Dame	61. Richard Chatterjee (Scrutiny Vice-Chair)
41. Sherwan Chowdhury	62. Michael Neal
42. Stella Nabukeera	63. Andy Stranack
43. Tamar Barrett	64. Scott Roche
44.	65. Jeet Bains
45. Fatima Zaman	66. Yvette Hopley
46. Jade Appleton	67. Ola Kolade
47. Danielle Denton	68. Maria Gatland
48. Ian Parker	69. Jason Cummings
49. Simon Brew	70. Mario Creatura
50. Margaret Bird	Notes etc.
51. Joseph Lee	M – Civic Mayor Councillor Tony Pearson
52. Lara Fish	DM – Deputy Civic Mayor – Councillor Appu Srinivasan
53. Alasdair Stewart	EM – Executive Mayor Jason Perry
54. Robert Ward	DEM – Deputy Executive Mayor – Councillor Lynne Hale
55. Chrishni Reshekaron	Please note that the numbers relate to microphone numbers.

To: To All Members of the Council

Date: 3 October 2023

A meeting of the **COUNCIL** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Wednesday, 11 October 2023 at 6.30 pm** in **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense
Monitoring Officer
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Marianna Ritchie, Democratic Services
Democratic Services
Marianna.ritchie@croydon.gov.uk
www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
3 October 2023

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, or you can view the webcast both live and after the meeting has completed at <http://webcasting.croydon.gov.uk>

If you would like to record the meeting, we ask that you read the guidance on the recording of public meetings [here](#) before attending.

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

If you require any assistance, please contact officer as detailed above.

AGENDA – PART A

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any Members.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 13 - 22)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023 as an accurate record.

3. Disclosure of Interests

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) they may have in relation to any item(s) of business on today's agenda.

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. Council meeting dates

For Council to agree the change of date of the meeting scheduled for 21 February 2024 to the 28 February 2024, and to add a preliminary second meeting on Wednesday 6 March.

6. Announcements

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

7. Croydon Question Time

Public Questions (30 minutes)

To receive questions from the public gallery and questions submitted by residents in advance of the meeting.

The following Public Questions will be heard at this meeting, which will be responded to. The questioners will have the opportunity to ask a supplementary question based on the answer received.

The questions are as follows:

1. As a local resident in Fairfield near East Croydon station, I'm feeling increasingly anxious when walking around the local area. Especially so after the spike in knife crime we've experienced in the last week or so. I'd like to know what is being done to tackle this at source and also what is being done to keep residents such as myself safe from not only actual crime, but the fear of crime itself.
2. When will the council start taking action against fly tippers, especially in alleyways and hotspots like Euston road?
3. TFL data for Croydon shows 51% go to work by car, 25% on foot, 17% by bus or tram, 6% by rail and 1% by bike.

Croydon introduced many car-hostile policies and restrictions under the previous administration, often with minimal consultation.

Given the Uxbridge byelection, how will you change the following to a more car-friendly voter-friendly approach – boosting the economy and setting the public free?

20mph on most roads
School streets
Road closures
Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
Controlled parking zones
Yellow lines
High parking charges
Emission charges
Cycle lanes
Road humps

4. The residents of Croydon welcome and applaud mayor Perry's Croydon clean-up campaign August 14th (Norbury clean up). But does this extend to eyesore front gardens where owners / occupiers leave fridges, mattresses, sofas in their front gardens and ignore polite requests to clean up their front garden? Is there or will there be a council department which will respond to residents' complaints about eyesore front gardens, and will such council / department officers attend and deal with and take enforcement action in respect of reported eyesore front gardens?
5. My name is Lisa Grady, I work at Applegarth school, where my children attended. There has been an increasing risk for the children of Applegarth and Good Shepherd school when crossing the road to school as cars and buses do not stop for them. I have seen children walking into the road having to look around parked cars and buses to try to cross. My son was also almost hit when crossing the road as we couldn't see clearly. Therefore, could I put forward a request for a zebra crossing to be added in Fieldway by Brierley and Applegarth?
6. What does Croydon Council intend to do about the total lack of provision for dyslexic primary school-aged children? 1 in 5 children are dyslexic with either ASD/ADHD or Visual Stress conditions, and yet we as one of London's largest boroughs do not have our own Crested LA maintained school with Level 7 Dyslexic and Dyscalculia input.
7. As part of the modernisation of Croydon managed bus shelters those in Norbury (and other areas) were removed before the new were available for installation. Residents' are now facing a third winter without shelter. Please could you say when are the new bus shelters likely to be installed?
8. Government funding settlement for TfL requires TfL to increase fares. As a result, TfL will withdraw One Day Paper Travelcards, contrary to Croydon's sustainable transport policy. Residents will pay higher fares and make fewer journeys. Those without Oyster

cards or bankcards will require single peak tickets for all journeys. Children who do not have an Oyster zipcard will pay peak/adult fares; buses are cashless. The London Mayor is willing to discuss ways of retaining the One Day Paper Travelcard with the Rail Delivery Group and DfT. Would the Mayor support discussions with DfT and retention of One Day Paper Travelcards?

9. The Croydon Observatory Borough Profile published in June 2023, shows uptake for funded 2-year-old early years places is 9% lower than the London average. Uptake for 3–4-year-old funded places had dropped 5% from the previous year and was 3% lower than the average for London. Given how important early years provision is for lifelong outcomes, especially for children living in areas with high income deprivation how will the council work to improve uptake of funded early years placements to enable Croydon's future generation to flourish?

8. The Croydon Debate

For Council to receive a Public Petition and / or a Member Petition.

One Public Petition has been received. The petition has been verified and is worded as follows:

The South Norwood Country Park visitor centre has been closed since it was damaged by a fire in Spring of 2020. Despite persistent engagement by the local community, Croydon Council have not begun work to restore the centre, set out a plan for doing so, or explained why nothing has happened in three years since the fire.

South Norwood Country Park is an important designated local nature reserve and provides easy access to a variety of natural habitats that would otherwise be largely inaccessible for many residents in the area.

The visitor centre provided a vital venue for school children to learn about and experience wildlife up close, an office for a park warden and was a base for volunteers. The visitor centre provided the only toilets in the park which means the park is now inaccessible for many people and is unsuitable for large groups of volunteers.

Since the visitor centre closed, other facilities in the park have begun to decline - the environment garden behind the centre is overgrown and its pond is empty, paths throughout the park have deteriorated, and the viewing platforms at the lake have become increasingly dangerous to use. The longer the centre remains closed, the more damage will be done and the more it will cost to repair.

The visitor centre is the first of many areas of South Norwood Country Park and its management that require commitment and leadership from the Council. An area the size of South Norwood Country Park requires a full-time warden with experience in conservation and a fully operational visitor centre. Reopening the visitor centre is an important first step that would not only restore the facilities it provides but act as a focal point for future work in the park and a clear sign of the Council's commitment to the people of South Norwood.

We call on the Mayor of Croydon, Jason Perry, to commit to reopening the visitor centre, to set out a timeline for doing so, and to consulting the local community about the centre's future.

One Member Petition has been received. The Petition has been verified and is worded as follows:

Petition - Introduce a weight restriction on Heavy Goods Vehicles on Plough Lane, Purley

"We the undersigned call on the Mayor and his Administration to introduce a weight restriction on Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs) which use Plough Lane as a short cut. This should address the volume and speed of these vehicles, road damage, increased noise, and pollution levels.

"Plough Lane has a width of 5.25 metres kerb to kerb yet is designated as a B-road which is required to meet a width of 7 metres. Plough Lane is therefore unsuitable for HGVs due to its width. However, it is used regularly as a cut through for these vehicles. Given the width of the road

and the frequent usage of these large vehicles, recurrent and severe damage is being caused. Kerb stones are regularly dislodged and damaged requiring continuous repairs and in recent months there have been two major gas leaks.

"In addition, pedestrians are endangered when HGVs regularly drive onto the very narrow pavements to avoid similar vehicles moving in the opposite direction or even cars and vans. For pedestrians this is terrifying.

"Residents on Plough Lane that come under Sutton Borough are also calling for the same restrictions and are working with their local Councillors and Council officers – demonstrating the overwhelming consensus for this issue to be resolved."

9. Reports to Council

a) Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report (Pages 23 - 40)

This Annual Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board Report provides an opportunity to celebrate all the hard work that has been achieved over the past year by everyone in the Croydon Borough right across the health and social care system, as well as looking ahead to some of the opportunities for the coming year.

b) Scrutiny and Overview Committee Annual Report (Pages 41 - 134)

The overall time, which may be devoted to questioning the Annual Report of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, shall be not more than 20 minutes. The Chair of the Committee (or in the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair) and the Chairs of each Sub-Committee shall introduce and answer questions on the Report. The Chair of the Committee shall have not more than 3 minutes' speaking time and the Chairs of each Sub-Committee shall each have not more than 3 minutes' speaking time to introduce the report.

For the remaining time available, the report will be open to questions. In the event that any recommendation in the report has not been reached when the overall time limit has expired, it shall be put immediately to the vote.

Any Member, except the Secunder of the Report, may ask the Chair,

Deputy or Vice Chair, as appropriate, not more than two questions on each paragraph of the Report.

c) **Equalities Strategy** (Pages 135 - 230)

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Croydon Equality Strategy, refreshed for 2023-2027 and the updated Equality Objectives.

**10. Questions to Mayor and Executive
(65 minutes)**

To receive questions from Councillors. The first five minutes of this item may be used by the Mayor to make any announcements.

11. Council Debate Motions

To debate any motions submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

The following two Motions, one from the Administration and one from the Labour Group, will be debated:

Conservative Administration Motion

This Council RESOLVES:

That it is committed to listening to, respecting and working in partnership with our diverse communities. We are dedicated to ensuring that local voices are heard and are at the heart of our work and that all residents are treated fairly, with respect and dignity.

Labour Group Motion

This Council RESOLVES:

This year, Croydon proudly joins the nation in celebrating 'Windrush 75', marking 75 years since the Empire Windrush's arrival at Tilbury in 1948, bringing 1,027 passengers from the Caribbean including 500 from Jamaica.

This saw the start of the 'Windrush Generation' defined as people who arrived in the UK from the Caribbean between 1948 and 1973, invited by the British government to help rebuild the mother-country after World

War II.

Croydon Council salutes the 'Windrush Generation,' their contribution to post-war Britain and enrichment of our borough's cultural diversity. As we celebrate Windrush 75, we recognise that the country must address ongoing fallout from the 'Hostile Environment,' which leaves many Windrushers still seeking fair and just compensation for the adverse impact on their lives.

We also recognise that legacies of the past still manifest themselves today in inequitable outcomes for Windrush descendants as evidenced in the educational attainment of Black boys who are disproportionately excluded from mainstream education. These issues require robust policies to address them.

We affirm Croydon's commitment to becoming an anti-racist Council and extend our apology for past unjust Council policies, like the 'Ban on Bashment' affecting Reggae, Grime and Hip-Hop performers, that was introduced in 2008 and lasted for a decade.

Croydon Council is resolute in supporting cultural expressions and commits to fostering a thriving, inclusive, night-time economy for all.

May Windrush 75 remind us of our shared history and our unwavering commitment to social justice and inclusivity in Croydon.

12. Maiden Speeches

For Council to receive the Maiden Speeches of the remaining newly-elected members of the May 2022 Local Election.

13. Appointments

For Council to agree any in-year amendments to committee memberships.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

Council

Meeting held on Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Tony Pearson (Chair);

Councillors Appu Srinivasan, Kola Agboola, Jeet Bains, Leila Ben-Hassel, Adele Benson, Margaret Bird, Claire Bonham, Mike Bonello, Simon Brew, Janet Campbell, Louis Carserides, Richard Chatterjee, Chris Clark, Sherwan Chowdhury, Stuart Collins, Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Nina Degrad, Rowenna Davis, Samir Dwesar, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Clive Fraser, Amy Foster, Simon Fox, Gayle Gander, Maria Gatland, Brigitte Graham, Matt Griffiths, Lynne Hale, Patricia Hay-Justice, Maddie Henson, Christopher Herman, Yvette Hopley, Mohammed Islam, Karen Jewitt, Mark Johnson, Stuart King, Ola Kolade, Joseph Lee, Endri Llabuti, Enid Mollyneaux, Stella Nabukeera, Michael Neal, Tamar Barrett, Eunice O'Dame, Ian Parker, Ria Patel, Jason Perry, Ellily Ponnuthurai, Holly Ramsey, Chrishni Reshekaron, Scott Roche, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Nikhil Sherine Thampi, Luke Shortland, Andy Stranack, Aladair Stewart, Esther Sutton, Catherine Wilson, Robert Ward and Callton Young

Apologies: Councillor Jade Appleton, Sue Bennett, Danielle Denton, Lara Fish, Humayun Kabir and Helen Redfern

PART A

60/21 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March, which included the amendments detailed in the agenda, and 17 May 2023 were agreed as accurate records.

61/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

Councillor Ria Patel, Green Party member, declared that she was an unpaid Director and Trustee of Croydon Pride, as during the section of the meeting on Questions to the Mayor and Cabinet Councillor Patel would be asking a question on behalf of the LGBTQIA+ Community.

62/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

63/21 Announcements

Councillor Tony Pearson, Chair of Council, informed members that a new board of trustees for the Mayoral Charities had been arranged, and that it was the Chair's intention to appoint members to the board of trustees for three-year terms to guarantee continuity.

The Chair also announced that there would be a curry night on 26 September at The Royal Tandoori in Selsdon to support the work of the Mayoral Charities.

64/21 Member Petitions

Council had received a petition from Councillor Chris Clark, Fairfield Ward, who stated that he supported the petition as the issue had been raised by the local residents and Residents Association for a number of years, and has been advised that they should carry out the enforcement work themselves.

Councillor Scott Roche, Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment, in response to the petition stated that enforcement was down to the metropolitan police force, but that he would discuss with the Highways team whether it was possible to carry out additional enforcement in the area where possible. The Cabinet Member also proposed to look into the possibility of putting a speed visor in the area.

65/21 Croydon Question Time

Public Questions

1. In response to the answer given and printed in the agenda, the questioner stated that rubbish collection at her residence had not been reliable, and asked whether the increase in Council Tax would contribute to improving this service.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, stated that the increase in Council Tax was never intended to be spent on services; instead it was increased to ensure the council had sufficient funds to protect it from future financial difficulties.

2. In response to the answer given as printed in the agenda, the questioner asked a supplementary question, to which the Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment responded that the recycling of soft plastics should be increased by providing residents with greater awareness of where they can recycle these items. Councillor Roche also stated the council intended to promote responsible recycling at local level through communications campaigns and the use of QR codes, but that a lot of the waste contract was out of the council's control.
3. The third questioner was not present at the meeting, and so the answer to their question was published in the agenda and no supplementary question was asked.
4. The supplementary question regarding the investigation into financial mismanagement by previous members of the council and officers was responded to by Mayor Jason Perry who stated that he could not comment on how far the police had progressed the investigation but that the council would do everything it could to support the investigation.
5. The questioner asked a supplementary question based on the answer given in the agenda, asking the Council to commit to meeting with residents and Brick by Brick to ensure the company heard residents' concerns, to which the Cabinet Member for Finance replied the resident should get in touch directly with him so that the issue could be discussed with the relevant officers.

Mayor and Cabinet Questions

In response to questions, Mayor Jason Perry, assisted by Cabinet Members, stated that:

- The council was working closely with the head leaseholder of the Purley Pool site to reopen it;
- The LGBTQ population was supported during Pride month through London Borough of Culture events and respect was extended to members of the workforce belonging to the group as well as support being provided to residents;
- Discussions would take place with Councillor Bonham on the petition by Conservative MP Mark Eastward concerning changes to the legal

guidance on camera locations to improve road safety in areas of accident hotspots;

- There was no budget cap set in this year, assets were being sold quickly to pay down debts;
- The grass cutting service was not as good as expected; however, there was a need to rebuild the infrastructure around the service by bringing back equipment and staff;
- Westfield's acquisitions in the town centre and monthly Board meetings with the council were crucial steps in the town centre's regeneration;
- There was an expectation of a pre-planning discussion and a planning application, the master plan was undergoing finalisation;
- Violent crime was a top priority issue and there was a reset to the community safety partnership with a community board established to sit below the partnership;
- Work had been conducted on the Violence Against Women and Girls delivery plan and Youth Safety delivery plan; the Youth Safety delivery plan was used to tackle issues on Church Street resulting in some young people moving to other mentoring routes.
- The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) had been in action for 2 months and the powers had been used 69 times;
- Working with community groups and police, training was in place to demonstrate how to use the powers effectively;
- There was a consultation on extending the PSPO to Thornton Heath and the Hotspot Delivery plan would be used to decide if other areas should be included;
- Service level agreements would be created from the Housing Revenue Account to the grass cutting service for housing estates, and this would be reviewed next year;
- By September 2023, councillors and residents would be engaged to discuss their expectations for the Local Plan; by December 2023, consultation on a renewed Local Plan for Croydon should begin;
- The loss of every ticket office was concerning to residents but only 10% of ticket sales occurred face to face; Mayor Perry's response to the consultation would ask for some strategic offices to remain available across the borough;
- Engagement with residents of Regina Road had taken place; the ballet process had occurred and an overwhelming yes to redevelop was received; a meeting was held with residents to discuss next steps and papers would be issued to Cabinet over the coming months;
- There was a commitment to hold former councillors and officers accountable for the financial damage to the Borough;
- The Penn report included information on decisions considered and agreed around the finances of the Borough;

- The **Kroll** reports provided details on the full investigation of the Fairfield Halls refurbishment and what happened to the £70 million that was invested;
- Two reports on public interests had been handed to the police and allegations were being investigated;
- The exit payment of the former Chief Executive was still being pursued for recovery;
- There were still outstanding issues at Fairfield Halls, but some issues had been dealt with;
- An update was requested from the responsible officers about the reopening of Wandle park café and the locking of gates at night; the Mayor would provide an update to the Waddon councillors once received;
- A Joint paper on Housing was produced to Cabinet on the 28th of June which looked at the provision of housing to young people; the objective was to set care experienced young people up for an independent life rather than putting them in debt and sub-standard housing;
- Apprenticeships would be reviewed as a method to encourage young people to aspire for full and independent lives;
- The Corporate Parenting Panel would assess the process of the new initiative, conduct a review in 6 months and the Panel would hear directly from affected young people to ensure that the new policies were working for them;
- The consultation on the expansion of the proposed area of the Public Space's Protection Order ended on the 21st of July and residents were encouraged to take part in the consultation to ensure their opinions were heard;
- An improvement plan would be developed to enhance, reallocate, and improve resources for the Planning department;
- The plan should improve performance within the department around enforcement issues, so that the needs and planning applications of residents and developers could be addressed in a timely manner;
- One million pounds of government funding was invested into the summer programme; a £50,000 bid was put in place for Purely and Thornton Heath and an additional £5,000 in funds was directed to Purely for transport interchanges.
- Work would remain ongoing with community groups to ensure that clubs would be open throughout the summer.
- A Community board was established and there had been great engagement. 26 groups attended the last board meeting, and a working relationship had been created with mentoring groups and the community and voluntary based sector to provide facilities to young people.

- 1,000 pieces of graffiti have been removed from highstreets, Councillor Roche and Mayor Perry have worked with Officers to provide deep clean processes in the centres so they can be restored for traders and shoppers. The service has delivered results.

66/21 Maiden Speeches

Council heard the Maiden Speeches of the following members:

- Councillor Mark Johnson, Shirley North Ward
- Councillor Enid Mollyneaux, Bensham Manor Ward
- Councillor Joseph Lee, Selsdon and Addington Village Ward
- Councillor Fatima Zaman, Selsdon Vale and Forestdale Ward

67/21 Appointments

No changes to Appointments were proposed.

68/21 Council Debate Motions

Moving the Conservative Group Debate Motion Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale, stated that the council had a long way to go but that it was taking difficult decisions to balance the books, transform services, and provide proper housing services.

Councillor Hale argued that the council was well on the way to doing less but doing better, which had been demonstrated by the improved Housing Transformation Programme, which involved proper engagement with residents, whom Councillor Hale thanked for the time and energy they had committed to the project.

On behalf of the Opposition, Councillor Callton Young, argued that the Mayor was unwilling to share his powers with his Cabinet and that was holding back progress. Councillor Young argued that the Mayor's key manifesto pledges had not been fulfilled, and that high street stores remained closed, and Purley Pool was yet to be reopened.

Councillor Alasdair Stewart, seconding the motion, stated that the programme of London Borough of Culture events taking place across Croydon this year were demonstrable of the improvements and enthusiasm of residents. Councillor Stewart also mentioned such successes as the plans for Westfield opening in the town centre, the Public Space Protection Orders that were in place, the plans for reopening Purley Pool, and the new approach to planning applications.

Councillor Stewart King, Leader of the Opposition, stated that on the contrary the situation for Croydon's residents had worsened, citing the 15% increase in Council Tax despite the recognised cost-of-living crisis, cuts to council services, the lack of Levelling-Up Funding, and failed manifesto pledges.

Exercising her right of reply, Councillor Hale argued that the Administration had delivered on balancing the budget, adopting the Mayor's Business Plan, brought back Westfield, restoring PSPOs, scrapped Planning guidelines which had brought misery to residents, restored the graffiti removal service, opposed the Ultra Low Emissions Zone, approved Early Years and anti-Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, begun improvement work on the Regina Road estate, were putting in place a new waste and street cleansing contract, strengthening contract management and procurement, approved a strategy to tackle homelessness, were winding up Brick by Brick, and had agreed an asset disposal plan to recoup financial losses.

The Chair called Council to vote on the Motion, and member **RESOLVED**, with 31 votes in favour and 35 against, not to agree the motion.

Councillor Catherine Wilson then moved the Labour Group Motion, declaring that social work was not about box-ticking and meeting targets, but it was about ensuring the children in social care succeeded and had real prospects for achieving in life. Councillor Wilson spoke about how children in care struggled to get support, and that the system was designed against them. Councillor Wilson spoke about how she had seen young people denied services due to the care leaver status, and that they should be recognised as a vulnerable group.

Councillor Joseph Lee, on behalf of the Administration, stated that he and his colleagues had attended a number of events to gain a better understanding of the issues, and that they were doing all they could to navigate the legacy issues involved. Councillor Lee stated that it was important to recognise the wishes of the individual, and that a catch-all label for young people with these experiences was not always appropriate. Councillor Lee also mentioned the personal responsibility of members as Corporate Parents to ensure that vulnerable young people were afforded the same life opportunities as others.

Councillor Janet Campbell, seconding the motion, told members how she had proudly served as a foster carer, providing a nurturing and stable environment for children in need. Councillor Campbell described how she had experienced the lack of support and poor service provided to care-experience young people by the local authorities, and that she had known some young people who were told they needed to register as homeless before they were offered housing support. Councillor Campbell asserted that young people should be recognised as valuable and with potential to achieve, and that the council should uphold the principles of equality and fairness.

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Maria Gatland, asserted that the Corporate Parenting agenda was a top priority, and that Children’s Services must be improved to properly serve the borough’s care-experienced young people. Councillor Gatland informed members that a strategy had been developed which signals a whole-council approach, with plans for a care-experienced young person as the co-chair of a refreshed Corporate Parenting Panel. Councillor Gatland agreed to bring this motion to the Corporate Parenting Panel for consideration and to consult and listen to the needs of care leavers.

Councillor Wilson closed the debate, stating that there was no hidden agenda by the Corporate Parenting Panel of which she was a member; the members simply wanted the best outcomes for the borough’s care-experienced young people.

The Chair put the motion to the vote and Council **RESOLVED**, unanimously to support the motion.

In his final response to the outcome of the vote, Mayor Jason Perry agreed that supporting care leavers should be a priority, but stated that the reality was that this was not how the council had treated young people in the past. The Mayor stated that the current and future housing provision needed to be looked at, and that the council should be encouraging young people to become independent.

The meeting ended at 8.49 pm

Signed:

.....

Date:

.....

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Council	
DATE OF DECISION	11 October 2023	
REPORT TITLE:	Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health Annette McPartland, Corporate Director Adult Social Care & Health Debbie Jones, Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education	
LEAD OFFICER:	Jack Bedeman, Consultant in Public Health Email: jack.bedeman@croydon.gov.uk Telephone: 22616	
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Yvette Hopley, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	
KEY DECISION?	No	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This Annual Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board Report provides an opportunity to celebrate all the hard work that has been achieved over the past year by everyone in the Croydon Borough right across the health and social care system, as well as looking ahead to some of the opportunities for the coming year.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to receive and consider the annual report of the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board 2021/22

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In accordance with Part 4A Council Procedure Rules, s 3.45 highlights, the Annual reports shall be received at the Annual Council meeting.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 4.1 This annual report was received and signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 21 March 2023

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 *Not applicable*

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 *Not applicable*

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 7.1 This report contributes to delivering against the Mayor's Business plan 2022-2026 Outcome 5, People can lead healthier and independent lives for longer, Priority 2, work closely with health services and the VCFS to improve resident health and reduce health inequalities.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1.1 Finance have reviewed the report and can confirm there are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Any future financial impact will be fully considered as part of subsequent reports as they arise.
- 8.1.2 Comments approved by Lesley Shields, Head of Finance for the Assistant Chief Executive and Resources, on behalf of the Director of Finance. (Date 10/03/2023)

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.2.1 The establishment, composition and functions of the Health and Wellbeing Board are set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012, sections 194-196. Part 4.L of the Council's constitution Terms of Reference Health and Wellbeing Board include, at paragraph 1.8 "To report to Council the outcome of the Board's monitoring of the delivery plans in fulfilment of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy as part of its annual report".

8.2.2 Comments approved by the Head of Litigation & Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 09/03/2023)

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 Section 149 of the 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.

8.3.2 Protected characteristics defined by law are race and ethnicity, disability, sex, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief and marriage and Civil Partnership.

8.3.3 The report provides a summary of the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board over the past year. There is an overriding principle within the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy to reduce health inequalities. As set out in the report, this will continue to be a focus for the Health and Wellbeing Board going forward.

Comments approved by Gavin Handford, Director of Policy, Programmes & Performance, (Date 10/03/2023)

9. APPENDICES

9.1 *A Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report 2021-2022*

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Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Foreword

This Annual Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board Report provides an opportunity to celebrate all the hard work that has been achieved over the past year by everyone in the Croydon Borough right across the health and social care system, as well as looking ahead to some of the opportunities for the coming year.

The health and care system in Croydon, like many other boroughs in London continues to face a number of significant challenges with increasing demand, recruitment and financial difficulties against the backdrop of the recovery from COVID, and the cost-of-living crisis.

To address the issues, we are continuing to work together to promote greater integration and build closer working relationships between health, care, and wider partners to ensure services meet the needs of our residents and tackle the factors that affect everyone's health and wellbeing, both now and in the future.

The period, 2021-2022 has been a busy year for the Board. The Board has secured closer working support from the Local Government Association, and we welcome support and experiences from other local authorities to ensure that we can share learnings and gain expertise to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

The Board also supported the new executive Mayor's Mental Health Summit, whereby we were able to truly engage with Croydon residents to hear their voices, and explore opportunities to maximise resources, and improve the quality of local mental health provision.

Looking forward to the coming year, we will continue to drive integration and closer partnership working, to make a real difference, to the health and wellbeing of our residents in Croydon.

Cllr Yvette Hopley Chair of the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Introduction

This report summarises the work undertaken by Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board July 2021 to December 2022. The board was established on the 1st of April 2013 as a committee of Croydon Council.

In 2022, the Board was able to meet five times, of which there were three Board meetings scheduled this municipal year, and two extraordinary meetings (November 2022 and December 2022).

The report sets out the functions of the board and gives examples of how the board had discharged those functions. This annual report contains the outcomes of the boards monitoring of the delivery plans in fulfilment of the health well-being strategy available here.

Examples of key achievements of the Board are described, including the encouragement of great integration and partnership working, tackling health inequalities, and increasing focus on prevention of ill health.

The Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board is a formal committee of the London Borough of Croydon, established under the health and Social Care Act 2012.

It exists to bring together leaders primarily from the health and social care sector, but also includes local representatives of other local influential and strategic stakeholders who have a role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Health and Wellbeing Board Membership

This board in Croydon is made up of the following membership:

- London Borough of Croydon (6 Councillors of which there are 3 Majority, and 3 Minority group members)
- Director of Public Health
- Corporate Director Adult Social Care & Health (DASS & Calidcott Guardian)
- Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education (DCS & Calidcott Guardian)
- Service Director for Croydon (South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust)
- Chairman of Croydon Health Services
- Croydon Voluntary Action Chief Executive
- Place Based Leader for Health, Croydon, NHS South West London Integrated Care Board
- Chief Executive of HealthWatch Croydon

Functions of the board

The board has nine main functions as outlined below:

1. To encourage, for the purpose of advancing the health and wellbeing of people in Croydon, persons who arrange for the provisions of health or social care services in Croydon to work in an integrated manner.
2. To provide such advice, assistance or other support as appropriate for the purpose of encouraging partnership arrangements under Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 between the Council and NHS bodies in connection with the provision of health and social care.
3. To encourage persons who arrange for the provision of health-related services (i.e. services which are not health or social care services but which may have an effect on the health of individuals) to work closely with the Board and with persons providing health and social care services.
4. To exercise the functions of the Council and its partner Clinical Commissioning Groups in preparing a joint strategic needs assessment under Section 116 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and a joint health and wellbeing strategy under Section 116A of that Act.
5. To give the Council the opinion of the Board on whether the Council is discharging its duty to have regards to the joint strategic needs assessment and joint health and wellbeing strategy in discharging the Council's functions.
6. To agree the delivery plans of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
7. To monitor the delivery plans in fulfilment of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
8. To report to Council the outcome of the Board's monitoring of the delivery plans in fulfilment of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy as part of its annual report
9. To exercise such other Council functions which are delegated to the Board under the Constitution.

Cllr Yvette Hopley - Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care took over as Chair and Cllr Margaret Bird was appointed Vice Chair in May 2022.

Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The current Health and Wellbeing Strategy is structured around the following 8 priorities.

Priority 1- A better start in life

Priority 2 – Strong, engaged, inclusive and well connected communities

Priority 3 – Housing and the environment enable all people of Croydon to be healthy

Priority 4 – Mental wellbeing and good mental health are seen as a driver of health

Priority 5 – A strong local economy with quality, local jobs

Priority 6 – Get more people more active, more often

Priority 7 – A stronger focus on prevention

Priority 8 – The right people, in the right place, at the right time

The following report covers the work of the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board from July 2021 to December 2022 and links this to the priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Review of July 2021 to December 2022

The Board was able to meet five times and was able to review strategic work being undertaken in the borough across the following areas:

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (priority 5, 7, 8)

Every Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in England has a statutory duty to publish and keep up to date a statement of the needs for pharmaceutical services of the population in its area, referred to as a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).

The PNA reports on the present and future needs for pharmaceutical services in Croydon and is used to inform the planning and commissioning of pharmaceutical services and to support the decision-making process in relation to new applications of change of premises of pharmacies. The PNA also seeks to identify gaps in current services or improvements that could be made in future pharmaceutical provision.

As part of the process, two surveys were conducted between May and July 2022 to gain views from Pharmacy Contractors and residents. A 60-days consultation took place from 31 August to 29 October 2022.

The final PNA document was formally approved by the Board on 18th November 2022. The full document can be viewed on the [Croydon Observatory](#).

Integrated Care Systems (ICS) creation (All priorities)

The Board received updates on the development of the ICS and its sub-structures of integrated care boards (ICBs) and integrated care partnerships (ICPs) and the processes of moving from the, now defunct, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced significant reforms to the organisation and delivery of health and care services with the creation of integrated care systems building on the recent development of regional Clinical Commissioning Groups. Integrated care systems (ICSs) are partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area.

42 ICSs were established across England on a statutory basis on 1 July 2022, and there was an ICS developed for South West London, South West London Health and Care Partnership became [South West London Integrated Care System](#).

Health and Wellbeing Board Development (priority 8)

A key function of the HWB is to promote and encourage integration across the health and care system, and the Health and Care Act 2022 introduced significant reforms to the organisation and delivery of health and care services such as the creation of the integrated care boards (ICBs) and integrated care partnerships (ICPs). The changing landscape provides an opportunity for the HWB to consider its future role in the health and care system in Croydon and South West London. To this end the HWB has invited the Local Government Association to work with the Board as part of their board development work. Two initial scoping meetings have been undertaken with two full board workshops planned to be undertaken during April and June 2023.

In March 2023 the Board will start a review of the current Health and Wellbeing Strategy and if refreshed this will be done alongside the development of the Board allowing synergy.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) (All priorities)

Croydon Health and Wellbeing Board is a formal committee established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 with a statutory duty to produce a joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA).

JSNA is a continuous, systematic process through which local data and intelligence are analysed and interpreted. Within Croydon, since 2017, the JSNA is published digitally at <https://www.croydonobservatory.org/jsna/>, and rather than being a static document, it is a collection of key datasets and statistical bulletins, which are updated as new data become available to ensure timely and up-to-date data and information on Croydon's overall population, their general health and wellbeing and key factors that affect health and wellbeing.

This digital JSNA aims to identify current and future health and social care needs of the local community which in turn inform outcomes and priorities to be considered for the joint local health and wellbeing strategy.¹

The Board received an update on the JSNA processes and improvement in the user experience.

Health and Care plan refresh (all priorities)

The five-year Croydon Health and Care Plan was developed in 2019 setting out how Croydon would deliver the Health and Care Strategy ambition to 'Work together to make Croydon a great place to live, work and play for all its residents through creating rapid improvements in the health and wellbeing of our communities' through its three aims: focusing on prevention and proactive care, unlocking the power of communities and putting services back in the heart of the community.

The Board was able to hear about how progress has been made on delivering the aims of the Health and Care Plan with multiple initiatives that join-up health, care and the voluntary and community sector to provide more coordinated services in our borough at the heart of communities; however, there are huge challenges ahead including uncertainty for jobs and

¹ More information about the JSNA process in Croydon can be found at <https://croydonobs.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-JSNA-in-Croydon.pdf>

economy, deterioration in residents' wellbeing during the pandemic, emerging unmet need and financial pressures across health and social care.

The Health and Wellbeing Board reviewed the approach to refreshing the Health and Care Plan and agreed the refresh on January 19th 2022

Transforming Mental Health Services for Children, Young People (0-25) and their families across South West London – Local Transformation Plan refresh 2021 (priority 4)

The Board was able to receive a report about the refreshed Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Local Transformation Plan for 2021. The 2021 refreshed plan combines six local Children and Young People's Local Transformation Plans.

The aim of this combined refresh plan is to establish a more consistent strategic framework for improving mental health and emotional wellbeing services for children, young people and their families across South West London.

Director of Public Health annual report: The Magnificence of Croydon during the COVID-19 pandemic (Priority 2, 3, 7 and 8)

The Board was able to receive a report from the Director of Public Health (DPH). The DPH has a statutory duty to produce an independent annual report to advise and make recommendations to professionals and the public, to improve population health. The Council also has a statutory responsibility to publish the Annual Report. Due to the unequivocal impact of COVID -19, the focus of the report is, the impact of COVID-19 on inequalities through the experience of Croydon residents, with recommendations on how we in Croydon can best protect ourselves, keep healthy and tackle inequalities together.

Health in Croydon's Black Community (All priorities)

On October 20th 2021 the Board had a focus on health in Croydon's black community in recognition of Black History Month. The Board received presentations and facilitated a conversation about the issues facing the local black population in Croydon, both from a mental health perspective, and how there are challenges with black populations being able to engage with primary care services.

The Board heard from Dr Vento, Psychosis lead for Croydon South London and Maudsley (SLaM) services for adult mental health who detailed the following:

- A common misconception was the black people, particularly black men, did not benefit from mental health services. However there were challenges in engaging the black community with mental health services.
- It was known that black communities struggled engaging with primary care services, and the difficulty was in the first step in getting help where they were underrepresented, which needed to be improved. Black communities were overrepresented in secondary care services.
- A black person is almost three times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act, which as a statistic had not changed in the past 20 years.
- The NHS Long Term Plan included embedding services within the community and for community to work closer together. The Croydon Health and Wellbeing Space was a collaboration between Mind in Croydon, the Croydon BME Forum and SLaM.
- Dr Vento stated that he would be the clinical lead for the Space, which would be based at the Whitgift Centre, and he expressed his optimism for a true partnership going forward.
- The site would be open seven days a week and have an open door policy to maximise engagement and be an inviting venue. This initial engagement would then increase the access to secondary health services. As well as sign-posting, the Space would run in-house services and groups to support residents coping with traumas.
- The Space will be a service to fit the community and an accessible place, staffed by local people and link to local churches and other community groups.

Mental Health Summit 2022 (priority 2, 4, 6, 8)

On November 18th 2022 the Board facilitated the Croydon Mental Health Summit in partnership with Croydon Citizens, delivering on Mayor Perry's manifesto pledge and bringing together over 100 people from across the health and social care system, community members and community groups with an interest in mental health.

The board heard a summary from local residents, who shared their experiences around barriers to access and signposting and treatment in the community as well as looking at the opportunities around mental health in the development of future health and wellbeing strategies in Croydon.

A theme in the discussions of the day was in the need for recognition of the extra challenges around access and treatment for Croydon's black population and that although progress is being made it is too slow and that more radical approaches are required to shift the structural issues that result in health inequalities.



Senior delegates at the Mental Health Summit. Left to right: Sir Norman Lamb, Chair at SLam NHS Trust, Councillor Yvette Hopley, Matthew Kershaw - Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, Jason Perry - Executive Mayor of Croydon, Bishop Dr Rosemarie Mallett - Bishop of Croydon, Rachel Flowers, Croydon's Director of Public Health, Jack Swan -Croydon Citizens, and Mother Susan Wheeler-Kiley



Jason Perry - Executive Mayor of Croydon opening the Mental Health Summit accompanied by Sir Norman Lamb, Councillor Hopley and Mother Susan Wheeler-Kiley

Healthwatch Croydon Annual Report (All priorities)

The Board was able to review and discuss the annual report produced by Healthwatch Croydon. Local Healthwatch organisations are independent, corporate bodies set up by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the legislation that also brought the Health and Wellbeing Board into being. Croydon Healthwatch has a seat on this Health and Wellbeing Board and contribute to ensuring the voices of local people are heard. Healthwatch Croydon works to get the best out of local health and social care services by ensuring the people who use health and care services can influence the way they are delivered. The report reflected heavily on the impact of COVID 19.

Better Care Fund (priority 2,7,8)

The Health and Wellbeing Board considered the Better Care Fund End of year 2021/2022 submission to NHS England report to ensure that both national and local governance was correctly followed.

- The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a national vehicle that the government used to progress health and social care integration, and local areas were required to agree a joint plan using a pooled budget on how funds were spent.
- Croydon BCF and One Croydon programme were the strong foundation for the integrated care delivery.
- The schemes funded in 2021-2022 maximised independence for people, outcomes following hospital discharge and development for ICS plus model of care.
- Croydon's successes were identified as progressing integration; joint localities induction sessions; and commissioned leadership sessions.
- Croydon's challenges were identified through the population health management; bed occupancy in hospitals; increasing hospital discharges; the increasing costs of packages of care; and the high number of care homes within the borough

Adult Social Care Discharge Fund Plan (priority 2,7,8)

The Health and Wellbeing Board considered the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund Plan report, that was enabled, using pooled budgets to support integration, governed by an agreement under section 75 of the NHS Act (2006). The funding of £2.687m was given to Croydon. This funding was used on activities that reduced funding was to be used on activities that reduced flow pressure on hospitals by enabling more people to be discharged to appropriate settings.

The Croydon Place Better Care Fund (BCF) working group worked with hospitals, CHS, adult social care, ICB, SLAM and primary care leads to develop potential schemes and addressed what was effective.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Council
DATE OF DECISION	11 October 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Annual Report of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee 2022-2023
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense Director of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
LEAD OFFICER:	Simon Trevaskis Senior Democratic Services and Governance Officer – Scrutiny
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Rowenna Davis Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee
DECISION TAKER:	Council
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	This report is prepared in keeping with paragraphs 3.65 – 3.68 of the Council Procedure Rules at Part 4A of the Constitution.
KEY DECISION?	No N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION? <i>(* See guidance)</i>	No Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	N/A

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1** 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.
- 1.2** Appended to this report is the Annual Report from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee, which summarises the work of the Committee and its four Sub-Committees, namely Children & Young People Sub-Committee, Health & Social Care Sub-Committee, Homes Sub-Committee and the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee, during the 2022 – 2023 municipal year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 For the reasons set out in the report and its appendix, Council is recommended:

1. To receive the Annual Report of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The provision for Council to receive annual reports is set out in the Council's Procedure Rules in Part 4A of the Constitution.

4. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERING THE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

4.1. The procedure for Council receiving the Annual Report of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee is set out in paragraphs 3.66 to 3.68 of Part 4A Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution. The procedure is set out as follows:-

Extract from Part 4A: Council Procedure Rules, Council Constitution

3.66 The overall time, which may be devoted to questioning the Annual Report of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, shall be not more than 20 minutes. The Chair of the Committee (or in the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair) and the Chairs of each Sub-Committee shall introduce and answer questions on the Report. The Chair of the Committee shall have not more than 3 minutes' speaking time and the Chairs of each Sub-Committee shall each have not more than 3 minutes' speaking time to introduce the report.

3.67 For the remaining time available, the report will be open to questions. In the event that any recommendation in the report has not been reached when the overall time limit has expired, it shall be put immediately to the vote.

3.68 Any Member, except the Secunder of the Report, may ask the Chair, Deputy or Vice Chair, as appropriate, not more than two questions on each paragraph of the Report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1. None. The requirement for Council to receive the Annual Report of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee is set out in the Council's Constitution.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee Annual Report had been prepared with the input of the Scrutiny Chairs and signed off by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee for submission to Council.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 7.1 A key role for Scrutiny is to monitor the delivery of the Council's priorities and hold decision makers to account on the performance of the Council against these priorities.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

8.1.2 Comments approved by the Interim Head of Corporate Finance, on behalf of the Director of Finance. (Date 02/10/2023)

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 The Constitution provides at Part 4A: Council Procedure Rules, paragraph 2.3, that the Annual Meeting of the Council shall be reserved for, amongst other things, the receipt of annual reports from Committees where required, including the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

8.2.2 In addition, the Council Procedure Rules set out the overall time which may be devoted to questioning the Annual Report of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the order of questions as detailed in paragraph 4 of this report.

8.2.3 Separately, at Part 4E of the Constitution the Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules also provide for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to submit an Annual Report on the work it has undertaken during the year and on the work programme as agreed at its first meeting of the year, to Annual Council.

8.2.4 Due to the amount of business on previous agenda and other practical issues presentation of the Annual Report has been delayed and the Civic Mayor has agreed for the item to be included on this Council agenda.

8.2.5 Comments approved by Sandra Herbert, the Head of Litigation and Corporate Law, on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 03/10/2023)

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 X The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010. In summary, the Council must in the exercise of all its functions, “have due regard to” the need to comply with the three arms or aims of the general equality duty. These are 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.

8.3.2 Having due regard means to consider 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.

8.3.3 There are no further equality implications, any implications are covered in the main reports.

8.3.4 Comments approved by Denise McCausland Equalities Programme Manager,
(Date 03/10/2023)

9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix A: Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-2023

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 None

Scrutiny

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



A magnifying glass is positioned over a list of scrutiny areas. The lens is focused on the text, which is slightly blurred around the edges. The background is a solid purple color.

HOUSING
TRANSPORT
SAFEGUARDING

RISK
VITALITY
ROAD ACCIDENTS

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Scrutiny Chair's Foreword



Cllr Rowenna Davis, Chair of Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Improving Scrutiny is essential for improving the Council. National government has been very clear that for Croydon to stand on its own two feet and remove the need for central government intervention, we must prove that we are continuously improving. The nationally appointed Improvement Panel that currently has directional powers over the Council will require this for its Exit Strategy. Rigorous scrutiny, whilst it might occasionally feel uncomfortable, is an essential part of that improvement journey. We are committed to being a critical friend to the Council to help it improve.

The Council's finances have been our key focus over the last year and will continue to be so. This is the number one issue for the Council and its residents. We have been pleased to see ambitious targets for transformations and savings over the last year, and we will continue to hold officers and members accountable for those targets. However, like the Mayor and senior council leaders, we know that Croydon can't escape its debt trap through cuts to services alone; it will require intervention from national government. Croydon Council must therefore continue its efforts to negotiate with Westminster to make sure we can become a more sustainable local authority.

As more councils face financial difficulty, national government is recognising the need to strengthen scrutiny's powers and is moving to do so. They recognise that stronger scrutiny earlier can prevent mistakes that might otherwise lead to expensive intervention later.

We are pleased to acknowledge that scrutiny is being taken more seriously in Croydon too. The Mayor has honoured his commitment to give the Chair of Scrutiny to an opposition member. That cross-party commitment has been reciprocated by the Committee, which has gone out of its way to waive normal proportional representation rules to make space for Green and Liberal Democrat voices in scrutiny. We welcome the contribution that this diversity of voices has brought to our work.

The introduction of a new scrutiny committee on Homes, also brought in with cross party support, has also helped deepen and improve our work on housing, supporting the housing department's improvement following the devastating treatment of tenants in Regina Road and those still languishing in expensive temporary accommodation.

We also want to acknowledge officers and cabinet members for their support. Officers are providing reports more quickly than the past, offering more regular briefings and answering more questions, although there is still room for improvement in timings. I also want to thank our existing team of two scrutiny officers, whose professionalism and support has been invaluable over the last year.

As scrutiny members we are also doing our bit to try and improve ourselves. We have worked hard to deepen community engagement and focus on the impact of our work. Scrutiny and Overview Committee alone has held five large public meetings and four visits in the last twelve months. The ability to listen and learn from tenants when we were scrutinising the housing repairs contract, or on foodbank and faith leaders on the cost-of-living crisis, has really enriched our work and we are very grateful to the time people have given us.

Thanks to the dedication of scrutiny members, we have managed to have a real impact over the last year. When looking at Council tax enforcement, for example, scrutiny members took the time to listen to residents struggling to pay their council tax bills who perceived the council to lack empathy and accessibility, and we made practical recommendations for changes based on their testimony. The open willingness of officers to respond to those recommendations means that residents will now be able to access information in different languages and be referred to support services where they need them.

Scrutiny will continue to push for improvement, both in our own committee and the wider Council. Chairs and vice chairs of all five of our committees now meet regularly to make sure we are reviewing our work and working together effectively. We continue to seek out new training opportunities, particularly on the budget, where all of us need to continuously upskill.

It has been an absolute privilege to work with colleagues over the last year in the service of the borough we call home. I hope that over the next year we can continue to help improve our Council, its finances, services and ability to listen, for the good of its people.

Scrutiny and Overview Committee

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee directs the performance of all overview and scrutiny functions at the Council, including the development of procedures governing the operation of both the Committee and its Sub-Committees. It also has responsibility for scrutinising crime and disorder matters and flood risk management within the borough. The Committee will consider any call-in of Cabinet decisions other than those relating to education matters, which are heard by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

2022-23 Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Cllr
Rowenna
Davis (C)**



**Cllr
Richard
Chatterjee
(VC)**



**Cllr Leila
Ben Hassel
(DC)**



**Cllr Jade
Appleton**



**Cllr Sean
Fitzsimons**



**Cllr Simon
Fox**

Chairs Introduction

Scrutiny is committed to improving itself to help improve the Council. Throughout all the topics we've addressed this year, we've been guided by two principles. First, the need to increase community engagement and, second, to focus on the impact we can have on helping the executive improve Croydon for its residents. Holding five large community meetings and four visits this year in Scrutiny and Overview Committee alone has really enriched both the questioning and the recommendations we've been able to make.

Budget Scrutiny

Although the Scrutiny & Overview Committee first considered a report on the Mayor's savings proposals and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at its meeting on 6 December 2022 when they were first provided by the executive, the Committee had prioritised monitoring the delivery of 2022-23 in-year budget throughout the year. This included the Finance Monitoring Reports prepared for Cabinet being scheduled for review at meetings of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee whenever possible. This allowed the Committee to identify areas of risk, such as transformation, that it wished to scrutinise in greater detail and provided reassurance on the financial controls of the Council.

The Committee recognised the Mayor's 'Opening the Books' review as an opportunity for the new administration to gain a more complete understanding of its financial position and increase its ability to manage potential risks. However, there was concern about whether the Fusion Oracle financial software was being optimised fully by the Council and given its importance to the management of the budget, recommended a project be established to maximise its functionality.

In advance of the first budget scrutiny meeting on 6 December, Scrutiny members received two training sessions, the first delivered by the Local Government Association, which provided an overview of scrutiny's role in the budget setting process. The second session was delivered by the Centre for Governance for the Scrutiny & Overview Committee and focussed specifically on reviewing and understanding budget reports. On 29 November 2022, the Committee also received a briefing from the Council's Section 151 Officer on the key budget principles and the approach to setting the budget.

At the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 6 December consideration was given to the 2023-24 Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Savings Proposals. From the discussion of the Committee, the approach of the Mayor to move towards a more transformation based approach to savings was welcomed, although caution was raised about the capacity within the organisation to deliver sustainable transformation without sufficient resources both in terms of staff time and financial investment, being allocated to the process. The Committee also raised concern about the budget being largely created using MS Word and Excel documents. However, it was encouraged by the confirmation that a project was being established to increase the integration of the Fusion finance system across the Council to ensure its potential benefits to the organisation were being maximised.

At its meeting on the 30 January 2023, the Committee conducted a deep dive on two specific areas of concern it had highlighted through the budget scrutiny process. These areas were Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector support, and the 2023-24 Transformation Programme. From its discussion of the support available for the voluntary, community and faith sector, the Committee welcomed confirmation from both the Council and Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) of their commitment to building a deeper relationship between the Council and the important voluntary, community and faith sector in the borough. The commitment given to looking at creative ways of providing support to the sector, particularly reviewing the use of social value in contract arrangements was also welcomed.

After consulting with a range of community groups in the borough, the Committee did raise concern about the potential impact of the move to new ways of working with the voluntary, community and faith sector, particularly whether these would be in place in time to support organisations through the transition away from the funding currently provided by the Community Fund, when it ended in March 2023. Given there was a risk that some community groups may not be able to adapt to the new arrangements

in time, the Committee suggested that there was a need to implement a tangible support plan as a priority to mitigate the risk of services and activities being lost.

By scheduling a deep dive on the transformation programme, it enabled the Committee to have an early look at the development of the programme for 2023-24. The Committee agreed, along with executives, that more work needed to be done to flesh out exactly what and how the list of transformation projects provided would actually work. Confirmation that the Council was introducing new project management software across the organisation was welcomed as a step in the right direction towards improving the Council's ability to successfully track and deliver transformation. Given the importance of transformation programme to the delivery of savings, the Committee agreed that it would monitor the delivery of the programme in 2023-24.

The Committee meeting on 16 February 2023 was the culmination of the budget scrutiny process and the work conducted by the Committee. Scrutiny and Overview Committee worked closely with the sub-committees and shared and referred items to each other for maximum impact. The Sub-Committee Chair's fed back their findings from their deep dives into specific savings within their respective service areas.

Prior to the meeting the Committee held an online meeting, open to members of the public, giving them the opportunity to ask questions on the budget proposals. From the discussion held at this meeting, which was well attended and oversubscribed, it allowed the Committee to identify areas of questioning at the meeting on 16 February, particularly around the reasons for the 15% Council Tax rise and the support available for those who may be unable to afford the increased payments. This was clearly an emotive subject with residents expressing high levels of concern about the impact of any council tax rise on finances already stretched by a cost of living crisis, but all residents and financial leads at the Council conducted the meeting with real respect.

At the conclusion of the final Budget Scrutiny meeting on 16 February 2023, the Committee reached a range of conclusions on the Mayor's Budget. There was a reasonable level of reassurance that the budget had been set using a prudent set of assumptions and that it was reasonable to conclude that it was deliverable. However, the cost of servicing the Council's debt was a significant challenge to the delivery of a balanced budget and until a solution was found it would be difficult to achieve long term sustainability as a local authority. Whilst the Committee were encouraged to hear of the ongoing commitment of the Mayor and council officers to engage with the government to find a solution, Scrutiny members were concerned that there is currently no precedent for this kind of intervention from national government, nor any commitment from Westminster to deliver one.

Another key area of discussion for the Committee was the 15% Council Tax increase, with differing views on this proposal. Half of the Committee, including the Chair, thought that insufficient justification had been provided for such a high

increase, particularly given no other local authorities in similar financial situations had faced this rise. The other half of the Committee believed that the increase was needed to ensure a balanced budget. Everyone agreed that no other viable alternatives had been identified by the Council.

The Committee welcomed the introduction of the £2m Hardship Fund to mitigate against the potential impact of the Council Tax rise and at its meeting on 28 March 2023 had the opportunity to review the criteria for the scheme before its approval by the Mayor. From its review of the scheme, the Committee was reassured that its development had been based upon a data led approach and that a robust monitoring system was being put in place to ensure the scheme was reaching those most in need. As a further safeguard, the Committee suggested the sharing of data on the distribution of the fund with Members to identify potential anomalies.

Cost of Living Crisis

The impact of the cost of living crisis upon residents was a theme revisited by the Committee throughout the year, particularly through the above mentioned budget scrutiny process. As part of this work, in July the Committee met with representatives from the voluntary & community sector (VCS) including leaders of food banks, faith groups, advisory services and charities, to listen to their experience of working with residents who were being directly impacted by cost of living rises. This meeting raised several concerns, related to residents' ability to engage with the Council, which included factors such as digital exclusion, and both financial and general illiteracy.

Other issues raised included the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector and the use of Council Tax enforcement. As a result of the discussion, it was agreed that these specific issues would be scheduled for review during the year. The Council relationship with the voluntary and community sector was picked up as part of the Budget Scrutiny process (see above) and at the meeting on 11 October 2023 Council Tax collection, recovery and enforcement was reviewed.

To inform their scrutiny of this item, the Committee organised a meeting of residents and representatives from the voluntary and community sector to hear about their experience of Council Tax collection and enforcement. While the evidence provided in this session was often challenging as many residents related huge financial pressures and often a perceived lack of empathy and accessibility from the Council, it did provide valuable insight for the Committee into the experience of residents, which helped to shape their questioning. As with the earlier cost of living meeting, the Committee identified a number of potential improvements to recommend for the consideration of the Mayor related to how the Council interacted with its residents, such as the wording used in Council Tax enforcement letters, offering translation services and training to officers to be able to support and refer residents to local support groups and legal advice services, as well as ensuring that information was

provided on the website in an easily understandable format. Following the meeting, the Committee commended the Council Tax team for the way they engaged with the issues raised by residents and their swift adoption of many of the solutions proposed.

Safer Croydon Partnership

At its meeting on 6 September 2022, the Committee had the opportunity to review the performance of the Safer Croydon Partnership including a draft version of the Strategic Assessment. From its discussion of the item, the Committee were supportive of a proposed campaign to de-normalise low level sexual harassment against women but recognised that its success would be impacted without sufficient funding being allocated for delivery. It was also suggested that the possibility of partnering with the voluntary and community sector on this campaign should be explored.

In preparation for the meeting, the Committee visited the Family Justice Centre, which highlighted the high rates of domestic violence in Croydon. Although reassurance was provided through hearing about the great work that was being done at the Centre, there was a concern that cost of living pressures may put further stress on families leading to even higher rates. From questioning officers on the potential impact of the cost of living crisis on the levels of domestic violence in the borough, the Committee was encouraged that there was work underway to understand the impact of the cost of living crisis, and that through good communication between council officers and the Family Justice Centre, the level of demand would be monitored and managed accordingly.

The Committee welcomed confirmation that a new town centre Public Space Protection Order would focus on recording offences to provide the evidence base required to support the scheme. However, there was concern about whether there was sufficient coordination of information between the Council and Police, which would need to be revisited at a later date to provide further reassurance that there was effective data sharing. There were also questions about potential displacement and the follow up support given to those who were moved on, which officers said would be reviewed.

Another area of questioning asked whether there was any link between anti-social behaviour and areas with high levels of private rented accommodation. It was accepted that as residents living within this type of accommodation tended to be more transient, it could be difficult to understand the challenges faced by these residents. The Committee raised concern that residents living in the private rented sector may not receive the same level of support as those living in social rented housing and as such suggested that data gathering should be undertaken to gain a better understanding of the potential challenges.

Borough of Culture

At the meeting held on 6 December 2022, the Committee reviewed the preparations for the year-long Borough of Culture event that was due to start in April 2023. From the discussion, there were concerns raised about whether the programme would reach across the whole borough or involve under-represented communities and seldom heard groups. However, the Committee was largely reassured by the commitment of the organisers to delivering diversity in the programme and ensuring the Borough of Culture had as large a reach as possible. Members particularly welcomed officers' commitment to embrace as wide a definition of culture as possible, which they felt would be more inclusive and deliver a more exciting programme.

The Committee was also reassured by the responses received to their questions on the distribution of the available funding for the programme, particularly that it would be closely monitored to ensure it was delivered within budget and also the availability of the Ignite Fund, which was targeted towards local groups and organisations in the borough.

Overall, the Committee commended the team for the work to date on the Borough of Culture programme, with many of their initial concerns being addressed. It was agreed that the Committee would review the Borough of Culture at a later date to ensure that it was achieving its original aims.

People & Cultural Transformation Strategy (Jan 2023)

At the meeting on 23 January 2023 the Committee had the opportunity to review a draft of the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy before its consideration by the Mayor. The Committee was keen to scrutinise the strategy, as it was seen as part of the ongoing improvement journey of the Council and provided an opportunity to assess the progress made with changing the culture of the organisation.

The Committee invited members of staff to the meeting who had been engaged in the creation of the strategy, which provided reassurance it had been created with staff buy-in, increasing the likelihood of successful delivery. The plan to engage with staff on the co-design of the action plan to accompany the strategy was also commended by the Committee.

Although there was general agreement with the aims of the strategy, the Committee agreed that it could not be reassured about its delivery without having sight of the action plan. As such it was agreed that the item would be revisited later in the year, once the action plan had been prepared, to seek additional reassurance. This would also allow the opportunity to review the key performance indicators that would be used to measure the success of the strategy.

Confirmation that work was ongoing to improve the data captured on the Council's workforce was welcomed by the Committee who had concerns about whether the

current level of data collected was sufficient to inform key performance indicators which could be used to monitor the delivery of the strategy.

Town Centre

At the meeting held on 23 January 2023, the Committee had the opportunity to consider the 'Whitgift Indemnity and Land Transfer Agreement (ILTA Remedy' report ahead of its consideration by the Mayor in Cabinet. This report set out the opportunity for the Council to seek a remedy from the Croydon Limited Partnership (CLP) for having progressed the redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre.

This item provided the Committee the opportunity to review the proposed decision and also question the current status of the town centre redevelopment. From the discussion, the Committee welcomed the use of the ILTA remedy, as it would deliver improvement work to the North End area of the town centre to the value of £4m, including work to activate the Alders site, improvements to the Whitgift Centre and the provision of a consultation space to inform the development of the Town Centre Masterplan.

The Committee noted that the Mayor had asked officers to start work on creating a vision for the town centre which was likely to be completed later in the year. Separately, it would be the responsibility of CLP to lead on the development of a masterplan and a planning application. It was advised that it would typically take approximately twelve months to deliver a masterplan document. Given the years of inactivity surrounding the redevelopment of the Town Centre, the Committee was disappointed to hear that it was likely to be at least a further twelve months before a planning application was submitted.

The Committee was disappointing to learn that the Council had not been successful in its bid for levelling-up funding, however having subsequently reviewed the feedback provided by the Government on the bid, felt that it reflected positively on its quality and as such recommended that it should be published.

Support provided by the Council to asylum seekers, those seeking refuge under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

At its meeting on 30 January 2023, the Committee reviewed the support provided by the Council to asylum seekers, including those seeking refuge under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This report had been requested for the meeting to provide an overview of the Council's role and responsibilities in supporting asylum seekers in accomodation in the borough.

In preparation for the item, members of the Committee visited a hotel in the north of the borough that was being used by the Home Office to accommodate asylum seekers while their claims were processed. The visit was extremely moving and led

to the Committee raising concern with the representatives from the Home Office in attendance at the meeting, about the potential risks of mixed cohort accommodation, residents having to share single rooms for long periods and the level of service being provided by Migrant Help.

The Committee agreed that the delay in processing asylum applications which resulted in people staying for months in hotels not intended for long term habitation was putting unsustainable and unacceptable pressure on vulnerable people and impacting upon the Council's resources. Confirmation that the Mayor was picking up many of the concerns raised at the meeting with the Home Office and other partners was welcomed.

Establishment of Homes Sub-Committee

At its first meeting of the year on 14 June 2022, the Committee had the opportunity to review the work undertaken by Council officers to re-procure the responsive repairs contract. Scrutiny of this report allowed the Committee to seek assurance that a robust process was being used and that the process was open, transparent and informed by residents.

In preparation for the item, site visits had been conducted to three Council blocks located across the borough to speak to residents and get an understanding of their views on the Responsive Repairs service. Finally, an online meeting was arranged on 13 June 2022 to give residents the opportunity to discuss the service, which provided excellent feedback to inform the questions of the Committee.

Following discussion of the item, the Committee recognised that an extensive amount of hard work had been invested into the re-procurement process to ensure that the best possible outcome was reached for residents. However, given the historic issues relating to the level of service provided in the responsive repairs contract, the Committee recommended exploring the possibility of including a clause within the new contracts to provide compensation for residents should below standard service be provided.

As a result of the discussion at the meeting and with cross party support, it was agreed that the remit of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee should be split to create a separate stand-alone Homes Sub-Committee to provide additional capacity to scrutinise the Council's Housing Service in light of the wide ranging Transformation Programme arising from the ARK report and the housing conditions at Regina Road. This Sub-Committee was set up at the Committee meeting on 11 October 2023, initially until the end of the municipal year, and has subsequently been renewed for a further two years.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee scrutinises key issues affecting children and young people in the borough as well as the services provided by the Council and its partners. It has the power to scrutinise the functions of the Council as a Local Education Authority and examine the Dedicated Schools Grant on a yearly basis.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

2022-23 Members of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee



**Councillor
Richard
Chatterjee
(Chair)**



**Councillor
Maddie
Henson (Vice-
Chair)**



**Councillor Sue
Bennett**



**Councillor
Gayle Gander**



**Councillor
Eunice
O'Dame**



**Councillor
Helen Redfern**



**Councillor
Manju Shahul-
Hameed**



**Councillor
Catherine
Wilson**



**Josephine
Copeland
Teacher Rep**



**Elaine Jones
Catholic
Diocesan Rep**



**Paul O'Donnell
Parent
Governor Rep**

Chair of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee Councillor Richard Chatterjee

The 2022-23 year brought a permanent return to face-to-face meetings, following the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the financial circumstances of the Council is another constraint which is pervasive and on-going.

The scope of work is as important as ever so the challenge of choice of subjects and how to deal with them means we have tried to remain disciplined and focused. It is clear that looked after children will remain of the highest importance, and this has been helped by some overlap in membership of this Sub-Committee and that of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

We have tried, where possible, to chime with themes across the other Scrutiny Committees, such as the Residents' Voice - an example of this is the visit we made to staff of the Health Visiting team to hear direct what their concerns and perspective

were. There has also been some coordination with the Scrutiny & Overview Committee in terms of work which could be better dealt with at that level. There have been many useful insights from the Sub-Committee and particularly the coopted members (representatives of the Teachers Union, the Catholic Diocese and Governors) which was especially helpful given the slender overlap in councillor membership from the preceding CYP Sub-Committee.

I would like to thank all the members of the sub-committee and the officers who have supported us this past year, both within the Council and of the NHS and other services such as the police, and of the other groups representatives which have attended and assisted the Sub-Committee.

A summary of the items considered by the Children and Young People Sub-Committee in 2022-23 can be found below. Members also received the Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard each meeting to ensure that they were reassured about the performance of the Children, Young People and Education Directorate across a number of different areas. The Sub-Committee received an update on Antenatal and Health Visiting at its meeting on 1st November 2022 and concluded that quarterly commissioning data on Health Visiting would be included alongside the Dashboard, when available.

Tuesday 21 June 2022

Children, Young People and Education Directorate Overview

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the Children, Young People and Education Directorate to inform the development of the Sub-Committee's work programme for 2022/23.

The Sub-Committee asked questions about a number of areas that fell under their remit and had useful discussions which helped to inform the work that they would carry out for the rest of the municipal year. Members also stated their aspiration to engage in outreach work with children and young people in Croydon, as well of those in charge of delivering services.

Tuesday 27 September 2022

Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership - Annual Report 2021-22

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2021-22. The Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education introduced the item and the Independent Scrutineer, Eleanor Brazil, to the Sub-Committee. It was noted that the Independent Scrutineer would be leaving the role soon and had served Croydon in many roles over a number of years; officers and Members thanked her for her hard work.

The Partnership had identified a number of themes throughout the year, and these were: the importance of Fathers/Male Carers; Professional Curiosity; Information Sharing; Safeguarding Supervision; Extra-Familial Harm. These themes had been used to influence the training offer for the following year. The Sub-Committee heard that an independent review of the Partnership had been commissioned to identify any areas of learning to inform the work and priorities of the Partnership in the coming year. The following had already been identified: Safeguarding Asylum Seekers; Early Help Transformation; Partnership Communication Strategy; Domestic Abuse; Sexual Abuse (inter and extra familial abuse).

The Chair noted the absence of a police representative and expressed the disappointment of the Sub-Committee. The Independent Scrutineer and Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education explained the commitment of the Police to the work of the Partnership and suggested the necessary change of dates may have led to their non-attendance. The Sub-Committee queried the disparity of proactivity and funding from some partners and the Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education responded that there had been huge pressures for all partners and there had been significant work over the last 12 years to improve frontline availability and engagement on children's' safeguarding from the Police.

Members asked how recommendations were implemented and tracked across the partners. The CSCP Quality Assurance & Development Officer explained that this responsibility sat within the Safeguarding Practice Review Group, which tracked key partners involvement and regularly looked at key themes across the reviews that came in. Key people involved in reviews often attended the Safeguarding Practice Review Group to monitor how actions were being implemented and how effective they had been. Whilst sometimes reports could take time to publish, learning from these was implemented and shared between the partners to ensure this was not delayed.

The Sub-Committee asked about the challenges of Safeguarding Education Standards and the Director of Education responded that schools shared safeguarding audits which were reviewed to identify best practice and gaps. Where gaps were identified, or audits were not completed, schools were helped to find how to close these gaps and, where significant safeguarding concerns were identified, visits would take place and an action plan would be developed. Audits would be shared with and signed off by Governors to ensure safeguarding was a key focus for school leaderships. Serious concerns were not often identified in education provision, but should they be, they would be discussed within the Partnership and with OFSTED where necessary. Members asked how the challenge differed for the Police and Health Safeguarding Standards and the Chief Nurse Croydon CCG/CHS explained that the auditing and reviewing was similar. The Independent Scrutineer explained that reports on auditing came to the Quality Improvement Group who provided further challenge.

The Sub-Committee asked how the experience of children and young people was used to inform the practices of the Partnership. The Head of Social Work with Families & Children with Disabilities 0-17 Services explained that this information was captured through direct work with children, multi-agency meetings, family

surveys, complaints and direct interactions with frontline workers and managers. Often feedback was good, and it was recognised that positive outcomes could sometimes not be as visible. There were a number of avenues used to collate this information, but it was recognised that more work needed to be done in this area and this was a part of all improvement plans across the Partnership. There would be a Practice Week in early October 2022 which would involve practitioners spending time talking to young people, children and carers to hear what they would like to see improved. Carers often attended social service meetings to discuss what was being done well and what could be done differently to allow social workers to reflect on their work.

Insourcing of the South Locality Children's Centre Delivery

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Children's Centre Contract award for North and Central, and the insourcing of the South Locality Children's Centre Delivery.

The Sub-Committee asked why the Council was not able to find a provider for the South Locality but were able to for the North and Central Localities. The Director of Education explained that this was largely due to the funding envelope available, concern around Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE), a lack of clarity around building costs and issues with the internal capacity of the bidders. After the first round of commissioning, bidders had been asked to provide the reasons for not bidding and a warming exercise has been conducted. The provider for the North and Central Localities had not been able to take on the South Locality due to a lack of capacity.

Members asked if there were any lessons that could be learnt as a result of the failure to commission for the South Locality. The Director for Education explained that learning had been taken into account after the first round and had led to conducting a warming exercise, but this had not been enough to result in a successful bid. Members heard that unfortunately some things could not be changed, such as the funding envelope and the services the Council needed to be provided, TUPE and lack of clarity around the maintenance costs of buildings. Members heard that there was always an attempt to develop learning after any commissioning exercise. The Director Quality, Commissioning & Performance added that these were small providers, and the unknown costs were bigger risks for them than a larger business.

Members asked how existing services users were being supported into the new model, with some families having to travel further which would affect families without cars. The Director of Education explained this had been looked at during the consultation and that bus routes had also been considered and made available to families. It was acknowledged that the service had been reduced but that services would be signposted to families. There had been a long consultation on this strategy, but ultimately services had needed to be reduced in line with budget reduction. The Hub and Spoke Model was not just about Children's Centres and also focuses on delivering health services and more with partners.

Tuesday 1 November 2022

Update on Antenatal and Health Visiting Visits

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on Antenatal and Health Visiting in Croydon. The Sub-Committee thanked Elaine Clancy (Chief Nurse at Croydon Health Services) for commissioning the two independent and external reviews into the services, and asked about 'New Birth Visits' and whether these were being targeted at the most vulnerable families. The Head of Public Health Nursing explained that the aim was to visit all new mothers within 10-14 days, but this was not always possible due to workforce challenges, and so prioritisation of visits was assessed based on the levels of need or where there were mental health challenges identified through partnership working and intelligence sharing.

Members asked how they could be reassured that those needing help were not being missed. The Head of Public Health Nursing explained that monthly data had to be provided to the commissioners on the visits that had taken place, and where they had not, why not; this data was also reported nationally by the Local Authority. Health Visiting services were accessible by phone, and the number was shared by practitioners and through other groups. The Director Quality, Commissioning & Performance stated that monthly monitoring of the service was robust and that intelligence was being shared between the Council and Croydon Health Services to ensure those that needed help received it.

The Sub-Committee asked for reassurance that the service was improving in the context of health visiting in Croydon underperforming over a number of years; in particular, poor retention and recruitment were highlighted as problems facing Croydon to a greater extent than other local authorities. The Deputy Director of Nursing explained that some local authorities provided health visiting services and were able to pay Health Visitors more; the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust provided services to multiple boroughs and were able to pay an inner London weighting regardless of where the services were being provided. Members heard that Lewisham, Greenwich and Bromley all provided recruitment retention bonuses and this, combined with other factors, led to stronger recruitment and retention in other areas, and to people leaving Croydon to work for other providers. The Deputy Director of Nursing stated that there were plans to address these issues by providing a more flexible work offer and by making remuneration of Health Visitors more in line with neighbouring employers alongside the improvement plans detailed in the report. The Director of Public Health added that services were already improving and that organisational and developmental changes were just as important to recruitment and retention as competitive remuneration. The Sub-Committee raised a strong challenge about the consequences of the service not improving for Croydon Health Services and the Council. Members heard that the Director of Public Health reported regularly to the Secretary of State on Health Visiting and that improving the service was a high priority. The Chief Nurse expounded on the commitment and passion of the Health Visiting team and explained how seriously they took their role to the residents of Croydon. The Associate Director of Operations added that governance processes were strong in monitoring month on month performance and that there was a monthly meeting of an

Improvement Board, chaired by the Chief Nurse, to provide additional internal challenge.

The Vice-Chair asked about the timeframes involved in the improvement journey and how priority of need was identified. The Head of Public Health Nursing explained that that an 'assessment of need' was undertaken on first contact with families and this determined the particular care pathway required; once need had been assessed, referrals could be made, or other services engaged, if required. Members heard that the level of risk was always taken into account, and where this presented the possibility of safeguarding risks or harm to the individual, an action plan would be developed and enacted and this could take place at any part of the process. The Chief Nurse explained that the two independent reviews of the service had been undertaken to identify areas for improvement and ways to mitigate shortfalls in the numbers of Health Visitors; many of the mitigation and improvement measures would take time to embed and to dramatically improve the service.

Croydon Partnership - Early Years' Strategy

The Sub-Committee considered a paper which provided the report approved by the Executive Mayor at Cabinet on 21st September 2022 on the Croydon Partnership - Early Years' Strategy. Members asked about the criteria for the success of the Strategy and heard this this would be a key part of what would be developed as part of the delivery plan. Key indicators that the Strategy had been successful would be families knowing where they could access services and further indicators would be developed in conversation with parents, carers and schools. Responding to questions on the timeline for the Strategy, the Director for Education explained that this was a three-year strategy that would begin to be embedded following the completion of the delivery plan.

The Sub-Committee asked about funding for the Strategy and heard that this would be implemented using existing funding streams in Education, the Croydon Partnership and Public Health. There would be significant extra funding available for Family Hubs over a three-year period and this would help very young children, children up to the age of 19 and children with special needs and disabilities. The Family Hub model would look at priorities across education, health and children's social care to focus all of these aims into a single strategy document.

The Sub-Committee noted the key risk identified in the Children, Families & Education Delivery Plan 2021 – 2024 of the reduction in Children's centre service delivery impacting early identification, intervention and prevention support within the community for vulnerable children and families, particularly delivery of universal service through centres; Members asked if this was recognised in delivering the Strategy. The Director for Education confirmed that it was and explained that they understood the importance of maintaining Children's Centres in the borough delivering services, but it was acknowledged the offer was now narrower with a reduced budget.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Strategy and asked about the engagement and consultation process. The Director of Education explained that they had already identified gaps in those who had not been engaged in the initial round of

consultation, and these groups would be targeted for the next round of engagement. The Sub-Committee asked about measuring the success of the strategy once it was implemented and heard that this would be evidenced by families knowing where they could find support and the implementation of a strong Family Hub model.

Tuesday 17 January 2023

Budget Scrutiny Challenge

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided identified budget proposals for 2023/24.

Review of Front Door Services

The Sub-Committee asked whether there was staff capacity to meet current demand, and the Head of Service, Access Support and Intervention explained that the service had been designed to meet current demand and needs and thought had gone into who the best teams were to respond to any given query. There was a significant number of staff in the MASH team with increased capacity through the Early Help triage team.

Members asked about the limited funding for the Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) programme and the future of the programme. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that schools participating in the programme saw significant benefits, and that SWIS was 80% funded by the Department for Education and 20% by the local authority and schools. Members heard that in an ideal world with no funding restrictions early help schemes designed to work with families where they were often were the most effective; schemes such as SWIS added significant costs due to having to operate from multiple locations. The Sub-Committee heard that in response to the financial challenges of Croydon and the challenge in recruiting qualified social workers, there had been a shift in approach to ensure that non-social worker roles could deal with cases, where appropriate, to free up qualified social worker capacity. This approach was supported by the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership, and had not been decided in isolation.

The Sub-Committee asked how demand on the Front Door compared with neighbouring boroughs. The Head of Service, Access Support and Intervention explained that meetings with neighbouring boroughs and police colleagues were regular but, as they were smaller than Croydon, demand was significantly less. Not all enquiries to the Front Door led to referrals into the Children's Social Care system and partnership working was important to ensure that other interventions and services in the Croydon community were tried first; this approach was embedded in current MASH transformation activity. Members asked if data was compared with statistical neighbours, and were informed that this was the case and was done on a regular basis through a monthly dashboard.

The Sub-Committee asked how the effectiveness of the new structure would be measured. The Head of Service, Access Support and Intervention explained that practise would be considered within a quality assurance framework to look at the

outcomes that were being achieved for children and an evidence based performance framework would be used to look at and scrutinise data across the different service areas. Members heard that a live dashboard was currently in development to support MASH activity, and would show data on the number of contacts coming in to the Front Door and the number of open cases. Soft data from service user feedback would continue to be collected throughout interventions as part of the quality assurance framework.

Members asked about efficiencies that had been identified from process improvements, and the Head of Service, Access Support and Intervention provided the example of consistent management oversight for cases for their duration, which allowed for decisions to be made in a more efficient and effective way that was safer for children. In response to questions about whether efficiencies were about service improvement or saving money, the Director of Children's Social Care explained that it was both but that safeguarding children and responding to urgent referrals was always the priority. The introduction of contact and referral officers meant that qualified social workers had additional capacity, as they would not need to focus on administrative tasks, such as requests for information from the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). The Early Help Triage was led by social workers who were experts in this area, and this meant that families were offered solutions quicker, which led to greater take up and reduced demand on social work services.

The impact of the reduction in spend on the adolescent service

The Sub-Committee asked about the Integrated Care Board funded roles and it was explained that these officers would work collaboratively with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) to decide the best plans for immediate follow-up intervention for children.

Members asked about disproportionality in safeguarding and whether officers were confident that early intervention was effective in reducing the number of young people in crisis. The Head of Service, Access Support and Intervention explained that there was a positive offer in Croydon across Young Croydon and Youth Justice Services with a wide variety of targeted early interventions across the continuum of need. Work was ongoing with Community Safety colleagues on identifying contextualised risk and to identify hotspot areas and provide youth interventions to tackle risk factors in the community. In response to questions on how the effectiveness of this would be measured, the Sub-Committee heard that the quality assurance framework went across Children's Services and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for individual services were scrutinised on a regular basis.

The Sub-Committee commended the thought that had gone into the transformation of the service. Members asked how the voice of the service user had been incorporated into transformation and whether complaints had increased. The Head of Service, Access Support and Intervention responded that complaints were used to assess how well services were working, but that none had been received on the reconfiguration of the services specifically; relations with children and parents were overall good, with complaints managed largely at the stage one and two level. Service user engagement was more developed in the Youth Justice Service, and Young Croydon were working with the service to further develop this.

The review of care packages for children with disabilities aged 0-17

The Sub-Committee asked how many children were catered for by Calleydown Residential Home, and heard that currently there were 55 children who received overnight respite, and 10-15 children who received daytime respite. There were two children who were on the waiting list, but these children would begin receiving care later in the month. The capacity was seven children a night, but this fluctuated based on the needs of the individual children. Members heard that there were always at least four members of staff on site at any given time, but this also varied based on the needs of the individual children.

The Sub-Committee asked about joint funding arrangements and were informed that a monthly Joint Funding Panel, chaired by the Director of Children's Social Care, reviewed and challenged joint funding arrangements with Health. The Director Quality, Commissioning & Performance explained that this was challenging and required a culture shift, but that partners were being engaged on multiple levels. Horizon scanning for opportunities through the South West London Integrated Care Board and Partnership were ongoing. The Sub-Committee asked, whether when service users were transferring between Children and Adults services, if it was seen that service users were eligible under the Adults framework when they had not been under the Children's framework. The Head of Service, Social Work with Families and Children with Disabilities responded that this was not something that had been noticed, but would be looked into outside of the meeting.

The Sub-Committee considered the case studies in the report and asked what happened when care packages were reduced. Members heard that officers had been unable to find an example of this happening in the last four months. It was thought that there may have been some reductions in care packages at the beginning of the review in 2021, but now as circumstances changed this needed to be looked at in the context of what else was available to the service user; for example, there may have been a decrease in domiciliary care, but this could have been supplemented by an increase in respite care. The Head of Service, Social Work with Families and Children with Disabilities explained that the impact on the individuals and families was always considered, explained and mitigated.

The Director of Children's Social Care explained that transformation funding would be used to fund an expert in house development to look at possible alterations or extensions that could provide additional bedrooms or the possibility of a self-contained flat on the grounds through the conversion of a garage. It was highlighted that these changes would require a number of approvals and capital expenditure.

Members asked about the use of data in the transformation of services and what this would mean for service users with the inherent risks of trying to maintain service levels with reduced resource. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that transformation of practise sat alongside data driven monitoring but that there was a difference between transformation of services and transformation funding.

Transformation funding was limited, and looked to enable changes to a system or service to provide better outcomes in the long term. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that the biggest risk to the Council was the possibility of increased

demand, which was not within the control of services and could lead to higher levels of risk held in families as a bottom line was reached. Members heard that this could lead to overspending as interventions that are more expensive are required.

Education Estates Strategy

The Sub-Committee considered a paper which provided a report due for consideration at Cabinet on 25 January 2023 on the Education Estates Strategy for Pre-Decision Scrutiny.

The Sub-Committee asked about plans to deal with surplus school places and what powers the Council had to deal with this with a large number of academy schools in the borough. The Director of Education explained that the local authority was responsible for school place planning; the Head of Service, Early Years, School Place Planning and Admission explained that the Council was working with all schools through meetings with schools with the highest surpluses, and through locality clusters, to discuss and plan work on school place planning. A School Organisation Advisory Board is being set up and would be representative of all partners; this would look at the criteria of how the Council would need to work with schools to reduce places. Work had already been done with a number of schools to manage their surplus spaces, with the main route being a reduction in the Published Admission Number (PAN). Members heard from the Head of Service, Early Years, School Place Planning and Admissions that the Council was still mindful of schools' overheads in terms of maintaining necessary surplus and were exploring ways to harness this spare capacity through provision of enhanced learning units, early years provision or community based activities. There were a number of other options that would be considered such as federation mergers, reductions in class sizes or reorganisation of schools.

The Head of Education Services explained that they worked with Local Authority (LA) Maintained Schools who were in or at risk of budget deficit; surplus places was a common issue for these schools. All LA Maintained Schools submitted a yearly budget forecast, and those predicting a deficit submitted monthly returns that were scrutinised. Members heard that termly meetings were held with the leadership teams of these schools to explore solutions. Additional support was also offered including using a Department for Education financial advisor, looking at class sizes and other possible efficiencies. Common issues with school finances were managing surplus places, rising energy costs, rising staff costs and managing staff absences. There was an escalating model of support that was used to ensure schools received the help they needed. The Director of Education explained that the picture in Croydon on surplus places largely reflected the national situation and that London authorities were in dialogue on this issue.

Members asked about the work with school clusters to look at surplus spaces and heard that these discussions were taking place on a locality basis and schools were looking to come up with additional solutions. Schools had come up with lists of things that could be done which took into account their own individual circumstances and collective solutions with other schools. The Sub-Committee asked about the methodology of working out surplus spaces, and noted predictions from last year had increased a large amount. The Head of Service, Early Years, School Place Planning

and Admission explained that these numbers were kept under review, and the Greater London Authority (GLA) had been commissioned to produce the predictions used in the report; these numbers were likely to change again next year as new data was made available. Members heard that surplus places were highest in the North of the borough and much lower in the South.

The Sub-Committee asked about children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and issues with delayed assessments as well as the number of available SEND school places. The Director of Education explained that assessments were now 80% taking place within target timeframes, which had been a huge improvement; Members heard that support was also available to children awaiting assessments. Special school places had increased in a number of schools within the borough across all age ranges. The SEND Strategy priority is to educate children with special needs within borough, and where possible and appropriate, in mainstream schools. Data quality had improved which had allowed special school place planning to be much more effective, but parental choice is key in deciding provision and in, for some children and young people, suitable provision is out of borough.

Education Standards 2022

The Sub-Committee considered a paper set which provided a report due for consideration at Cabinet on 25 January 2023 on Education Standards 2022 for Pre-Decision Scrutiny. The Sub-Committee heard that an Education Partnership Board had first been proposed to schools in 2020 to a positive reception. The Board would be made up of schools and key partners who would work to agree what local priorities were and enable greater school-to-school support and collaborative working. A draft terms of reference had been drawn up with a working group made up from representatives from a number of different schools and school types. Soft engagement with key partners had begun with those schools which were thought would be most difficult to reach and engage with the work of the Board, and the response had been encouraging. The Board would be launched in spring 2023, ready for being operational from the commencement of the new academic year.

Members commended plans for the Council to encourage schools to work together through the Education Partnership Board, and asked how schools had been engaged, noting the heavy workloads of Head Teachers. The Head of Education Services explained that Head Teachers had been engaged, but this had been alongside Business Managers, HR leads and governors. The Sub-Committee heard that engagement with schools had improved over the pandemic as the Council had been offering additional support. The Director of Education explained that a weekly newsletter to schools had been started during the pandemic, and the appetite had been for this to continue; this included information on lots of areas and helped to maintain an open conversation with Head Teachers.

Members asked how many schools would be needed to buy into the work of the Education Partnership Board for it to be effective, and the Director of Education explained that it was important that all schools felt represented on the Board. The Education Partnership Board set up costs would be initially Council funded, and possibly, the Council could continue to contribute funding for the first year or two

years; this was contrary to other areas where schools were required to pay into the model from its inception.

The Sub-Committee asked about young people who were not making expected progress from some specific groups. Members heard that some of these cohorts were very small, while others were very school and setting specific. The Head of Education Services explained that work was done with schools to identify cohorts of children who were underperforming to develop improvement action plans, to pair schools for peer support and to encourage collaborative solutions.

The Sub-Committee asked about high numbers of persistent absences from education, and asked who was responsible for reducing this, any available targets that could be shared, and how it was known that these children were safe. Members heard that this was a historic national issue, and that Croydon performed better than the national average. Central Government had identified this as an issue and a cross party national committee would be looking at this, but ultimately it was the schools responsibility to monitor this through welfare officers or commissioned services. The Director of Education explained that every school had a designated safeguarding lead and that the Education department worked closely with social services on children missing from education. The Director of Education explained that attendance proposals in the withdrawn White Paper were likely to return in new legislation at some point in the future. A monthly virtual attendance surgery would be rolled out in the coming year to assist schools with improving attendance.

Tuesday 28 February 2023

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Update

The Sub-Committee considered a paper which provided a summary of the activity of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) services for children and young people residing and receiving education in Croydon. The report also provided an update on the position with current waiting times, access and performance.

The Vice-Chair asked if practitioners felt there were gaps in the current service offer and heard from the Chief Executive for Off the Record that there had been a large increase in demand for services since the pandemic; as a result of this, the length of counselling had been shortened to a standard offer of six. The Sub-Committee heard that young people and practitioners had identified that there were gaps for those in need of more substantial support, but who did not meet the threshold for CAMHS services. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that Off the Record were trialling the 'First Contact Method', 'Waiting List Groups' and carer helplines, but ultimately these were not substitutes for one-to-one support and did not reduce waiting lists. Members heard that there was good partnership working across the groups to try to identify and mitigate gaps in the offer where possible. The Service Director of CAMHS explained that NHS funding for CAMHS was around 1% of the total NHS budget, and it was known that this was often not sufficient to meet current need; many services had seen a doubling or more in the level of demand since the pandemic. The Sub-Committee heard there were gaps in a lot of the services being

offered, but that in-patient care was meeting current demand. It was stated that while the gaps were known, and a national issue, work was being done to target resources where they could do the most good to meet local priorities whilst utilising hotspot and equalities data.

Members asked about the Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (MHSTS) programme and heard that 45 schools in Croydon were receiving this service, jointly delivered by SLaM, Off the Record and Croydon Drop-In in different waves focussing on different areas. The SLaM wave focussed on School Exclusions, Off the Record and Croydon Drop-In jointly delivered a wave focussed on serious youth violence and a new wave had been introduced focussed on COVID recovery. The Sub-Committee heard that practitioners were based in the schools for a day a week for secondary schools, and for half a day for primary schools. Kooth, an online resource, was available for the schools who were not in the MHSTS programme.

Members asked about the long waiting times for assessments, and how long it took from assessment to receiving services. The Service Director of CAMHS explained that the majority of the longest waits were around the neurodevelopmental pathway and that this was linked to the work being done to change the Autism diagnosis pathway. The Sub-Committee heard that an Autism diagnosis would lead to a number of support packages and was not a mental health condition for which there was a treatment pathway. To reduce Autism diagnosis wait times, work was being done to look at how the system should operate and how it could cope with the current demand, and then to see what was in place to deal with the backlog. Members heard that CAMHS had been working with a private sector company called 'Clinical Partners' to increase capacity, reduce the longest waits and ensure a system was in place to manage ongoing demand. On the mental health pathway, waiting lists were being managed with dynamic reviews of risk to ensure the most acute needs were met as a priority; there was a single point of contact that triaged service users to ensure individuals were directed to the correct services through partnership working. The Service Director of CAMHS explained that they were seeking to increase the use of apps and virtual waiting lists so that, once individuals were registered, they could be signposted to services and receive some support whilst they were on waiting lists.

The Sub-Committee asked if there was a knock on effect to Children's Social Care from CAMHS not having as much capacity as would be desired. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that there were higher levels of mental health distress since COVID, both nationally and locally, which was a feature in safeguarding referrals. Members heard that this was a challenging aspect of safeguarding and required strong partnership working; where needs were acute the Director of Children's Social Care often met with Service Director of CAMHS to review cases to see where fast-tracking access to acute provision was needed. The Sub-Committee heard there was a need for every professional and parent to learn to recognise signs of mental distress and to upskill workers in contact with children to provide interventions. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that there was a Clinical Practice Team and qualified therapists in Croydon who worked directly with families and looked after children; there was also ongoing work focussing on suicidal ideation.

Members asked what was available for young people whilst they were waiting for assessments. The Service Director of CAMHS, SLaM explained that there was not a lot that was offered for these individuals but that there were attempts to make it clear how long people would be on the waiting lists, however, there were not sufficient resources in place to do much more. The Sub-Committee asked if it was possible to capture the impact of long waiting times on young people and heard that it was clear longer wait times often led to an increased cost of intervention at a later stage. The Chief Executive for Off the Record explained that they had set up a 'First Contact Team' to try and quickly meet with, assess and provide short term interventions for young people, and it was found that this had reduced counselling waiting lists. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that there were welfare check-ins for those on the waiting list for counselling that took place roughly every four weeks.

The Sub-Committee asked what the financial impact was to the Council as a result of unmet mental health needs leading to increased social care demand. The Director of Children's Social Care responded that this was very hard to quantify, but that there was a specific support offer to families awaiting Autism assessments. Members heard that mental health issues for young people with Autism were often a result of operating in a world that did not account for neurodivergence, which could cause significant stress and difficulty. The Corporate Director for Children and Young People highlighted the huge pressures on social care and mental health services and the importance of being transparent about this between partners.

Members asked about the pressures on services following the wind down of the Community Fund in 2023 in a context of existing funding pressures for services. The Sub-Committee heard that this would reduce the capacity of services, and that the 'Talk Bus' would likely see 1500 less young people than in previous years. The picture was difficult nationally and it was increasingly hard to bring in additional grant funding to supplement Council funding; the NHS were being looked at to supplement reduced funding from other areas. The Sub-Committee asked about the future of the 'Talk Bus' post March 2023, and heard the funding bids to continue this work had been developed over the previous 12 months. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that money had been saved over a number of years to replace the 'Talk Bus' with a more eco-friendly bus, and this had now been ordered; this was a shared community resource and every effort to continue funding it would be made. The Director of Performance and Partnerships, SLaM explained that all the organisations represented at the meeting worked together in partnership to deliver services and unlock resources to direct them where they were needed. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that they had received funding from the National Lottery to build a 'sensory room' for neurodiverse young people to use before counselling sessions. Members heard that a joint project between Drop-In, Off the Record and CAMHS on custody suites would be undertaken to provide counselling to young people.

Police Representation and Multi-Agency Working

The Sub-Committee considered a paper which explained the partnership between the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate, specifically Children's Social Care, and Police colleagues.

Members asked about the Youth Integrated Offender Management Partnership, and heard that the young people worked with were generally in the age range of 18-25. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that police analysts had been integrated into this work, and that applying this intelligence had significantly reduced numbers of young people in the programme.

The Sub-Committee asked what was being done to increase trust amongst communities who had lost confidence in the police. Inspector Morteo responded that the new Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, Sir Mark Rowley, had launched a 'Turnaround Plan' featuring nine priorities, and that he was very open on trust and confidence. The Sub-Committee heard that there was a commitment to removing 'bad officers' and eliminating misconduct, and that there was more work happening with community groups than ever before. Members heard that it was thought that current methods of measuring trust and confidence were not sufficient, and needed to be improved. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety explained that the Youth Safety Plan was in development at the Council, and increasing trust amongst young people in the police was key to this being successful. Members heard that the Cabinet Member for Community Safety had been working closely with the police and local communities and that open conversations had been key in responding to an incident where the Central Police Team had conducted a Stop and Search where a young person had been put to the ground. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety explained that a new initiative had started that saw community members providing training to the police, to try to build trust between communities and the police. The Detective Inspector added that there were weekly meetings with partners to discuss 'every child every time' and what was being done by the police on a daily basis to increase police transparency. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that the 'Complex Adolescents Panel' was a partnership group that met a weekly basis and considered exploitation within individual children's cases; the police co-chaired the Panel to enable shared accountability in developing and driving child safety plans. Members commended the role the police were playing in partnership working but recommended that the police do more to inform the wider community about the work they were doing.

The Sub-Committee asked about hotspot areas where children were more at risk and how this was monitored and mitigated. The Inspector explained that these hotspots moved depending on the time of year, school terms and what assets the police put into certain areas. Members heard that these hotspots were identified and monitored through intelligence sharing and crime reports. There had been a three-week operation focussed around Church Street to tackle schoolchild robbery, as levels of this offence were heightened in Croydon and across London. Neighbourhood Safety Officers were often deployed to hotspots and, where needed, central assets could be requested to Croydon to provide additional resource. The Inspector stated that work with other statutory organisations, such as the Council, was the best they had seen it. Members heard that there were 16 Schools Officers in priority schools who performed high visibility patrols and had been involved in the Church Street operation. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that they had been working closely with the Violence Reduction Network and police to develop a locality based response model that recognised emerging needs and provided intervention and support to children and young people in these hotspot areas; it was recognised that intelligence sharing with the police was vital in

targeting support and intervention where it was most needed. The Youth Engagement team had been engaged in Church Street to try to minimise anti-social behaviour and risk.

Members commented on the need for more joined up thinking in the way that young people were dealt with to acknowledge their previous experiences and trauma. The Director of Children's Social Care agreed and explained that the Youth Engagement Team were very skilled at engaging young people to create teachable and reachable moments where valuable conversations could happen to change the perception and experience of the police for young people. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that there was a lot of joined up working that happened during 'Complex Strategy Meetings' that considered groups of young people whilst looking at 'places and spaces' as a focus for that work. It was acknowledged that this was a very difficult, fluid and complex area of work in the child protection landscape, where the focus on moving from prevention, to intervention, to arrest was happening simultaneously around different groups. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety commented on the complex relationship between being an observer, victim and perpetrator of violence. The Sub-Committee heard that the government had launched the 'Serious Violence Duty' that made links between youth violence and domestic abuse; the Safer Croydon Partnership would be developing a risk profile followed by a strategy and action plan for Croydon that brought these elements together. The Council is developing a Youth Safety Plan, and would be developing a Domestic Abuse Strategy, and the Cabinet Member explained that they were cognisant of linking in all of these elements to ensure the safety of children and young people.

Update on Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children in Education

The Sub-Committee considered a paper which provided information on the support available for children arriving in the borough on asylum schemes; information on access to education; and information to demonstrate that schools were being properly funded for taking in Ukrainian refugees as per national government support schemes.

Members asked how concerns that children could be behind, due to missing years of schooling, could be addressed and noted that this could present a barrier to integration,. The Director of Education explained that children who came to the country at a young age picked up English much more quickly than older children did. The Sub-Committee heard that the interim provision had been provided to develop English-speaking skills to aid in the transition to mainstream schools, and it was being looked at whether this would be reintroduced. The Sub-Committee heard that, whilst this was challenging, schools in Croydon were very open and welcoming, and it was more likely that children's experiences and trauma would create barriers; because of this it was important that support for children's mental health and wellbeing was in place.

The Sub-Committee asked how confident the Council was that all the available funding was being received to support Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children. The Director of Education confirmed that this was the case, and work was being done to pass this funding on to schools directly. Members heard from Co-optee Josephine

Copeland that integration had been successful at their school, but it was important that 'English as a Second Language' was a focus to ensure that lessons accounted for all of the children. Members heard that funding could be an issue as it did stretch resources with the example given of increased mental health needs. The Director of Education explained that the per-pupil funding was lagged, and that children arriving and leaving between census days could lead to a situation where funding was not received for these children. Members heard that this could create challenges but that support was provided wherever possible, however, school funding was complicated and sometimes did not account for pupil movement. The Director of Education stated that the Department for Education notified Local Authorities of available funding streams. The Early Help Service Manager explained that there had been a small grants funding process in late 2022 for voluntary sector organisations to provide additional services to, and activities for, the asylum-seeking community to provide opportunities outside of their accommodation.

Members asked how spending time outside of their main school setting affected the ability of children and young people to integrate. The Director of Education stated that this depended on each individual child, but that the idea of the interim provision had been to provide a short-term placement until the child was able to enrol at a mainstream school; this had also been to help the development of English skills. The provision had been located in St. Andrews School and a number of children had ultimately transitioned onto mainstream schooling at St. Andrews, which had been positive, as many had already integrated with their peers.

Tuesday 18 April 2023

Exclusions Update

The Sub-Committee considered a paper, which provided an update on Exclusions and Suspensions in Croydon. The Sub-Committee asked about challenge where patterns of disproportionality with exclusions were identified, and what training opportunities were provided to Head Teachers. The Head of Access to Education explained that there were training opportunities available, but these were at the discretion of Head Teacher to attend. Representatives from every school in Croydon had attended a training session on 'Adultification' in the 2021/22 academic year; this had been followed by other ongoing training sessions for which the Council held attendance logs. Academies held their own training and reported these sessions to the Council. The Head of Access to Education explained that the Council did undertake Section 11 statutory audits of safeguarding which included scrutiny of the training schools were providing. Members asked if training had been effective in reducing disproportionality for black children and the Head of Access to Education explained that it was effective on an individual basis and that strong challenge was being made on the basis of race, which would be reflected in this year's exclusions figure. The Head of Access to Education acknowledged that systemic change would take a much longer time to embed.

Members asked about the independent review of exclusions decisions and the Director of Education explained that every permanent exclusion went through an independent review panel that was usually convened by the school's governing

body. The Sub-Committee asked about Croydon's adoption of a 'Public Health' approach to crime, and whether there was a correlation between exclusions and youth crime. The Director of Education explained that there was a known link that had been identified through the Vulnerable Adolescents Review. Members heard that sometimes young people 'self-exclude' by taking a decision not to attend school and that this could impact on their outcomes. Members heard that Saffron Valley Collegiate, the Council's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), have been involved in the AP 'taskforce' project and that pupils within the PRU were receiving support that extended beyond their education and incorporated a 'trauma informed' approach.

The Vice-Chair asked about scenarios where exclusions would or would not be challenged by the Council. The Head of Access to Education explained that there was always an initial challenge and conversation with a Head Teacher from the Exclusions Lead, followed by scrutiny of the exclusions paperwork. Members heard that the Council would investigate whether there had been a lack of effort or intervention with the child prior to the exclusion, and if there was any evidence of discrimination or unfair treatment. The only circumstances where the Council would not challenge is when the paperwork and evidence for the Exclusion were 'watertight', but this was extremely rare. The Vice-Chair asked how confident officers were that the advice and support being provided to parents by schools was good and relevant. The Director of Education responded that the Council worked closely with Head Teachers, and that they were confident that Head Teachers had a strong understanding of the exclusions process and their statutory responsibilities.

Members asked about disproportionality with regards to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and whether there was best practice in regards to reducing disproportionality for Black Caribbean students. The Director of Education explained that children with Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) were not excluded from schools, and that any concerns were picked up in the annual review process. Members heard the reducing disproportionality for Black Caribbean students was a priority and that work with Head Teachers was ongoing, but that the Local Authorities' power here was limited. The Education Partnership would have representatives from all schools and would set priorities across Croydon; the Director of Education would be suggesting that inclusion and the reduction of disproportionality be a priority for the Partnership. The Head of Access to Education explained that where serious concerns around disproportionality were identified, the Council could intervene under safeguarding legislation; this had happened a few times in the last year and had resulted in visits from the Director for Education and members of the Exclusions Team to conduct in depth reviews of the school's practices.

The Vice-Chair asked about the increase in primary exclusions and the Head of Access to Education explained that there two trends that had been acknowledged. The first was increased numbers of children in nursery with complex needs, SEN and EHCP applications; this was impacting on the ability of schools to meet the needs of some very young children coming into schools. The second was children who had missed significant amounts of nursery and reception schooling during the pandemic. Long wait times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the complex diagnosis pathway for Autism and ADHD was also acknowledged as a contributing factor. The Director for Education explained that

Croydon Locality SEND support was providing funding into primary and secondary schools to support early interventions for students; this would be rolled out to Early Years settings in the near future to pick up on the needs of children at an earlier stage.

Members commented on the need for school governors to be trained and aware of best practice to ensure they were best able to scrutinise the decisions of Head Teachers. The Director of Education agreed and explained that the Council did provide training to governing bodies and that the best training did include examples of best practice. It was agreed that it would be a good idea to have experienced chairs of governing bodies talk at these training events and that this would be something considered in the future.

Elective Home Education

The Sub-Committee considered a paper which provided a briefing on Elective Home Education (EHE) in Croydon, including the data showing the number of Children and Young people receiving EHE.

The Sub-Committee asked what the Council could do to address children who fell significantly behind in EHE. The Director for Education explained it was expected that any child with a special need was in a school that could meet their needs, but where families had chosen to EHE, they would be responsible for meeting these needs without resources from the Council. The Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education explained that there was very little power for the Council to intervene over issues that could not be in the child's best educational interest, but that forthcoming legislation may change this. The Sub-Committee heard the Council was supportive of this legislation changing. The Sub-Committee asked how many SEN children were being home educated and heard that currently there were seven in Croydon with an EHCP, but some parents may be in the process of applying for EHCP, or have less substantial needs. The Head of Access to Education explained that families were responsible for delivering the EHCP should they chose to EHE.

The Sub-Committee asked if the Council knew how many 'not known' EHE students were in Croydon, and whether there were any processes to try to identify these children. The Director for Education explained that families did not have to register with the Council to notify of EHE, but the Council would know if the child had previously been on a school roll. The Vice-Chair asked how an EHCP process would be conducted for a child receiving an EHE. The Director of Education explained that a parent or GP could submit an application for an EHCP assessment. Members asked about the increase in parents not providing a reason for EHE and heard that this was not known but that possibly this was because it was the first year that this option had been included as a 'tick box' on the notification form.

The Sub-Committee asked about the most common obstacles facing children in receipt of EHE. The Head of Access to Education explained that many families delivering EHE did so very successfully. Challenges were referred on to the 'Children Missing Education' team, and referrals for EHE were only accepted when the family wanted to EHE; if this were found not to be the case, then the school would be challenged and this could lead to a referral to Children's Social Care. Members

asked if the Council tried to intervene with students and families who taken the EHE route as a result of bullying. The Head of Access to Education explained that this was the case and that there would be an immediate conversation with the school. It was likely that these cases would not sit under the EHE team for very long and would be passed on to the 'Children Missing Education' team to work with the family alongside inclusion officers where a number of options could be considered, including a move to a different school.

The Sub-Committee highlighted families who had wanted to move to EHE who were involved with Children's Social Care or were on child protection plans. Members noted that the report stated that this had been challenged robustly and asked how it was ensure that these children were still attending school. The Director of Education explained that the Council would monitor attendance for these children in conjunction with Social Care; a social worker would be assigned to each of these families. Members asked if pupils who received EHE disproportionality went on to become 'Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs)'; the Head of Access to Education explained that this was difficult to benchmark for a number of reasons.

Experience of Care Leavers

The Sub-Committee considered a paper which outlined the position of Care Experienced young people in Croydon as assessed by Officers in the Annual Self-Assessment and Improvement plans and a recent review and recommendations by Mark Riddell, the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, at the Department for Education (DfE). The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People explained that this report was a very early response to the recent review and recommendations by Mark Riddell, and that a full report would be coming forward through Cabinet and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Members asked about the housing offers available to Care Leavers, and whether there was effective support from the Council Housing department. The Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education explained that significant work with Housing colleagues was already underway, but the scale of the challenge in this area was not being underestimated. A full Cabinet paper would be forthcoming on the housing responsibilities to Care Experienced Young People that would be a collaboration between the Housing department, Deputy Mayor, Children, Young People and Education department and Cabinet Member for Children & Young People. The Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education agreed with the Sub-Committee that a 'whole Council' approach was needed in addition to good partnership working.

The Chair asked what housing support and options were offered to Care Leavers. The Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers responded that a large number of Care Leavers had 'stay put' arrangements where they were able to stay with their foster carers. Some young people did not want to do this and wished to live independently, but housing waiting lists for those who wished to move on could be long, and often other alternatives had to be sought in the private rental market, rent guarantee schemes or supported living where appropriate. The Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers stated there was an aspiration for more supported housing to be available. Members heard that there were a number of wraparound

services that were available and work had begun on developing these further to provide some additional support. The Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers explained that Housing colleagues were on-board with further developing housing pathways for Care Leavers.

The Sub-Committee asked about KPIs and monitoring of the service. The Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers explained that a number of KPIs were received by and monitored by the Corporate Parenting Panel who would also be receiving the full action plan once completed; in addition to this, the department also had a number of internal KPIs. The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People highlighted the work happening on the Corporate Parenting Strategy that it was hoped would be launched in September 2023. The Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education explained that this report was an introduction and overview to the next phase of a significant improvement plan; it was recognised that this work would involve the whole of the Council and its partners.

Health & Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee scrutinises the work of local healthcare organisations and social care services provided to adult residents of the borough. It also, in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities, investigates and responds to emerging health and social care issues and changes affecting more than one borough.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

2022-23 Membership of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee



**Councillor Sean
Fitzsimons**
(Chair)



**Councillor Sherwan
Chowdhury**
(Vice-Chair)



**Councillor Adele
Benson**



**Councillor Patsy
Cummings**



**Councillor Robert
Ward**



**Councillor Fatima
Zaman**

Gordon Kay
Healthwatch Croydon
(Non-Voting)

Yusuf Osman
Croydon Adult Social
Services User Panel
(Non-Voting)

Chair of the Health & Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee Councillor Sean Fitzsimons

Over the last year, the sub-committee has focused on the challenges facing Croydon's Adult Social Care and Croydon's NHS Services. Croydon's Adult Social Care service had its budget "right-sized" in 2021-22. Since then, the sub-committee has had an ongoing remit to ensure that future savings or demand management actions are both deliverable and sustainable, and won't put service users or carers at an unacceptable risk. We made it a feature of every sub-committee meeting to monitor the progress of the service against its budget proposals, especially as the 2022/23 budgets pencilled in savings of over £16m.

The second central strand of the sub-committee's work was holding the local NHS to account for its recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring the delivery of good health services for the borough's residents. We were disappointed to discover

that new health centres in New Addington and Coulsdon were mothballed due to rising costs, which the local NHS could not meet from within its existing resources. Uncertainty about future resources was a constant theme of the sub-committee's investigations, alongside workforce pressures and how to manage increasing demand from the borough's growing population. This is why it is important that when it comes to scrutiny of the new South West London Integrated Care System, the sub-committee has a firm focus on ensuring fair funding across the five boroughs

As Chair, I would like to thank the support I received from Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive of Croydon Health Service NHS Trust and Rachel Flowers, Croydon's Director of Public Health. The Health & Social Care Sub-Committee has worked hard to develop good working relationships with health sector leaders and without their support, the sub-committee could not work effectively. I also want to thank Healthwatch Croydon for the research they have carried out over the last year, which helped to give sub-committee members invaluable insight into the patient experience of services provided by various health and social care organisations.

I want to thank my Vice-Chair, Robert Ward, and the sub-committee members, including Yusuf Osman, our Resident Voice representative. Finally, I would like to thank Croydon's Scrutiny Officers, especially Simon Trevakis, and the support the sub-committee received from Annette McPartland, Croydon's Corporate Director of Adult Social Care & Health (DASS), who like her predecessor Guy van Dichele, welcomed scrutiny of her department.

A summary of the items considered by the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee in 2022-23 can be found below. Members also received an update from Healthwatch Croydon at each meeting.

Tuesday 28 June 2022

Health & Social Care Overview

The Sub-Committee considered a series of reports which provided an overview from the Social Care, Public Health and Healthcare partners on their priorities for the year ahead. The updates were provided at the meeting to help the Sub-Committee with setting its work programme for 2022/23

It was agreed that consultation on the redesign of Sexual Health services would be added to the Sub-Committee work programme in the coming year. It was also agreed that the work of the Public Health team on childhood obesity may also be considered for scheduling in the work programme should there be capacity.

In response to a question about mental health support for menopausal women, it was explained that there were specialist hormone intervention clinics, but this was delivered by a small service. It was acknowledged that there was further work that

could be done in this area, which may benefit from a whole system approach. The Sub-Committee agreed that this may be an area to revisit as part of its work programme, along with looking at the issue from a workforce perspective and the support available for staff.

It was noted that the level of referrals for older people to mental health services had decreased during the pandemic and as such it was questioned whether the local performance had been benchmarked with data from other areas. It was advised that work on this had been conducted as part of the South West London Mental Health Strategy, but there was a need to review the support available for older people across the system, including building capacity within the community and voluntary sector. It was agreed that mental health provision for older people would also be considered for the work programme.

Members questioned whether the identified savings in Adult Social Care were being kept under review to check that they were still deliverable. Reassurance was given that savings were tracked monthly and had been reviewed by the Government appointed Improvement and Assurance Panel. The delivery of savings was on track, but should this change, there were processes built into the system to flag this. It was agreed that the delivery of the Adult Social Care budget would be a standing item at each meeting of the Sub-Committee to seek continued reassurance that it remained on track.

It was highlighted that there was concern within the local community about the possible impact from savings upon vulnerable residents and as such it was questioned how reassurance was being provided to those affected. It was advised that the aim of the savings programme was to enable people to lead an independent life and would be managed through engaging with residents on an individual basis. Work was underway to ensure the voice of people was being heard and used to co-produce services. It was important that the level of service provided was flexible to ensure it could be increased or reduced as needed. There was a statutory role for the Director of Adult Social Services to ensure that both the quality and safety of services was maintained, and a Challenge Panel was in place should there be concern about the fairness of any changes delivered. The Sub-Committee agreed that it would continue to look for assurance on the maintenance of safety throughout the year ahead.

Tuesday 18th October 2022

South West London Integrated Care System Update

The Sub-Committee considered a presentation which provided an update on the delivery of the South West London Integrated Care System. An introduction was provided to the Sub-Committee by the Croydon Health Services Chief Executive and Place-Based Leader for Health, Matthew Kershaw.

Members noted the close work between the ICS and Healthwatch and heard that funding had been received by Healthwatch for an executive lead to coordinate the six Healthwatch groups in the ICS areas. The Sub-Committee asked about the complexity and pace of implementation in the ICS. The Croydon Health Services Chief Executive explained that so far responses had been timely and effective; an example of this was given on securing funding for health inequalities that had been granted for Croydon at higher levels due to quick responses, as a result of strong and effective relationships in the borough, that demonstrated Croydon's higher levels of need.

The Chair asked about place-based accountability for the ICS and what would be done to keep the Sub-Committee abreast of upcoming workstreams. The Croydon Health Services Chief Executive responded that he was a representative of Croydon at the ICS, and was responsible for ensuring that Members remained sighted on workstreams at the Croydon and South West London level. The ICS were committed to providing good forewarning of upcoming work and it was highlighted that early work on shifting commissioning responsibility for dentistry to the ICS level was being undertaken following enquiries from the Chair. The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care added that all Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs were included in the ICS and also met separately. The Chair welcomed the support of both the Croydon Health Services Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care in ensuring Croydon was well considered by the ICS.

Croydon Safeguarding Adult Board (CSAB) Annual Report 2021/22

The Sub-Committee considered the Annual Report for 2021-22 from the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board, with a view to reassuring itself on the performance of the Board, prior to the report's consideration by the Cabinet. The Independent Chair of the Board, David Williams, introduced the report.

The Chair asked about the effectiveness and key strengths and weaknesses of the Partnership. The Corporate Director Adult Social Care & Health stated that the commitment of the partners was a particular strength, with strong participation across many sub-groups from the partners; it was recognised, however, that data collection and the building of the scorecard still required additional work. The Detective Superintendent for Public Protection commented on the willingness of the partners to learn from each other and to engage with the action plans resulting from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) but felt that transitions between the Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards could be strengthened and would be a key area of focus for the partnership going forward. Members heard that increasing inequality and vulnerability in Croydon, and nationally, remained a key challenge. The Independent Chair explained that the engagement and commitment of partners were key to the success of the partnership, and that work to improve data collection would be prioritised.

Members asked about referrals to safeguarding and the suggestions that these had decreased, in part, due to the Croydon Adult Support Team having been able to divert people to other services where safeguarding was not needed. The Sub-Committee asked if the training the Croydon Adult Support Team had received allowed them to properly pick up on safeguarding issues, and if there were any figures for those who had been directed away from safeguarding services in error. The Corporate Director Adult Social Care & Health explained that the 'front door' had changed to include experienced staff and social workers to perform triaging on the referrals that were coming into the safeguarding service. There was a daily meeting with the Section 42 Team to review cases to see if they required a full Section 42 enquiry or an alternative service or assessment. The Corporate Director Adult Social Care & Health stated that they were confident in the training staff had received and that robust processes were in place with experienced staff at the 'front door'.

In response to questions about what training was provided by the Partnership on mental health, Members heard that the Metropolitan Police had an internal mental health team that provided training to other officers and that this included training on neurodivergence and autism. The Corporate Director Adult Social Care explained that there was a full multiagency training programme on safeguarding in Croydon, that was open to professionals and the voluntary sector; data on attendance could be provided to Members at a later date. The Independent Chair explained that there had been extensive conversations with the chair of the Training and Development Sub-Group about measuring training outcomes.

Adult Social Care Budget & Reforms

The Sub-Committee considered a report on Adult Social Care Budget and social care reform with a view to reassuring itself about the delivery of the 2022-23 Adult Social Care Budget and to understanding of the implications for Croydon from the Government's social care reforms. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health provided an introduction to the report.

The Chair asked about any emerging risks or changes that had been identified since the report was written and heard that Adult Social Care was still predicted to come in on budget and that forecasting for peaks in demand in the winter had been undertaken. Pressures on Croydon University Hospital had been high throughout the year and there were a number of workstreams focussed on this, including hospital discharge and prevention work. Members heard that the department was working closely with partners, such as Virtual Wards, GPs and the voluntary sector, to mitigate and prevent hospitalisation. The NHS backlog and long waiting lists could lead residents to have contact with Adult Social Care who would normally not have. Members heard that increased isolation over the last two years as a result of the pandemic had also likely led to declines in the mental health of some individuals which had increased demands on the service. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health stated that the priorities of Adult Social Care were to meet statutory requirements, to manage demand, complete reviews in a timely way and to

manage contracts and the market well. The importance with hearing the voice of every individual the service worked with was highlighted.

The Sub-Committee asked about the at-risk savings identified under the Medium Term Financial Strategy and service user and staff involvement in the deep dive analysis of the budgets in Transitions, Disability Services, Older Peoples Services and Mental Health. The Head of Improvement explained that due to a lack of staff resource, efficiencies from case and waiting list reviews were not possible. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health explained that there were regular meetings with the CEO, Section 151 officers and lead finance officers and that staff were regularly involved, but as this was more around accounting, service users and residents were not involved.

The Sub-Committee asked how the individual would be considered in work to mitigate the Cost of Living Crisis. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health stated that there had been a small uplift in Personal Independence Payments but acknowledged that this was a very difficult time nationwide for staff and service users.

Tuesday 28 November 2022

Update on proposed health facilities in Coulsdon and New Addington

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on the provision of new health facilities in Coulsdon and New Addington by Croydon Health Service NHS Trust (CHS). This update had been included on the agenda to inform the Sub-Committee of the reasons for the delay in delivering these projects.

Regarding the timeframe for the negotiations with the developer, it was confirmed that CHS was looking to resolve the outstanding issues by the end of March 2023 as a longer delay would impact upon the funding provided by NHS England requiring an extension to be negotiated. It was expected that negotiations with the developer should be concluded within six to nine months. There was a commitment from both CHS and the developer to work together on this site, but if the outcome from the negotiation meant it was not viable to proceed, then other options would need to be considered.

It was confirmed that neither the Coulsdon nor New Addington developments were reliant on the other to proceed. The same developer had been appointed for both sites, but they could be developed separately if needed. Given the delay to the provision of health facilities on the Coulsdon site, it was highlighted that the Purley War Memorial Hospital was the hub for the south of the borough. CHS was looking at improving both the surgical and diagnostic services available from this site.

In response to a question about feedback from the local community on the delays, it was highlighted that the health service had been managing without these facilities

and would continue to do so. There had been conversations with patient groups throughout the process and information had been shared at the Healthwatch Croydon AGM. CHS would continue to share information wherever possible.

Balancing Adult Social Care Legislative Duties with the Available Financial Resource

The Sub-Committee considered a report which explained how the Adult Social Care service maintained its statutory requirements in the face of delivering its budget savings targets. This report had been requested to allow the Sub-Committee to seek reassurance that there were sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that any changes to individual care provision was managed safely.

Members questioned whether staffing was a particular issue exacerbating patient flow through the system. It was confirmed that staffing was always one of the contributing factors to patient flow through the system. Although the hospital was doing well in terms of nursing staff, the availability of therapists along with shortages in social care were creating issues. There was also staffing hotspots in other areas across the system that had an impact. The Government had announced new funding to help health and social care services manage the impact of winter pressures. Croydon had been given the biggest allocation in South West London, which equated to £2.5m for the borough. 60% of this would be allocated to health care services and 40% to social care.

Given it was recognised that health and social care services nationally were going through a challenging time, it was questioned whether there was sufficient capacity within the system to manage any unexpected issues that may occur. It was advised that contingency plans were in place to manage the demand for services over the winter, but it was expected to be a very demanding period. The Service worked with Public Health colleagues to encourage the take up of vaccinations to prevent the possibility of a flu or covid-19 spike. Longer term plans were being made to ensure a sustainable social care system was in place going forward, which focussed on keeping people fit and well by working across the health and care system.

Further information was requested on the support being provided for the care market in the borough. It was highlighted that there were two care networks aimed at supporting the market to ensure it was managing the pressures from risks such as the cost of living crisis and increased energy costs. Only one care home in the borough had closed in the past year, but that was due to the provider not wanting to continue in the sector. The Service was looking at how best to support care homes with inflation and specific pots of money such as those available through the Government's Fair Cost of Care provision had been distributed. The care home market in the borough was sustainable and the Council continued to be able to buy beds as needed.

Officers were asked to explain how they were reassuring themselves that the Service was keeping people as safe as possible when going into or leaving hospital.

It was advised that there was a Life team in place to support people leaving the hospital environment, with a virtual ward system set up to monitor people outside of hospital to the same level as would be the case on a ward. People are first visited within 24 hours of leaving hospital and all cases are reviewed within four weeks to ensure the resident continued to be safe and was receiving the required level of care. Although there was confidence in the system to support vulnerable residents, it was acknowledged that sometimes things did go wrong and when this happened, there was a robust safeguarding process in place to review any such case.

It was questioned whether there would be any impact upon the services provided by non-statutory partners in the community and voluntary sector from the discontinuation of the Community Fund. In response it was highlighted that many of the contracts in the Community Fund were naturally coming to an end in March 2023. The Adult Social Care service worked with voluntary sector providers to access the various pots of money that were available for different services, such as the previously mentioned services to help alleviate winter pressures. The carers contract was due to be reproced in the New Year and work would continue with the voluntary sector on the provision of Personal Independence Coordinators.

It was confirmed that the Service was in the second year of a three year transformation journey, with the first year's targets met last year. The Service was also on track to deliver the second year's targets this year. A key part of the role for the Statutory Director of Adult Services was to ensure that the transformation programme was being delivered both properly and safely. There were risks around areas such as transitions and the workforce which were being actively managed, with a combined health, care and education approach being used to ensure the best outcomes for the young people supported by the Transitions service.

It was questioned how conversations with service users and residents had shaped the service. As previously mentioned, the Voice of the People Group had recently been set up to provide direct feedback, with the most recent meeting held earlier in the day to discuss the budget. The Service had worked with the National Team for Inclusion to ensure that service users felt that they were part of the solution. The immediate focus was on managing demand, pathways and ensuring they reflected lived experience. The membership of the group was fluid to ensure it focussed on residents with lived experience. It was acknowledged that there will always be people who are hard to reach, but it was about finding ways to communicate such as through representative groups. There was also a need to create connections with other groups such as local Community Partnerships.

Tuesday 24th January 2023

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022

The Sub-Committee considered the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2022. The report focused on how circumstances and experiences can impact on

people's health outcomes and spotlighted how these influences impact people unequally. The report discussed what can be done to reduce health inequalities across the life course and highlighted the work already happening around the borough to address them.

The Sub-Committee asked about the recommendations in the report, the budget for delivering these and how they would be prioritised. The Director of Public Health explained that this was not an action plan that this is an Independent report providing a compendium of health information for Croydon, and that Health Inequalities were not something that could be resolved by the local authority or NHS alone. The Director of Public Health explained that the report made a number of recommendations that reflected her view on measures that could be considered to reduce Health Inequalities that could be used by a number of organisations. Members heard that the Public Health budget was £22 million, but the content of the Annual Report was a separate statutory function to commissioning public health services with this ring-fenced funding, another statutory function of the Director of Public Health.

The Chair welcomed the content of the Annual report and stated that they hoped that Health partners in Croydon read and engaged with the recommendations. The Sub-Committee noted the report and thanked the Director of Public Health for taking the suggestions of Members into account for future Annual Reports.

Responding to Urgent and Emergency Care Pressures

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update from Croydon Health Service NHS Trust on Urgent and Emergency Care Pressures. The Chief Executive of Croydon Health Service NHS Trust and Place Based Lead for Health introduced the item and summarised the key points of the report.

The Sub-Committee asked about patient pathways and anecdotal evidence of patients presenting at A&E instead of GPs, due to long waiting times, and pressures caused by part-time GP working. Members asked what was being done to address this, manage demand and drive residents to enrol at GPs. Members heard that capacity in hospitals, community services and primary care was greater than ever before, and that there were now double the number of GPs at the front of A&E to divert appropriate cases. The Chief Executive of Croydon Health Service NHS Trust explained that as quickly as capacity was being created, this capacity was being used due to increased demand and the slowing down of the flow of patients through services. Members heard that it was crucial to look at expanding capacity and how this capacity was used at the same time to ensure services were efficient. This was being done in conjunction with colleagues in Health and Social Care and a national pilot to integrate services was due to start in Croydon called the Frontrunner programme.

The Chair commented on mental health as a topic on the work programme, and the prevalence of long-term hospital stays on mental health grounds. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health explained that there was work happening with the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and the Bethlem Royal Hospital to support hospital discharge and that it was vital that support services and placements were available in the community for these patients.

In response to questions on follow up community support and reduced funding for these services, the Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health explained that the authority had encouraged local partners to bid for the Innovation Fund to deliver 'Pathway Zero'; this had been successful for the bids submitted by Age UK, the Red Cross and Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association. This was short-term funding until the end of March 2023, which would be monitored to see how this effected the flow of patients through the hospital, and whether 'Patient Zero' would be funded long-term. The Chief Executive of Croydon Health Service NHS Trust added that the Social Care Discharge Fund would be replicated next year.

The Chair welcomed the government's increase in short-term funding and the signs of good partnership working in Croydon. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that certainty and long term funding would be significant challenges that were largely not in the hands of the partners and needed to be addressed by central government. The Sub-Committee were of the view that certainty and proper funding were essential in making services work properly.

Adult Social Care & Health Directorate - Budget & Performance

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided the 2022/23 Period 7 (October 2022) budget and savings position, 2023/24 indicative savings and benchmarked key performance indicators for the Adult Social Care & Health Directorate. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health introduced the item and summarised the report.

The Chair asked about the Period 7 Financial Monitoring figures. It was noted that an underspend was predicted for 2022/23, and it was asked why savings had not been achieved in some areas. The Director of Adult Social Care Operations highlighted the area of Disability Transitions; it was noted that significant savings had been made but that there had been difficulties in meeting the targets that had been set. The department was looking to address this through increased recruitment of staff to conduct reviews, as it was acknowledged that reviewing capacity was not sufficient; whilst there had been constant recruitment there had still been a shortfall in staffing. There had been better management of costs in the market since the start of the Director of Adult Social Care Policy & Improvement, by looking at ways to ensure the market remained resilient and was developed to provide better and more cost effective solutions.

The Director of Adult Social Care Policy & Improvement explained that there had been issues with recruiting to Commissioning inside of Adult Social Care, and that good strategic commissioning was vital to delivering savings targets through a partnership approach with Operations. Commissioning capacity was now in place, it was thought that the department was in a much better place moving into 2023/24 to deliver a greater pace around reviews which it was hoped would make savings targets achievable. The importance of supporting staff who had been under significant pressure for an extended period was noted, and failure to do this properly was highlighted as a risk.

The Sub-Committee commented on concerns about compromising on the safety and quality of care packages in delivering savings and asked for reassurance that this was not the case. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health stated that this was not happening, and that all individuals were assessed to ensure that their care needs were met in the most cost-effective way that could deliver the best outcomes for the service user; it was also important that reviews were carried out in a timely manner. Members heard that the department was going through assurance and would be inspected to verify that this was the case.

Members asked about the risk of burnout for social workers with high caseloads. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health explained that those doing overtime on reviews were being monitored closely, as were caseloads to ensure that these remained manageable. The Director of Adult Social Care Operations added that the quality of work was also being monitored, and that Heads of Service and Team Managers were watching caseloads to ensure the quality of work remained high. Outstanding reviews had been organised by the age of the cases to ensure these were tackled in an appropriate order.

The Chair related a question from Selhurst Ward Councillors about plans in the 2023/24 budget for closing the Whitehorse Day Centre and Cherry Orchard Garden Centre, both of which catered to residents with learning disabilities. It was asked if the impacts of these closures had been properly assessed, whether there had been sufficient consultation with service users and if the proposed savings were significant. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health explained that they would be meeting with Ward Councillors to discuss this in January 2023; the Whitehorse Day Centre service would not be closed, but there was work to find alternative buildings to provide efficiencies. The Sub-Committee heard that service users of both sites were being engaged on the plans, and that no decisions had been taken on either site. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health stated that an Equality Impact assessment on the proposals had been completed. Members heard that all provisions in the directorate had been looked at through the lens of statutory provision, which running a garden centre was not, however use of the Cherry Orchard Garden Centre featured on the care plans of 11 service users, all of which would need to be looked at closely should it close to find alternative provision. In addition to this, there were nine volunteers who worked at the Centre who would also be carefully considered for alternative provision. The decision on

these sites would ultimately be made by Members and it was acknowledged that the potential savings were not large in and of themselves but contributed to wider financial figures. A comprehensive report considering all factors would be provided to support any decision that was made. The Whitehorse Day Centre supported 65 people on average and work was ongoing with these individuals, their families and staff; none of the staff or care packages for service users were at risk, as a new location for these services was being investigated. It was highlighted that both sites required ongoing investment, should they be retained, and that services were moving to an 'Active Lives' approach to ensure that people were engaged in the community, as opposed to building based services.

Tuesday 4th April 2023

Croydon's Mental Health Transformation

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on the transformation journey of mental health services in Croydon. The update had been included on the agenda for the Sub-Committee to review the provision of mental health services in the borough and would be used to identify possible areas for a future deep dive.

At the start of the meeting, thanks were given by the members of the Sub-Committee for their visit to the Bethlem Royal Hospital on 21 March, to view the facilities provided by the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM) at the site and presented with an overview of mental health services delivered by partners in the borough.

The Sub-Committee asked whether the pathways to accessing mental health services in the borough could be easily understood by the public, and what were the strengths and weaknesses in the current approach. It was acknowledged that the routes into secondary mental health services were not necessarily clear or straightforward, with multiple pathways available. Further work was needed to map out the various pathway to ensure it was as clear as possible without making it too linear for multiple entries into the system. It was suggested by the Sub-Committee that the present system was confusing, especially for friends and family members who may be looking for additional support for an individual. It was agreed that a simple 1-page communication should be created for use by partners such as the Police or Housing Officers, who may encounter individuals in crisis, to ensure they were aware of the best routes for support. A request was made for this document to also be shared with Councillors, once it was available.

A new pathway, a Health and Wellbeing Hub in the Whitgift Centre, had recently opened to provide walk-in access to mental health support, and it was planned that similar hubs would be rolled out in other locations across the borough. Other existing pathways include through GP referral, or through emergency access in the Accident & Emergency (A&E) department at the Croydon University Hospital.

It was highlighted that there was a significant level of unmet demand for mental healthcare services within the borough, and as such, it was questioned whether resources were being focussed effectively and how assumptions on the service delivery were tested. It was advised that using a population health approach would be key to developing future services. The basis of this approach was to use data to identify areas of need, which would enable the production of a more targeted offer. It was acknowledged that this approach was not fully optimised at the present time, but it was the direction of travel for the commissioning of services moving forwards.

It was highlighted that there seemed to be an almost infinite demand for early intervention mental health support, and as such it was questioned how the process was being managed to ensure the support was prioritised towards those in most need. It was advised that the Social Care team had increased capacity at the front door of the service with the employment of a mental health wellbeing assessor. Training was also provided to staff to enable them to signpost residents to available support. There were also performance indicators linked to the front door of the service which would help to provide an explanation of the reasons for the high demand for mental health support. The representatives from SLAM advised that demand management also needed to have a focus upon supporting communities through a multi-layered approach. For instance, the Health and Wellbeing Centre had a clinical psychologist located within the service which helped free up clinical time elsewhere within the mental healthcare system. It was important to enable staff to work in a targeted way to ensure that the system operated efficiently. Another programme highlighted was the Ethnicity Mental Health Improvement Programme which was targeted towards upskilling faith leaders on early stage support and to help identify where support was most needed.

In response to a question about how the patient experience was monitored regarding safeguarding, it was highlighted that the Council produced a range of data on safeguarding. The use of restraint at the Bethlem Royal Hospital was monitored at a service level and by the SLAM Trust Board. There was a target to reduce the use of restraint including a zero level use of prone (face down) restraint. SLAM had also embarked on a refreshed approach to managing patient distress and the use of restraint, but there was still work to do in Croydon to embed best practice. It was confirmed that data on the use of restraint could be broken down by ethnicity.

There was concern amongst the members of the Sub-Committee about the level of support provided to residents in social housing and whether there was sufficient engagement with social housing providers on how to support residents with mental health needs. It was agreed that housing placements needed to be carefully considered to ensure that residents were being placed in the right type of accommodation for their needs. It was agreed that this topic would be flagged as a potential area for review in conjunction with the Homes Sub-Committee for 2023-24.

It was questioned whether there was sufficient data available to demonstrate whether services were performing effectively. In response, it was advised that there was a significant amount of data for established programmes, but further work was required to produce data for new or transformed services. This included setting baseline data and identifying the performance indicators to be monitored. The Sub-Committee agreed that it was important to have as much data as possible to available in the public domain to ensure there was transparency over performance and how the data was being used to transform services.

Tuesday 16th May 2023

Croydon Health Services NHS Trust - Quality Account 2022/23

The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out a draft version of the 2022-23 Quality Account for Croydon Health Service NHS Trust (CHS). A draft of the Quality Account had been provided for the comment of the Sub-Committee, which would be taken into consideration by CHS in preparing the final version of the document. The Chief Executive of the Croydon Health Service NHS Trust (CHS) and Croydon's place based leader for health, Matthew Kershaw attended the meeting for this item, to provide an introduction and answer questions arising.

The first comment on the Quality Account highlighted that the report mentioned Croydon being the youngest borough in London but did not acknowledge it also had the ninth highest number of people aged over 60 as well. It was agreed that this would be picked up and reflected in the report. It was suggested that it may be helpful include graphs or diagrammatical indicators within the Quality Account to better help demonstrate performance.

The importance of the workforce upon the delivery of services was highlighted, with it questioned whether workforce issues had impacted upon the performance of CHS. It was advised that staff had been required to work through a tough set of issues including going through the pandemic, ongoing industrial action, and a high level of vacancies. Targeted work had reduced the number of vacancies in the nursing workforce, with CHS having a lower level of vacancies than had in recent years. Both the health and wellbeing, and the support of and engagement with staff would continue to remain a top priority. It was confirmed that CHS had undertaken local, national, and international recruitment campaigns for staff, with a lead in place helping to support staff from overseas to acclimatise. This had helped the Trust to reduce the use of agency staff and lowered vacancy rates. The recruitment of physio and occupational therapists remained a challenge, with avenues such as apprenticeships being explored.

CHS was congratulated on its maternity services achieving a good rating by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The hospital was one of only two maternity units in London that achieved a good rating on the safe care and well led aspects in the CQC inspection. CHS had a new Director of Midwifery in place who was leading the

ongoing improvement work and had connected well with both staff and patients. It was important for CHS not to become complacent on the performance of the service, as the provision of midwifery was a tough challenge across the country, requiring a continued focussed. In response to a question about the stroke facilities in the borough, it was advised that these had been reorganised several years ago, with St George's University Hospital in Tooting becoming the local unit for specialised stroke care. Clinical evidence indicated that having specialised urgent care services for stroke patients located in one hospital improved patient outcomes. The stroke facilities available in Croydon provided rehabilitative support for patients in their recovery post-stroke, once they no longer required the urgent care provided by St Georges

Given the priority for hospital acquired infection had not been achieved, it was questioned whether this should be a worry for residents. It was acknowledged that the risk of infection was a significant concern for patients, but the historic performance of CHS in this area was good and the hospital had good infection control processes. It was hoped that there would a reduction in the number of infections in the forthcoming year.

It was highlighted that there was a national issue within maternity services, with BME patients facing worse outcomes. As such it was questioned whether CHS could provide data on the performance at Croydon University Hospital. It was confirmed that this was a core issue in Croydon due to the diverse population with the Health Equity and Racial Disparity in Maternity (HEARD) campaign targeting improvement in this area. It was confirmed that metrics from the HEARD campaign and the core maternity service could be shared with the Sub-Committee. It was suggested that this may be an area of scrutiny to schedule in the forthcoming year.

Regarding patient complaints, it was acknowledged that there had been a slower level of response following the pandemic, which had created a backlog that was being addressed. In the past two to three months CHS had brought in additional capacity to help respond to complaints, which was getting on top of the backlog, with responses sent to most of the outstanding complaints from 2022.

It was agreed that health visiting was an important issue and although some progress had been made, it remained a massive challenge. New birth visits had been prioritised for improvement as these were a crucial point of assessment for the early identification of potential issues. It had been included in the Quality Account to ensure there was a greater level of focus on the Trust's performance in this area. It was suggested that it may be helpful to share the work plan for the service with the Children & Young People Sub-Committee.

Streets & Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee

(formerly the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee)

The Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee has a broad remit. It investigates services and issues relating to public and private transport, Croydon's highways, waste management and environmental issues. In all its work, the Sub-Committee seeks to promote sustainability and to promote the health and wellbeing of Croydon's residents.

At the meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 18th October 2022, it was agreed that the remit of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee would be divided through the formation of a separate Homes Sub-Committee until the end of 2022-23 Council year.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

2022-23 Membership of the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee



Councillor Ria Patel (Chair)



Councillor Amy Foster (Vice-Chair)



Councillor Simon Brew



Councillor Danielle Denton



Councillor Christopher Herman



Councillor Mohammed Islam



Councillor Luke Shortland

Chair of the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee Councillor Ria Patel

As Chair of the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee from October 2022, the focus of this committee has been scrutinising key services in the Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery (SCRER) Directorate, like the transformation plan for the planning department, as well as the procurement of the next Waste Collection and Street Cleansing contract. Prior to the change in Chair and split of Sub-Committees, the Sub-Committee also scrutinised items like the revocation of the Croydon suburban design guide supplementary planning document (SPD2) and the Housing Transformation Plan.

At each meeting the department's finances have also been scrutinised, through the Financial Performance Monitoring report, as well as in January via the Budget paper, asking questions on the determination of savings during the budget-setting process, the shortfall in income from parking services, the transformation of the planning service, and risks from future building control legislation.

A key consideration has been investigating the robustness of savings targets and ability to deliver efficiencies, with a context of increasing workloads, scarcer resources, and inflationary pressures, as well as monitoring the impact of these savings on the quality of services to our residents. Throughout the year we emphasised the importance of using data collected to inform an evidence-led approach. We raised concerns at the slow pace in workforce recruitment, as well as the minimal progress on a coherent climate and environmental strategy.

I would like to thank the members of the Sub-Committee for their hard work, particularly Councillor Amy Foster, the Vice Chair. Thank you to all the officers in SCRER, and Tom Downs, the Sub-Committee's Scrutiny Officer, who supported us so well over the past year. Finally thank you to Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel, the previous Chair of the Streets, Environment & Housing Sub-Committee.

A summary of the items considered by the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee in 2022-23 can be found below. Members also received the Financial Performance Monitoring report from the most recent Cabinet meeting to ensure that they were reassured about the delivery of the Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery Directorate budget.

Wednesday 20th July 2022

Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery Directorate Overview

The Sub-Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery (SCRER) Directorate to inform the development of the Committee's work programme for the year. The Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment went through their initial priorities in post including Graffiti Removal, working with community groups, residents' associations, and parks Friends Groups. This work was to identify these groups' priorities and to rebuild trust and relationships with the Council. Members heard that work had begun on 'Clean Up Croydon' and the Veolia contract to identify issues and develop plans with officers.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration explained that they were looking at improvements that could be made in the Planning Service with the Planning Advisory Service review due to be published imminently. The Sub-Committee heard that the Town Centre Regeneration plan was being updated to bring it in line with current circumstances.

Housing Directorate Overview

The Sub-Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the Housing Directorate to inform the development of the Committee's work programme for the coming year. The Cabinet Member for Homes introduced the paper with a short summary adding that close work with residents to deliver quality and value for money services would be their priority. The Sub-Committee were informed that this would be a process that took time but that a new Corporate Director was in place to bring stability and leadership to the directorate. Work was underway on re-procurement of the Responsive Repairs Contract, which had been reported to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee before approval by the Mayor at Cabinet; the Residents' Charter had also been approved at Cabinet. There had been detailed discussions with the Housing Improvement Board regarding the Housing Improvement Plan which would be reshaped and reinvigorated incorporating the views of residents.

The Sub-Committee asked about previous poor service provided to residents and asked whether there had been consideration of compensating residents; the Cabinet Member for Housing reminded Members that this had been a recommendation of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and was awaiting a response from the Mayor.

Members highlighted the burden on residents of private sector rents and poor-quality private housing and asked about licensing in the private rented sector. The Sub-Committee heard that the previous landlord licensing scheme renewal had been rejected by the Secretary of State as it was not backed by enough data and as there was not a housing strategy in place. The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that any new scheme would take time to develop and emphasised the importance of the private sector providing quality affordable housing. Members heard that there were examples of the Council prosecuting rogue landlords under other legislation and encouraged any known issues to be reported.

The Sub-Committee asked about plans to address backlogs of complaints that had been reported by tenants. The Cabinet Member for Housing explained work to catch up on complaints was ongoing but that the department was currently overstretched, demoralised and with a large number of vacancies. Progress was being made alongside development of key performance indicators (KPIs) which would also be reported to the Tenants and Leaseholders Panel. The Head of Homelessness & Assessments informed Members that, on the homelessness side, it was known that there were common complaints, and these were being looked at to improve the strategies being used. It was explained that a different kind of service was required and there needed to be greater openness with residents about what was and was not possible.

Revocation of Croydon Suburban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2 (SPD2)

The Sub-Committee considered a report which had been approved by the Executive Mayor at Cabinet and recommended the revocation of the Croydon suburban design guide supplementary planning document (SPD2) to Council. The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration by way of a short presentation prepared by the Head of Spatial Planning and Interim Head of Growth Zone and Regeneration.

In response to questions from the Sub-Committee it was clarified that identification of areas of gentle intensification were designated within the Local Plan and not SPD2, even though the desire to move away from density driven targets was identified in the report as a reason for the proposed revocation.

The Sub-Committee queried why revocation was proposed before replacement supplementary planning documentation on residential extensions and alterations was ready to take its place, as was thought to be plan making best practice and carried reduced risk of poor quality residential extension and alterations. It was further asked whether this alternative approach was considered. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration stated that once the political decision had been taken to fulfil this election promise, this was the best way to achieve it in the view of the Executive.

The Sub-Committee understood that since the SPD2 had been adopted in 2019, there had been a number of planning policy changes and that alterations to the document were needed. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration informed the Sub-Committee that legal advice had been that a partial revocation was not possible. Members were advised that new guidance on residential extensions and alterations would be written as soon as possible, taking into account planning policy changes on design codes and design guidance. The Sub-Committee were informed that policy on residential extensions and alterations was in place before SPD2 would now be the fall back position (including local planning policy and the London Plan) should SPD2 be revoked. The Head of Spatial Planning restated that there was still a development plan and guidance at a national and London Plan level in place that could be used in the absence of SPD2 to determine applications.

The Sub-Committee requested that the fall-back guidance, on the London Plan and national level, that would be used in the absence of SPD2 be shared noting that reasons for application refusals often referenced SPD2. It was stated that without this it was very difficult to ascertain what risk residents would be faced with if SPD2 was revoked without new residential extensions and alterations guidance to take its place. Members were advised that this risk had not been assessed but were reassured by the Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration that policy to determine applications was in place in the event that SPD2 was revoked. The Committee were informed that there had been a period of time, before the adoption of the Local Plan in 2018 and of the SPD2 in 2019, when determinations on residential extensions or alterations had been made using other planning guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework, the London Plan, Croydon masterplans and Croydon Planning Policy Framework.

Members highlighted significant upcoming changes in the planning sector with the new London Plan and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (expected early 2023). The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration clarified that upcoming planning

changes in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill looked at building on the existing planning system rather than revolutionary change and would provide for transitional arrangements. The Chair asked the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration whether now was the right time for producing new planning guidance when this could result in abortive costs as the draft Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill could result in SPDs becoming redundant. An additional consequence could be the waste of officer capacity that is already under strain. The Chair also highlighted that the cost of producing the document would be met by reserves earmarked for the Local Development Framework / Local Plan review and asked how risky this approach was, as it could leave the work needed to bring the new Local Plan to adoption under-resourced. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration stated they felt there was a political mandate for the revocation of SPD2 but and that, in their opinion, there were equal risks to maintaining the SPD2 document and revoking it.

Tuesday 4th October

Housing Needs Transformation Plan

The Sub-Committee considered a report that provided an update on the development of the Housing Needs Transformation Plan. The Sub-Committee asked about the suggestion in the report that the service was not currently 'customer centric' and heard that the number of entry points to the service led to an inconsistent quality of advice and service for vulnerable people and that this needed to be addressed to ensure they were treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

The Sub-Committee asked about a court case the Council was appealing, referenced within the paper, and asked if it would have been cheaper not to appeal it. The Head of Homelessness & Assessments explained that the Council had lost a High Court case which determined that anyone in unsuitable accommodation must jump the housing queue and be provided a permanent home within weeks; the decision also implied that the financial situation of a council would no longer be considered. Local Authorities across the country were very concerned about the implications of this case as it could lead to significant issues and it was regarded as a test mark case nationally.

The Chair asked why the report did not provide any financial information on the stated work streams. The Head of Temporary Accommodation explained that the starting position was to achieve savings of £1.8 million in the next financial year; some plans had been developed and some were still at early stages. It was noted that homelessness demand was likely to increase alongside the cost-of-living crisis which would provide some additional budget pressures.

Members asked about how vulnerable people in private accommodation were helped and the Head of Homelessness & Assessments stated that currently the service was the last port of call but that the intention was to adopt an early intervention approach so that support could be provided to these individuals through a strategic, comprehensive, and multi-agency response to reduce the risk of homelessness. The Sub-Committee asked about how the needs of vulnerable people were being considered when being placed into temporary or emergency accommodation. Members heard that there was a statutory test for vulnerability and that this had a high

threshold. Data on needs was now being collected at a person's first contact with the service to try to ensure the best choice, advice, and outcomes for customers.

The Chair asked about residents who had been turned away from the service for not having an eviction notice and highlighted that this was contrary to the early intervention approach set out in the report; it was also noted that there was a lack of follow up from the Council when residents had been in touch with the service and it was asked how this culture would be changed. The Head of Homelessness & Assessments acknowledged that staff were still working with antiquated systems and explained that there would be cultural change through workshops and various forms of training. The lack of training had been identified as a barrier to adopting early intervention which needed to be changed to ensure staff were proactive and could work with residents before eviction notices had been issued. The new service looked to ensure that residents met an officer on the day they came to the Council, who would remain assigned to their case and develop a personal housing plan.

The Sub-Committee raised concerns about the quality of private sector temporary accommodation and asked how this could be improved. Members heard that the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) would allow temporary accommodation to be procured from specific vetted suppliers, who would sign up to a framework, and would help manage these relationships by monitoring certifications and stock checks. This would hopefully unlock capacity for staff to inspect sites where complaints had been received to gather evidence.

The Sub-Committee asked how the Transformation Plan managed the risk of increased pressures on the service from the cost-of-living crisis. The Head of Homelessness & Assessments explained that there was also additional pressure from Ukrainian and Afghan refugees and that this would be very difficult to manage. It was expected that the new system would be more flexible to try to mitigate challenging circumstances for customers. The Chair asked if there were earmarked reserves and the Head of Temporary Accommodation confirmed that these were in place to deal with additional demand to the value of around £970k, and that meetings with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and other authorities to horizon scan were ongoing.

Healthy Streets and Active Travel (including Healthy Neighbourhoods, School Streets, Vision Zero, Cycling and Walking Strategy) Update

The Sub-Committee considered a report that provided an update on the Healthy Streets / Active Travel Programme including (Healthy Neighbourhoods, School Streets, Vision Zero, Cycling and Walking Strategy). The Chair explained the background of this item and stated that a briefing on the implementation and monitoring framework of Healthy Neighbourhood schemes had been held before the meeting.

The Chair asked the Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment about the manifesto commitment of the Mayor to review Healthy Neighbourhood schemes and the appearance that this had not undertaken. The Cabinet Members for Streets and Environment responded that a review of the original Traffic Management Advisory Committee decision had been undertaken and these were being implemented due to

financial implications for the budget but with amended signage and road markings. The Sub-Committee asked whether this was contrary to the Mayor's manifesto and heard that the Council was going above and beyond in its engagement with residents to ensure schemes were sensitive. The Head of Strategic Transport explained the process that needed to be followed at the end of the Experimental Traffic Management Orders (ETMOs) and explained that this would be running alongside extensive engagement including independent polling, receipt of objections, street audits and drop-in sessions. A comprehensive review of Healthy Neighbourhood schemes would be presented to Cabinet after 12 months with suggested next steps at the end of the ETMOs.

The Chair explained that the engagement approach did not necessarily mean that schemes would be removed as the default position in national policy was that unless significant harm from schemes could be proven then they would be retained. The Head of Strategic Transport explained that whilst there was a presumption that schemes would be retained, officers would need to draw together all material factors in the final report to Cabinet about whether schemes should be removed or made permanent. Officers would use their professional judgement to form these recommendations alongside the results of monitoring, ministerial guidance and resident engagement.

Members noted that data was being collected on schemes now but asked what data had been collected before schemes were implemented to evaluate how well schemes had performed. The Head of Strategic Transport explained that TfL had encouraged very quick implementation during the pandemic which had restricted advance data gather. As a result, other data had been used to form the picture pre-implementation of schemes, and these included traffic flow information and TfL databases including IBus data.

The Sub-Committee asked what the key lessons were for ensuring that residents understood schemes that had been learnt from the implementation of the first tranche of School Streets. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that for the second tranche of School Streets, discussions had been held with school leaderships to ensure proposals were in line with what was wanted by schools before engagement went out to the wider community. The Chair asked if any other lessons had been learnt and Members heard that the need for advanced signage was vital. The Sub-Committee heard that for the first tranche of School Streets, informal consultation had been undertaken, and the results of this would be reported to Cabinet in October 2022; dependant on that decision it would then be decided whether to proceed with ETMOs. The Chair asked about how School Streets would be monitored and heard that work was being done with a third-party supplier and that monitoring would be installed on the schemes implemented by ETMOs in April 2022. Approval was being sought at Cabinet in October 2022 to continue this monitoring and to install air quality traffic monitors in the local areas of these schools.

The Sub-Committee asked about how Active Travel and Healthy Streets linked to wider policies around reducing traffic and road fatalities. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that additional funding had been offered from TfL for Croydon's third Local Implementation Plan (LIP3) and that this would include the implementation of road safety schemes. The Chair commented on current uncertainty until TfL funding settlements were known and asked how a more integrated approach

could be adopted that told the story of these policies to residents. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that it was always their aim to link up these policies as part of a coherent strategic approach, but that there was often a tension between achieving this and responding to disjointed funding offers to implement schemes. The Corporate Director of SCRER acknowledged that more could be done to bring these policies together but that there were always efforts to link schemes to a wider strategic picture. The Chair acknowledged this and highlighted the importance of taking the emotion out of the picture and presenting the benefits of policies to residents as a cohesive narrative.

Tuesday 8th November 2022

Waste Contract Performance Paper

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on the performance of the Council's waste collection and street cleansing contract and identified areas of service improvement and management of known and emerging risks to the service. The Director of Sustainable Communities introduced the item and Scott Edgell (Veolia General Manager for South London & South) and Andrea Lowe (Veolia Senior Contract Manager) who went through a short presentation (Appendix 1).

Members asked about consistent underperformance from Veolia and what the Council were doing to assist in improving this, and how Veolia had adapted services as a consequence. The Chair noted that the Council had served a Service Improvement Notice to Veolia in February 2022, and that there had been three contract management meetings held since May 2022. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the contract contained a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with a required minimum level; there was a Performance Bond paid to the Council by Veolia, which was paid back when KPIs were achieved to a minimum level. The Council had not been satisfied with Veolia's performance and had served a Service Improvement Notice due to performance against three main areas; these were missed collections, repeat missed collections and container delivery. Veolia had produced a plan in response to the Service Improvement Notice to rectify missed collections and repeat missed collections; discussions on container delivery were ongoing. Members heard that contract monitoring was multifaceted and that there were daily and weekly operational meetings, as well as structured monthly performance meetings that were fed back to the SLWP.

The Chair asked about Croydon's recycling rate, and the suggestion in the report that it was on track to reaching the Mayor of London's target for 50% recycling by 2025. The Director of Sustainable Communities stated that Croydon had been at a near 50% rate before the pandemic, but that behaviour changes had led to a downward trend in recycling rates. For the current period, the provisional recycling rate was at around 46%.

The Sub-Committee asked about weed and moss clearance on Council Estates and collection of communal waste from new buildings. Members heard that a lot of this was dependant on the developers and managing agents being proactive, but that it

was a challenging area with crews taking many keys and fobs, as well as having to remember a large number of access codes, to ensure all communal waste could be collected. Consistency in crews was important in ensuring missed collections were minimised, but Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) driver and crew shortages had made this difficult to maintain. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that communal waste access was a challenge and some standard advice on this had been put together for new developments. One of the big challenges of the contract was the contamination of waste on estates across the borough.

The Vice-Chair asked about enforcement and the strategy for tackling fly tipping hotspots identified through the 'Love Clean Streets' app. The Director of Sustainable Communities acknowledged that there was some reliance on public reporting, but that this would not be the case in a perfect world. The Council and Veolia were aware of fly tipping hotspots in the borough but had limited resources to do as much as they would like on tackling this; targeted clear ups did happen, alongside evidence gathering where possible. The Director of Sustainable Communities noted that there was a national trend in increased fly tipping and there was not a single solution to tackling this.

The Chair asked about the lapse in performance following an initial improvement after the Service Improvement Notice was delivered in February 2022. The Veolia Senior Contract Manager explained that peak annual leave times leading to greater agency and temporary staff use had contributed to this. There were efforts to increase recruitment to rectify this and keep a consistent service and performance levels. There had been some success in the recruitment of HGV drivers but this remained a significant challenge in a very competitive market. Veolia were offering HGV training to all staff, had run radio adverts, and were working with local job centres and linking in with First Military Recruitment to increase recruitment.

Members asked about the distribution of fly tips in the borough and what actions the Cabinet Member would take to incentivise proper disposal of waste and to crack down on fly tippers. The Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment explained that they were gathering data currently, and looking at creating better education through the SLWP and the Council website, as well as being more proactive with hotspot data and relationships with Friends and Residents groups. There would be a campaign on fly tipping in early 2023 and a ward-by-ward approach to clean problem locations that was still being developed. The Director of Sustainable Communities added that there was a bulky waste collection service and three recycling centres open seven days a week; making sure residents were aware of these facilities would be a key part of the campaign to reduce fly tipping.

Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract

The Sub-Committee considered a Cabinet Report on the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract for Pre-Decision Scrutiny. The Vice-Chair noted about the Mayoral Pledge to pursue the recommendation in the report and asked for reassurance that the recommendation was driven by evidence and data. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the recommendation not to extend the contract had been reached in collaboration with the other Partners in the SLWP and with legal advice taken on Veolia's proposed contract extension. The provision to extend the contract

by mutual agreement is contained within the contract, and the decision not to extend would only take effect in March 2025, which left extensive time to work on a re-procurement process and to conduct consultation with the Greater London Authority (GLA), which was required. Members heard that a large amount of soft market testing had taken place to look at options, and this had been fed into the information contained within the report and Appendix 2.

On the development of a future contract, the report contained a commissioning timeline for a process of consultation and engagement on its development before a future report would be submitted to Cabinet in March 2023 with a recommendation on the commissioning model and procurement strategy. The Chair and Vice-Chair emphasised the strong feeling on waste issues from residents in Croydon and asked about the opportunities for Member and resident engagement. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the Mayor and Cabinet had already been engaged on the recommendation not to extend the contract, and consultation with Members on any new contract would be a part of its development. Resident feedback from the SLWP triennial survey results had been received and Croydon officers would be briefed on this in November 2022; details of this could be shared once they had been compiled. There would be a dedicated resident engagement piece, which the SLWP would lead on across the partner boroughs, once the Mayor had accepted the recommendation not to extend the contract.

The Vice-Chair asked how confident officers were that the decision not to extend the contract would lead to good outcomes for Croydon residents, and heard that officers were confident that it would help to protect Croydon from possible legal challenge. The Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment stressed that a new contract could also lead to improved services and KPIs. The Chair asked about the risk of a reduced market and a number of authorities looking to retender for waste contracts at the same time. The Director of Sustainable Communities highlighted the importance of due diligence and explained that soft testing of the market had been ongoing for some time, alongside discussions with other boroughs, to try to mitigate these risks.

Members asked about whether the Council's current financial position might put off potential providers and heard that it was unlikely that this would be the case. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the contract was of significant value and that they were keen to explore any options that might provide employment opportunities to Croydon residents and maximise social value.

The Sub-Committee asked whether the Council had talked to other authorities about the benefits and challenges of developing an in house provision. The Sub-Committee heard that this was the case and that these discussions were ongoing.

Members went on to discuss confidential aspects of the paper in Part B session.

Tuesday 31 January 2023

Budget Scrutiny Challenge

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided specific proposals on the following 2023/24 budget areas: Parking Services; Planning Services; and Building Control. The Sub-Committee went on to review these proposals to determine whether they were resilient and sustainable, and whether they had been fairly prioritised. The findings of the Sub-Committee were reported to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee as part of the overall scrutiny of the 2023/24 budget.

Parking Services

Members noted the revised 23/24 budget figures for parking and asked how these had been calculated. The Director for Sustainable Communities informed Members that analysis had been carried out, alongside benchmarking activities on income streams with neighbouring boroughs, to ascertain the correct figures to right size the budget. The Sub-Committee asked specifically about Automatic Number Plate Recognitions (ANPR) cameras and Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), and the possibility that residents were better complying with regulations in the current economic environment. Members heard that resident behaviour had changed significantly over COVID and this had been studied to identify trends, which had been fed into the budget setting process. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that there was a detailed model to track the issuing of PCNs across the borough; this had identified a downturn in numbers, which had informed the revised budget figures.

The Sub-Committee asked if there were currently an appropriate number of Civil Enforcement Officers to maximise parking income and enforce traffic regulations. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that it was currently difficult to recruit to Civil Enforcement Officer posts, and agency workers were being used to fill gaps in the service; other London boroughs were being engaged to see if this was a wider trend and to ascertain if there were different options to tackle the recruitment shortfall. Members asked if ANPR schemes were working as predicted and if they were making predicted income targets. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that there had been delays to the implementation of these schemes over the last 18 months that had affected income collections; there had been two elections over this period that had caused delays to decision making, in addition there has been some delays in the mobilisation of the contracts and with getting the functionality of the cameras in place. The Director of Sustainable Communities added that Transport for London (TfL) funding arrangements had been chaotic over the COVID period, which had caused delays to delivery of the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) programme; it was stated that confirmation of funding for 2022/23 had only been received in October 2022.

The Sub-Committee asked how much of the borough was covered by Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), and how this compared with other London boroughs. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that around 34% of the borough was covered by CPZs; data on this was submitted to TfL on an annual basis, but data from 2021/21 covering other boroughs had not yet been collated by TfL and provided for analysis. Members heard that the Parking Transformation policy would be looking at how effectively CPZs were managing the kerbside and whether further measures were needed in areas of intensified development.

The Chair asked how confident officers were that the adjusted budget figures for 2023/24 were resilient. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that they felt the figures were based on strong analysis of data, but that there were always risks with parking budgets, as they needed to reflect resident behaviours, which had changed and could change again, and macro-economic conditions. There had previously been assumptions that parking accounts could be increased with inflation year-on-year, but this had been dispelled across all local authorities.

The Vice-Chair commented that they felt robust resident engagement was absent in the current Parking Policy, and asked what was being done to embed this in the new policy. The Director of Sustainable Communities stated that consultation with communities was important, and that consultation and engagement on the new policy would take place. Members heard that there was a clear requirement in the Road Traffic Act for consultation and engagement on any new Parking Policy. The Vice-Chair asked about wider communications with residents, for example on Healthy Neighbourhoods, and how this could be done better. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that often the pace of implementation as directed by other organisations, such as the Department for Transport and TfL, often made conducting the expected level of engagement difficult, but it was understood how important this was for any future schemes.

Planning Service

Members asked if the fall in major planning applications was a local or national issue. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that there were some suggestions that this was a national issue, but it was currently hard to say and depended on Inner or Outer London location; it was suggested that this likely was a result of the economic environment and rising construction costs.

The Sub-Committee asked how the Planning Service would tackle the backlog of applications, and heard that work on this had been ongoing for 12 months. Members heard that resources had been increased with additional officers and increased productivity through 'clearance weeks'. Officers had been refocussed on determining applications over and above other duties, as this was a statutory function, and this had been effective in significantly reducing the backlog and officer caseloads. As the backlog was reduced, a careful balance would be struck between determination of applications and engagement with the wider public and applicants.

Members asked why the 2022/23 fee income target had been set at a level that was unlikely to be achieved. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that budgets were set before year-end, and often required adjustment. The Sub-Committee heard that there was often the inclination to increase fee income targets based on inflation that could lead to a mismatch between the target set and income achieved.

Members asked what work was being done to ensure that fee income targets for 2023/24 were achievable, and the Corporate Director of SCRER explained that a piece of work, looking at current fee income, was being undertaken and was finding that that income was continuing to decrease due to reduced applications; work was being done to ascertain if further adjustments to budgets would be necessary.

The Sub-Committee asked if there was a staffing shortage in Planning Services. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that this was a difficult question to answer, as application quantum changed all the time, and this was why the department was staffed by a balance of agency and permanent workers to respond to changes in demand. The backlog of applications was being tackled, but additional officers were always welcome as more time could be devoted to working on planning policy as well as engaging with applicants, the public and customers. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration stated that they felt the department currently had the correct number of case officers in light of the downward trajectory of applications, but that this would be kept under constant review. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration explained that additional staff would always be welcomed, but efficiency, improvements to processes and IT resources also needed to be correct and would be addressed through the Planning Transformation Programme to ensure the department was effective.

The Chair asked about the timeline of the workstreams in the Planning Transformation Programme. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that there would be a detailed Cabinet report on this and on the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review of the service; the workstreams were identified in the paper at 4.21 and the Cabinet Report would include an action plan and timeframes. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration explained that the Transformation Plan did not sit in isolation, and ran alongside the rest of the transformation work in the Council. Members heard that the PAS review was extremely helpful as it gave specific points of improvement that were needed in the Planning Service. Much of the transformation programme would be delivered over the next 12-24 months with the aim to deliver savings from 2024/25

The Chair asked about any other key risks in the Planning Service and what mitigations were planned, or in place. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that an uncertain external environment could lead to a further decline in applications and reduced income; work to ensure income targets and budgets were aligned to demand were ongoing to ensure that these remained achievable, but still presented risk. The Planning Transformation Programme was highlighted as a big opportunity for operational and reputational improvement, but it was explained that the possibility that this failed was a risk. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that planning was highly political at both a local and national level; there was a changing national policy and legislative environment, and failure to adapt and respond to this was a key risk. Members heard that planning was becoming increasingly litigious, with increasing numbers of Judicial Reviews, which also presented reputational and financial risks.

Building Control

The Sub-Committee asked how pan-London collaboration could impact the borough if other authorities turned to Croydon, who was already struggling. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that Croydon was one of the few boroughs who was engaging neighbours to understand their resiliency as new proposals would likely require more collaboration. Members heard that it was important this was also done at a pan-London level through London Councils, to ensure there was resilience and collaboration across London in light of new

proposals. The Sub-Committee were informed that there were proposals through the Local Authority Building Control and London District Surveyors' Association to ensure that London rose to the challenges of the Building Safety Act, but it was too early to say if the right pan-London approach would be put in place. A number of final proposals were still awaited from the Building Safety Regulator to see how this would work. Croydon was seeking to position itself to ensure it had the correct level of surveyors and expertise in place.

The Chair asked how vacancies in the service would be filled, and whether the three new trainee staff would be sufficient, given they were not qualified surveyors. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that the Council was always looking for surveyors, but this was very difficult given the disparity in pay and conditions between the public and private sector; market supplements, flexible working and strong training and development offers were being used to make Building Control positions attractive. Members learned there would now be five trainees instead of five, who would effectively be undertaking an apprenticeship; this was seen as a very positive effort to bring new people into the industry and rise to the challenge of the Building Safety Act.

The Vice-Chair asked about corporate risks of not having a resilient Building Control service. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained not having a resilient Building Control service was a key risk that commissioning of the iESE study and the Transformation work sought to manage and mitigate. The Chair asked about the three options considered in the report and whether one had been chosen. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that these were all still being considered in more detail to decide on the most appropriate option for Building Control in the context of current restraints to recruitment and the new responsibilities in the Building Safety Act.

Members asked how the £300k savings figure from transformation had been calculated. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that this was a target and was difficult to estimate as a delivery model had not yet been chosen; these figures would not be built in to budgets until a model had been decided, and were for 2024/25.

The Chair asked how the workloads, resiliency and wellbeing of officers was being considered. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that considerations of these aspects was a core workstream in the Planning Service Transformation. The Corporate Director of SCRER highlighted that the People Strategy had been approved at Cabinet in January 2023 and included detail on how all staff were supported through their employment at the Council. It was highlighted to Members that senior officers were conscious of the challenging environment for local government officers, with long days and high workloads. The Corporate Director of SCRER stated that a number of ways to support officers were in place, but this did not mean that it was not still a challenging environment.

Tuesday 14 March 2023

Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract Specification

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract Specification. The Director of Sustainable Communities introduced the item and went through the presentation at Appendix A.

The Chair highlighted the 'Options Appraisal' and asked whether any options had been disregarded at this stage. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the only option that had been discounted was that of extending the current contract past 2025; delivery of services by in-house provision, re-procurement or Local Authority Trading Company were still on the table for consideration. The Chair asked if there had been consideration of delivering different elements of the service through a mix of these options and the Sub-Committee heard that this was still a possibility.

The Chair asked if officers were confident that the Council was within the timeline for delivering the possible options that had been set out, noting the need to account for the Greater London Authority (GLA) Collection Conformity assessment. The Sub-Committee heard that the GLA only looked at the collection element of the service and that the current provision already met the requirements of the GLA. Members heard that the GLA submission had already been undertaken, and that approval could take up to 108 days, which sat within the proposed timeline for the final officer recommendation to Cabinet. On the procurement pack, Members heard that officers were running activity for all options in parallel, and it was acknowledged that the timelines were tight but achievable. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that, if it were decided to go out to the market, then conversations would be consolidated where possible. The aim was for any contract to be awarded by early 2024, if this was the option that was chosen, to ensure there were 12 months for a contractor to purchase vehicles and be ready to deliver services.

The Sub-Committee asked how it was possible to ensure that any Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the new contract would be achievable, and how these would compare to other similar boroughs. The Director for Sustainable Communities acknowledged that the KPIs in the current contract had been set at a level that was too ambitious when compared to neighbours. Members heard that benchmarking with other authorities would take place to inform the setting of KPIs for the new contract, as well as incorporating industry standards; realistic targets would be set, with ambitious stretch targets to incentivise good performance. The Vice-Chair asked what outcomes were being sought as a part of the new contract, and whether these would be realistic given potential costs. Members heard that there was a desire to maintain the current frequency of collections, which conformed to the standards set out by the Mayor of London, and to improve collections for flats above shops.

The Chair invited Councillor Ben-Hassel to ask a question relating to Environmental Enforcement. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained any option would consider how the service provider would deal with fly-tipping as a first contact to check whether there was any evidence that could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice; this was a provision in the current contract. Members heard that evidence of this kind was relatively rare, but there were aspirations that the new specification sought a proactive approach to fly-tipping that was not just reactive to reports. Councillor Ben-Hassel asked if it had been considered that there be better join up between reporting

and investigating systems for fly-tipping. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that this was an aspiration for the future service and would be included in the method statement for this element.

The Chair asked how data sharing between contractor and Council systems would work for the future service. The Director for Sustainable Communities explained the current system had fully automated integration between the two systems that allowed for data analysis on fly-tipping hotspots and areas of repeated missed collections. Members heard that this would be continued in the future delivery of the service, but that consideration needed to be given as to what was required to tighten this up further.

The Vice-Chair asked what collaboration was taking place with the Housing department on collections for estates. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that they had recently attended the Tenants and Leaseholder Panel to speak about the Council's Housing Stock, and that it was understood that a Housing Waste Infrastructure review was needed to understand what had changed to ensure adequate bin provision; this would then feed into the future service delivery.

Members raised concerns about inflationary pressures on wages that had come close to causing industrial disputes under the current contract. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that indexation and inflation would be important aspects of any new contract that these elements would be up to date with best industry practice. Members heard that cost of delivering the service was discussed during annual reviews under the current contract, which could lead to elements being renegotiated, and it was important that any new service delivery made similar allowances.

The Vice-Chair asked about how communication and engagement with residents could be improved. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that there was a South London Waste Partnership communication and engagement plan, but that there needed to be a consideration of targeted communications on what was needed for Croydon. It was highlighted that the Residual Composition Analysis suggested that there needed to be better engagement and education on recycling, which could help with communal waste collections to maximise the collection of recyclates and resultant income.

Members asked about assisted bin collections and the Director of Sustainable Communities explained that a review of assisted collections had taken place recently to understand where these were still required. The review had reduced the number of assisted collections and going forward it was hoped this would be undertaken every couple of years as this had not been the case previously. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that they had undertaken walkabouts with crews and assisted collections had been identified as an issue due to the large number that had accrued before the review. The Sub-Committee suggested that those who only needed the service for a short time should be able to state this when they applied for it.

The Vice-Chair asked about resident awareness of the bulky waste collection service and whether better awareness, or reduced charges, could result in lower levels of fly-

tipping. The Director of Sustainable Communities acknowledged that there were probably some residents who were not aware of the service; having been through periods when the service was free and charged, as it was currently, had not shown an impact on the levels of fly-tipping in the borough. The Chair asked about cases where fly-tips had been reported, and then moved on to private land by contractors; the Director of Sustainable Communities responded that this was not acceptable and that they would look into this personally.

The Chair asked how Members would be able to collaboratively feed into the process going forward, in lieu of a cross party working group. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the Resident Survey results would be used, alongside the points raised at Sub-Committee meetings to inform the development of the contract. It was explained that a holistic approach was preferred over Member focus groups as it was felt that this would provide more representative data from a larger set of Croydon residents that also included Councillors. Preliminary feedback from the Resident Survey had only just been received, and focus groups with residents would be meeting to discuss issues raised in the survey alongside telephone interviews; this would be combined into a report that would be completed in April 2023.

Local Planning Authority Service Transformation

The Sub-Committee considered a Cabinet report on Local Planning Authority Service Transformation. The Chair asked how the workstreams would be managed and prioritised. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained this was still in its very early stages, but that there would be a project plan for each workstream. Members heard that the appointment of the Planning Improvement Manager was key and would follow building capacity for transformation into the service. Once the Planning Improvement Manager was in post, the workstreams, project plans and programme would be established; as part of this, how to monitor and report on progress would be considered. The Chair asked if every recommendation from the PAS review would be addressed, and the Corporate Director of SCRER explained that the review was a snapshot of the service and that the recommendations would need to be prioritised, with most of them directly addressed.

The Vice-Chair queried the Planning Department's current strategy and asked how resources would be prioritised over the coming months. The Chair enquired how the tensions between the budget, delivery of services and transformation would be managed. The Corporate Director of SCRER responded that there had been reductions in the number of staff and shortfalls in income generated by planning applications, which had made it difficult to resource the service and address capacity issues. There had been a budget correction of £1 million in recognition that income targets had been less than what had been achieved. Members heard that there was a continuing risk of reduced income from a downturn in planning applications.

Members asked what checks and balances were being put in place to ensure the department remained resilient. The Corporate Director of SCRER highlighted the importance of correctly resourcing the department, and noted the particular pressures that had been felt during the pandemic. Members heard that improvements to efficiencies, processes and IT were important to make workloads

more manageable for staff. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration explained that the PAS review, Mayor's Business Plan and National Policy changes would all be used to inform transformation plans. The Cabinet Member highlighted the strong governance structures in place for the programme and importance of workforce development in ensuring it was a success.

The Vice-Chair asked how different the service was now in comparison to when the PAS review was conducted, and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration explained that the department was on an improvement journey, and was making good progress. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that recruitment to planning roles was a national challenge, particularly in London, and that work to clear the backlog of planning applications was ongoing, but that progress was being made. The Chair asked how well the backlog was being managed, and the Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that headway had been made in reducing the backlog from roughly 1800 to below 1000 over the last 12 months. Members heard that around 800 live applications was thought to be a manageable amount. The backlog had been reviewed to ascertain the age of applications and it had been found around 2/3 were 'out of time', with around 1/3 'in time'; the Sub-Committee heard that the aspiration was to flip these ratios. Clearance weeks were taking place roughly once a month to help reduce the backlog, and recently had also been used to also review the 'out of time' applications to analyse why these had not yet been determined. Members heard this had been successful in making progress for these older applications and that learning from each clearance week was taken forward to improve processes. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration highlighted the digitalisation workstream and explained that it was hoped this would further help with prioritising applications for determination in future.

The Vice-Chair highlighted the loss of retail units on highstreets where conversions to HMOs took place. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that there had not been a great deal of this kind of Permitted Development in Croydon Town Centre, but acknowledged that this was a concern for District Centres. An Article 4 had been considered for Croydon, but Members heard that the Government had set the bar for this at such a high level that it was thought not to be achievable; an Article 4 also required sign off from the Secretary of State. The Sub-Committee heard that other London authorities had applied for Article 4s and that these had been curtailed dramatically or rejected entirely. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration stated that they would keep an eye on this area, but that in their opinion applying for an Article 4 was not a wise use of resources at this time.

The Chair asked if there was sufficient resource had been allocated to tackle the six workstreams in the transformation programme. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that greater capacity was always desirable, but that funding had been allocated to the programme and was currently sufficient. Members heard that some aspects of the programme, particularly digitalisation, might require more funding than had currently been allocated; if there was a business case to do so, it may be the case that transformation funding from other areas could be redirected to the Planning transformation programme. In response to questions on how the Review of the Local Plan would be funded, the Sub-Committee heard that an earmarked reserve for this was built into the budget.

Members asked about the deployment of temporary staff to address the enforcement backlog. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that temporary staff in enforcement only covered for vacant positions, and highlighted the national difficulties in recruiting to enforcement posts. Members heard that there was ongoing work to revise the job description for the 'Deputy Team Leader' post to turn this into a 'Team Leader' post, so that a permanent staff member could be recruited. Recruitment had been ongoing, with a permanent member of staff due to fill the last open vacancy soon. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that agency staff were helping to manage current caseloads and reduce the backlog by participating in clearance weeks, and closing down cases where possible. The Corporate Director of SCRER highlighted the busy nature of planning in Croydon, and the importance of ensuring enforcement officers prioritised cases. In response to questions about the size of the enforcement department, the Corporate Director of SCRER explained that the service was small for the size of the borough. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration highlighted the importance of providing development opportunities for enforcement staff going forward.

The Vice-Chair asked about the planned actions for Q1 2023/24 under 'Review the Resourcing of the Planning Service' on page 107 of the agenda, and raised concerns that these had not yet commenced. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that the backlog had already been reduced without additional resource. Members heard that the Planning Improvement Manager would be looking at programme management, workstreams and ensuring that progress was taking place; budget for this had already been approved and the recruitment process had begun. The budget correction that had taken place did not provide additional resource to the service, and it was acknowledged that it would be a challenge for the department to deliver transformation with the small amount of transformation funding and existing resources it had. The Chair asked if this was reasonable and whether transformation could be delivered within current resource. The Corporate Director of SCRER responded that greater capacity and resourcing was desirable, but that a great deal was possible with the existing resources of the department. Members heard that the Government was consulting on planning fees, which could potentially increase the resources available should these increase. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that better IT implementation and efficiencies would speed up determinations and increase officer productivity. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration highlighted a number of quick wins in digitalisation that were attainable for the service.

The Chair highlighted the importance of staff welfare and Members asked how frequently staff were working overtime, and whether they were compensated or given time in lieu. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that a great number of staff worked beyond their contracted hours, and that it was important to set boundaries to ensure staff were not overburdening themselves; staff were provided compensation or time in lieu as appropriate for overtime. The Chair asked about staff turnover, and heard that this had been higher over the last couple of years, but that there were many staff members who had been in Croydon for significant periods of time, and staff who had left and come back. The PAS review had acknowledged comradery between officers in the department, and the Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration acknowledged the importance of developing

officers and providing a compelling offer to keep staff in Croydon; Members heard that this would be a focus of the transformation programme.

The Chair asked about the implication of national policy changes for Croydon. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that national policy changes were always being considered by Government, and that the department kept abreast of proposed changes, making changes to respond to new policy where required. The Government were keen to encourage digitalisation, which formed a workstream in the transformation programme, but there were no large changes to national policy on the horizon.

Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee has a broad remit, albeit focused on the specific housing issues arising in the borough. It scrutinises services and issues relating to housing policies and needs, Housing Improvement Plan, homelessness and rough sleeping, temporary and emergency accommodation, housing associations in the borough, social housing and Housing Revenue Account.

The responsibility for the scrutiny of housing related issues used to fall within the remit of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee. However, at the meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 18th October 2022, it was agreed that the remit of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee would be divided through the formation of a Homes Sub-Committee until the end of 2022-23 Council year. Subsequently, at the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting on the 6th of June, it was agreed to extend the separation of these Scrutiny Sub-Committees until the end of 2024-25 municipal year.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

2022-2023 Membership of the Homes Sub-Committee



**Councillor
Leila Ben-
Hassel (Chair)**



**Councillor
Joseph Lee
(Vice-Chair)**



**Councillor
Adele
Benson**



**Councillor
Kola Agboola**



**Councillor
Danielle
Denton**



**Councillor
Claire
Bonham**



**Councillor
Ellily
Ponnuthurai**

Chair of the Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel

The council's landlord function is undergoing transformation at an unprecedented scale for local authorities across the country. As chair of the new Homes Sub-Committee, I have welcomed the opportunity to increase the Council's capacity to increase scrutiny of housing matters. The terms of reference of the new Homes Sub-Committee covers pre-decision scrutiny of the Executive Mayor's key decisions where related to housing, monitoring of finances (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account) both in-year and budget-setting as well as keeping a watching brief on the Housing Transformation Programme.

There has been slow progress on key areas of the Housing Transformation Programme, mostly due to capacity and staffing issues. Since the (permanent) appointment of the Corporate Director for Housing, pace has improved, in part thanks to external resources that have been brought in in areas where the Council lacked either the expertise, skills and/or capacity. A recommendation proposed by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee in previous years.

I would like to thank the officers who led on delivering the new housing responsive repairs' contracts within the agreed timescales, thus minimising the disruption of service to our council tenants. The Sub-Committee will be monitoring the performance of the new contracts as part of its ongoing work programme. Another strong achievement has been the development of the regeneration plans for the Regina Road estate which have also stayed on programme.

In the past few years, by the time policies and key decisions came to scrutiny, the scope for input was limited. Last year, the Homes Sub-Committee worked closely with officers to ensure earlier engagement and input into policy development. Considering the breadth of areas covered within Housing, we have also arranged various officer briefings in between sub-committee meetings to keep abreast of progress in key areas.

On the financial front, three areas remain of concern. The first is the lack of stock condition data to develop a more robust capital programme of works which also impedes the development of a fit for purpose Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, which is being addressed. The second is the resizing of the General Fund departmental recharges to the HRA. Although a lot of work has been undertaken, further work on Service Level Agreements is needed and the Sub-Committee will continue keeping a watching briefing on this matter this coming year. The third is the risks posed by the Emergency and Temporary Accommodation pressures on the General Fund. The Sub-Committee reviewed the proposals for the Homelessness Service restructure and welcomed the shift to earlier intervention and prevention. However due to unprecedented inflationary pressures affecting rents, demand is rising and that trend is expected to continue. The Sub-Committee had reservations that the new ways of working and resourcing may not cope with demand. The Sub-Committee will monitor closely the demand pressures on the

General Fund, while also ensuring the Council duly delivers its homelessness relief duty whilst providing a fit for purpose homelessness prevention service.

On the Housing Transformation (led by the independent Housing Improvement Board), Members welcomed a more robust programme approach which scrutiny had been advocated over the past couple of years. This has enabled greater line of sight of the various workstreams in the Housing Transformation Programme. Members highlighted concern about capacity to resource the various workstreams in addition to officer's business as usual work, particularly in the face of high level of vacant posts. Members further raised the need to prioritise the culture change workstream which cut across all transformation activities and the Sub-Committee will be reviewing progress regularly in this area.

The Sub-Committee has also set up its own action log and greater focus will also be put on reviewing progress of approved recommendation on a regular basis.

A summary of the items scrutinised by the Homes Sub-Committee in 2022-23 can be found further below. Looking ahead, this civic year, the committee will be looking at the following areas of the service:

- In-year budget monitoring both General Fund and HRA
- HRA business plan and asset management strategy
- Monitoring of the new repairs contact
- Culture change and resident's voice
- Private sector and licensing
- Regina Road regeneration

This year we also hope to work more closely with the Independent Housing Improvement Board to ensure we avoid duplication but foremost maximise opportunities to coordinate each other's work programmes.

I would like to thank the Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee and the other members of the Homes Sub-Committee for championing the continuation of the Homes Sub-Committee. Thank you to all the members and reserve members who served on the Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee this past year for their hard work and dedication to improving housing services to our residents. A particular thanks to my vice-chair over the past year, Councillor Joseph Lee for his support and leadership.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to our Scrutiny Officers for their support and dedication, always working above and beyond to service the needs of the Sub-Committee and its members.

Lastly, I would like to thank all officers working in the Housing Directorate for their hard work, their dedication to improving services for our residents and their support for the work of our Homes Sub-Committee.

A summary of the items considered by the Homes Sub-Committee in 2022-23 can be found below.

Monday 5th of December 2022

Updating the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Sub-Committee conducted pre-decision scrutiny on a Cabinet report that provided an update on the Council's approach to revising the existing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Plan for 2023/2024, following guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC), and for undertaking a comprehensive review of homelessness in the Borough in developing a three-year strategy from 2024/2025.

The Sub-Committee concluded that (1) the department were taking the right approach by not rushing into producing a new Strategy and extending the current strategy with an updated Action Plan and members were reassured that DHLUC were on board with the approach; (2) trend data for homelessness should be included in future reports for Croydon and comparable boroughs; (3) should central government grant funding for Croydon be reduced, then the plan to address this should be shared with Members; (4) officers considered historic policy data concerning 'Fairbnb' in Croydon and that this was reviewed and considered as an additional housing prevention pipeline. The Sub-Committee were of the view that under occupancy of registered social landlord properties should be investigated to see if this could provide additional Temporary and Emergency Accommodation capacity. Additionally, Members were encouraged that additional resource and expertise was being sought to address substance misuse.

The Sub-Committee recommended that (1) the Action Plan is updated to show (i) overall timeline of the action plan, key milestones, deliverables for each workstream and that interdependencies and associated risks be highlighted and included in the Action Plan; (ii) that the Occupancy Checks workstream covered both the remit of ensuring the accommodation is occupied by homeless households placed by the Council to meet housing duty and of monitoring how long new clients were staying in Temporary or Emergency accommodation; (2) Occupancy Checks proactively looked to see that accommodation was still meeting the needs of clients that had been placed there and that this was supported by appropriate staff training to empower them to anticipate and identify changing needs; (3) that suitable policy or guidance is in place once Occupancy Checks started, to ensure those who had left accommodation were not penalised if they had done so for legitimate reasons; (4) that the Executive Mayor write to the DHLUC to lobby for additional homelessness funding for Croydon, recognising the homelessness situation is acute in Croydon on a par with inner London boroughs.

Distribution of the Household Support Fund Grant

The Sub-Committee conducted pre-decision scrutiny on a Cabinet report on the Council's approach to the distribution of the Household Support Fund of £3,013,689.49, as allocated by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), covering the period 1st October 2022 to 31st March 2023.

From its consideration of the report, the Sub-Committee (1) requested that simplified information on grant eligibility be provided to Members and residents; (2) concluded that Members should be involved in helping to identify possible allocation for the Fund.

Members recommended that publicity be clear on the criteria and exceptions relating to the distribution of the discretionary part of the fund and that consideration be given to using social media advertising to proactively publicise the Fund. It was further recommended that all councillors are provided with the information in a timely manner so they can promote the availability of the fund through community networks and other social media channels. The Sub-Committee also recommended that a provision for emergency situations be investigated for the discretionary element of the Fund.

Monday 6th of February 2022

Update on the Re-Procurement of the Repairs/Void and Heating Contracts

The Sub-Committee considered a report, which provided an update on the process to re-procure the repairs/voids and heating contracts for the Council's housing stock. The report had been included on the agenda to allow the Sub-Committee to seek reassurance that the re-procurement had followed the process agreed by the Mayor in June 2022. It would also help inform the Sub-Committee's consideration of the Cabinet report on the outcome of the re-procurement process at its next meeting on 27 February 2023.

As it was recognised that the re-procurement process had produced a lot of good practice, it was questioned how this learning could be fed into other transformation projects across the Council. It was advised that delivery of the re-procurement of the repairs/voids and heating contracts had not solely been the responsibility of the Housing service, with the Procurement and Finance teams also involved along with project support from the Programme Management Office. A lessons learnt exercise had been run half-way through the procurement process to check that nothing had been missed and to record what had gone well. It was highlighted that the high level of resident involvement in the project had made a fundamental difference and once the new contracts were implemented there would be further engagement with residents on the delivery of the contract.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the project remaining on track was a positive indicator that the culture of the organisation was improving. Going forward it was essential that the experience and learning from the re-procurement process was used to inform the wider corporate learning on project management.

The Sub-Committee was happy that the level of tenant and residents' involvement reflected what was set out in the original tender strategy and agreed that the level of engagement should be seen as an example of best practice by the wider organisation.

Update on the Housing Revenue Account and Housing General Fund Budget

The Sub-Committee welcomed confirmation on several areas, including (i) the contracts being split to provide an opportunity for smaller contractors to bid; and (ii) financial penalties being included in the contract.

Given that prior feedback from tenants and leaseholders had raised significant concerns about staff culture, the Sub-Committee welcomed acknowledgment of this issue and confirmation that steps would be taken to define and provide training on the expected staff culture going forward during the mobilisation period.

The Sub-Committee agreed that there was a risk of there being a significant backlog of work outstanding at the end of the current contract and welcomed confirmation that officers were working with the contractor to understand this and put appropriate mitigation in place.

The Sub-Committee considered a report, which provided an update on Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the current in-year budget position for the Housing General Fund and proposals for 2023-2024 budget. The report had been included on the agenda as part of the Budget Scrutiny process to allow the Sub-Committee to reach a conclusion on the deliverability of the 2022-23 budget which would be reported to the next meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 16 February 2023.

From the meeting on 6 February, the Sub-Committee concluded that there was insufficient budgetary detail provided in the report to enable it to reach a decision on whether it was reassured on the deliverability of the budget.

As such, it was agreed that a briefing would be agreed for the Sub-Committee to seek further assurance on the budget. The outcome from this session would be reported to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 16 February 2023, to inform its consideration of the wider Council budget.

Monday 27th of February 2022

Update on the Re-Procurement of the Repairs/Void and Heating Contracts

The Sub-Committee considered a Cabinet report on the re-procurement of the responsive repairs contract, which included recommendations on the contract award for decision by the Mayor. The report had been included on the agenda to allow the Sub-Committee to review the content prior to the decision being taken, providing the opportunity to flag any recommendations for the consideration of the Mayor as part of the decision.

The Sub-Committee commended the team for the hard work it had invested into managing the procurement process up to this date, particularly when it had been delivered within a relatively short time frame.

Although there was concern that the procurement had been opened for bids over the summer of 2022, it was accepted that the results of soft market testing provided a reasonable level of reassurance that a good range of bids had been received.

It was seen as a positive move that a dedicated team was being set up to manage the mobilisation process, but concern remained about the overall capacity within the Housing service to deliver the mobilisation process within the timescales available.

The Sub-Committee noted that key risks to the success of the new contracts included the integration between the Council's new NEC system and those of the contractors, and the ongoing work to improve the culture within the Housing service. As such these projects needed to be properly resourced to give them the best chance of being successfully delivered.

The involvement of residents throughout the procurement process was commended and the plans for ongoing engagement with residents on the delivery of the new contracts was seen as essential to rebuilding the trust of residents.

Update on the Housing Transformation Programme

The Sub-Committee considered a report which provided an update on the delivery of the Housing Transformation Programme. The report has been included in the delivery of the programme and to flag any areas of concern.

The Sub-Committee extended its thanks to the officers involved in developing the Housing Transformation Programme, which was agreed to be well balanced, noting that a significant amount of work had been invested in its development.

There was concern about whether there was sufficient resource available within the Housing service to deliver the programme or whether there was sufficient investment available to increase the level of resource if needed. It was important that these factors were kept under review going forward.

It was important that a system was put in place to ensure that any learning arising out of the programme was recorded and implemented, as an ongoing mechanism for driving continuous improvement.

Update on the Regina Road Project

The Sub-Committee considered a report, which provided an update on the Regina Road Project and the consultation with the residents on the future options for their homes.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the ongoing work to engage with residents of Regina Road on the future options for their homes. Confirmation that engagement with Ward Councillors was planned was also welcomed by the Sub-Committee.

Appendix A – Summary of Past Recommendations

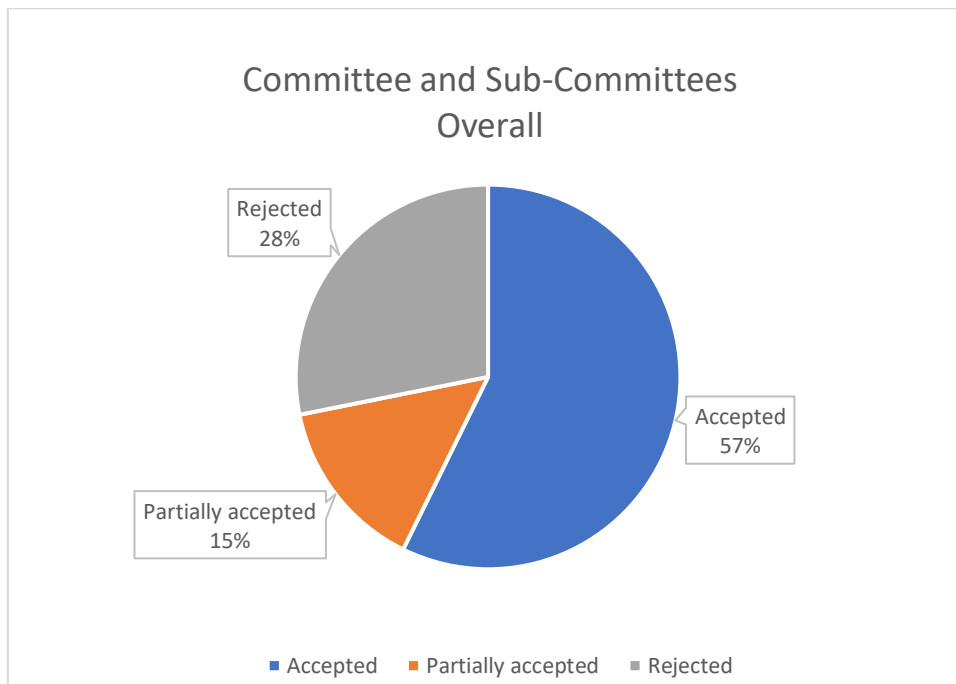
Considered period: May 2022 – May 2023

Overall

Table 1: Summary of past recommendations for the Committee and all Sub-Committees

Status	Overall
Accepted	59
Partially accepted	15
Rejected	29
Total	103
Percentage of recommendations accepted	57%
Percentage of recommendations of partially accepted	15%
Percentage of recommendations not rejected	72%
Percentage of recommendations rejected	28%

Chart 1: Past recommendations for the Committee and all Sub-Committees

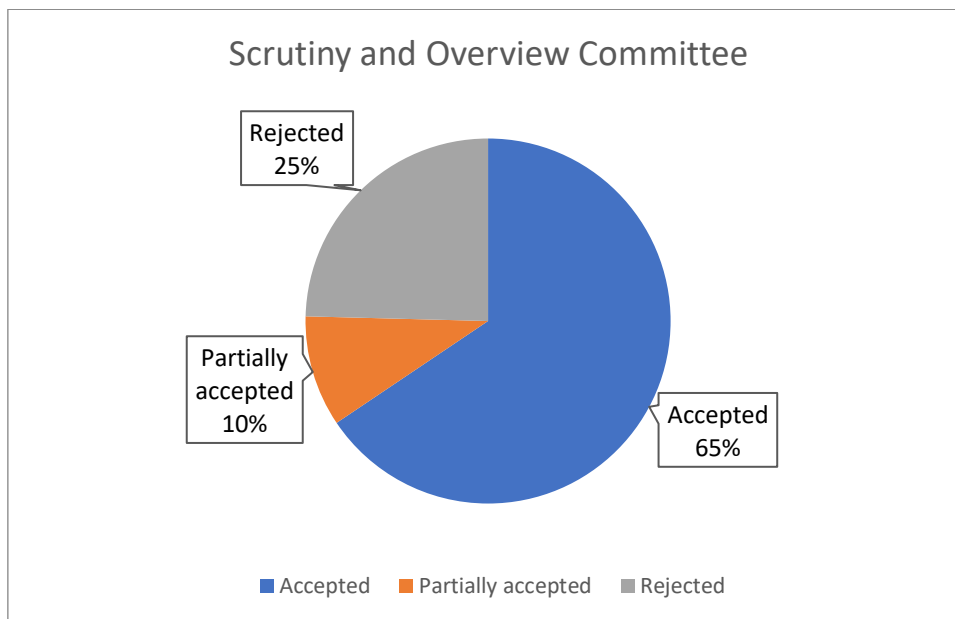


Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Table 2: Summary of past recommendations for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Status	Scrutiny and Overview
Accepted	40
Partially accepted	6
Rejected	15
Total	61 ¹
Percentage of recommendations accepted	66%
Percentage of recommendations of partially accepted	10%
Percentage of recommendations not rejected	75%
Percentage of recommendations rejected	25%

Chart 2: Past recommendations for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee



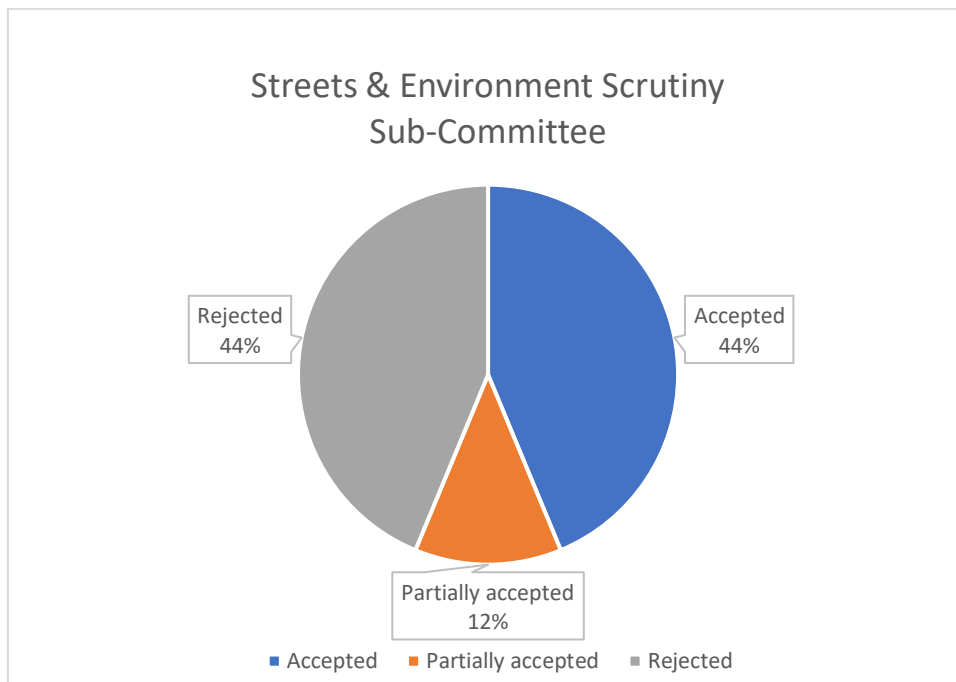
¹ There were 62 recommendations in total, and one of them is currently under review.

Street & Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Table 3: Summary of past recommendations for the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee

Status	Streets & Environment
Accepted	14
Partially accepted	4
Rejected	14
Total	32
Percentage of recommendations accepted	44%
Percentage of recommendations of partially accepted	13%
Percentage of recommendations not rejected	56%
Percentage of recommendations rejected	44%

Chart 3: Past recommendations for the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee

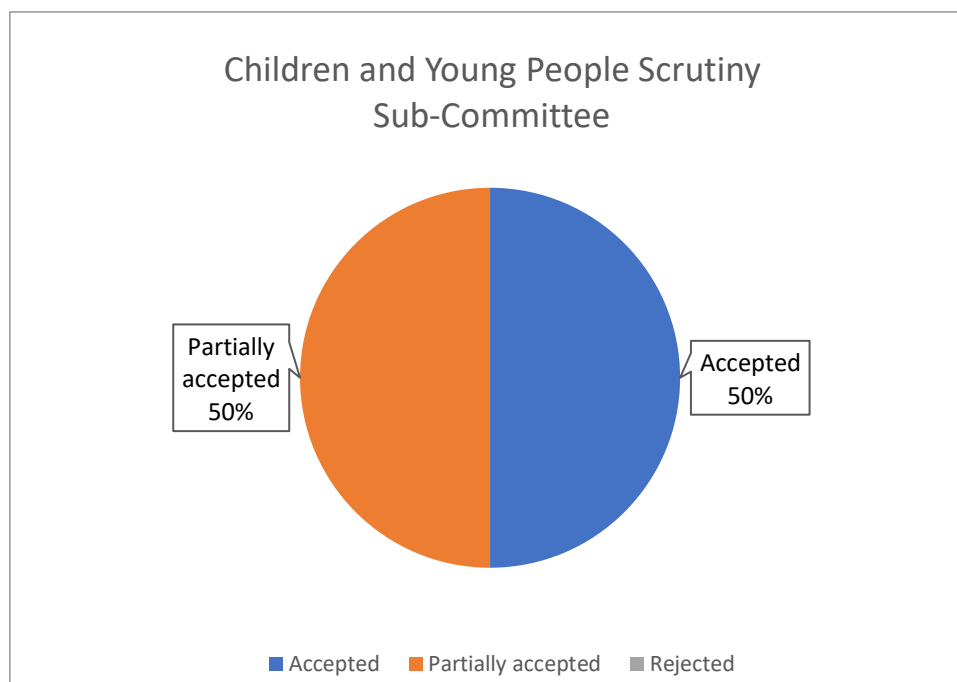


Children & Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Table 4: Summary of past recommendations for the Children & Young People Sub-Committee

Status	Children & Young People
Accepted	1
Partially accepted	1
Rejected	0
Total	2
Percentage of recommendations accepted	50%
Percentage of recommendations of partially accepted	50%
Percentage of recommendations not rejected	100%
Percentage of recommendations rejected	0%

Chart 4: Past recommendations for the Children & Young People Sub-Committee

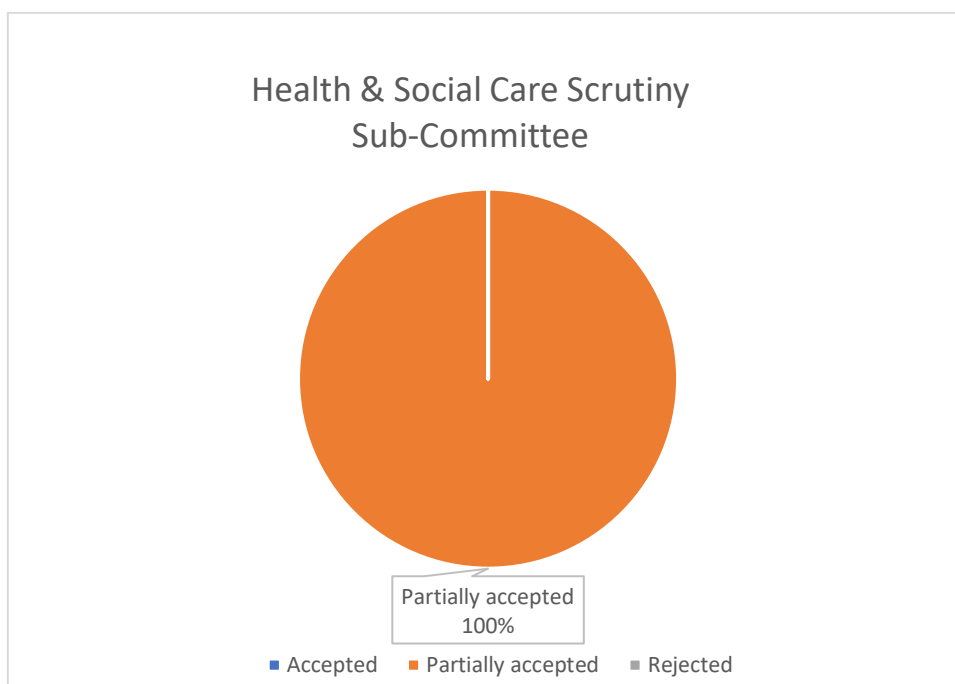


Health & Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Table 5: Summary of past recommendations for the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee

Status	Health & Social Care
Accepted	0
Partially accepted	1
Rejected	0
Total	1 ²
Percentage of recommendations accepted	0%
Percentage of recommendations of partially accepted	100%
Percentage of recommendations not rejected	100%
Percentage of recommendations rejected	0%

Chart 5: Past recommendations for the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee



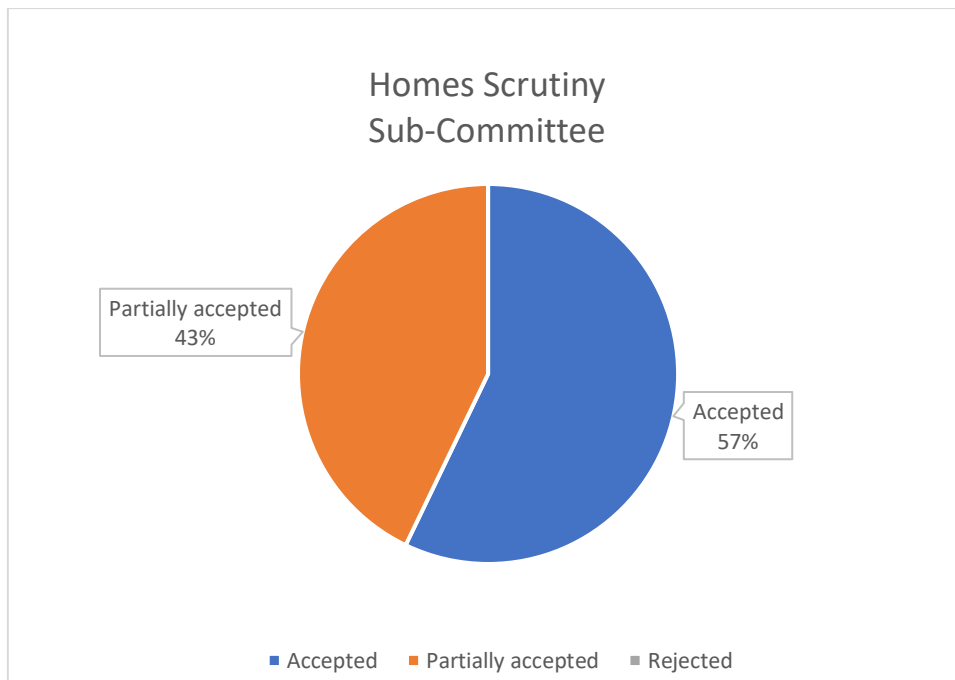
² There were three recommendations in total. However, two of them were not applicable to be either accepted or rejected.

Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Table 6: Summary of past recommendations for the Homes Care Sub-Committee

Status	Homes
Accepted	4
Partially accepted	3
Rejected	0
Total	7
Percentage of recommendations accepted	57%
Percentage of recommendations of partially accepted	43%
Percentage of recommendations not rejected	100%
Percentage of recommendations rejected	0%

Chart 6: Past recommendations for the Homes Sub-Committee



List of all recommendations

Scrutiny and Overview Committee		
Meeting Date	Recommendation	Status
6/14/2022	That the scope for bringing all or part of the current responsive repairs service inhouse is evaluated as a priority to ensure that the outsourcing delivery model proposed by the Council offers the best outcomes for residents.	Accepted
6/14/2022	That there should be periodic reviews of the delivery model, including an options appraisal on the benefits of insourcing either all or part of the service, to ensure the optimal structure is in place.	Accepted
6/14/2022	That the current re-procurement and delivery of the new responsive repairs contracts should be informed by best practice and experience from other local authorities.	Accepted
6/14/2022	That the key performance indicators created to performance manage the new contracts are reviewed by Scrutiny before they are signed off.	Rejected
6/14/2022	That provision for a compensation scheme for residents who experience poor performance, and paid for by the contractor, is included in the contracts for the new services . The Committee would ask to be kept updated on the outcome of this work.	Rejected
6/14/2022	That the of use technology to improve the level of communication with residents needs to be set as a minimum expectation in the tender specification.	Accepted
6/14/2022	That Housing Services commits to ensuring that the Tenants Handbook is updated and distributed to all residents to ensure they are aware of the level of service they can expect, how to access these services, how to complain when the expected service is not delivered along with confirmation of their dedicated Housing Officer	Rejected
6/14/2022	That a political commitment is given to ensuring the Caretaker/Handyman Service for Council housing is fully resourced and trained.	Rejected
6/14/2022	The expectations of the Council on the contractors to improve the culture of the staff transferred through TUPE needs to be clearly set out in the contract, with accompanying performance measures to track progress.	Accepted
6/14/2022	That sufficient capacity is allocated to ensure the delivery of the culture change programme within the Housing Service can be progress as far as possible by the time the new contracts are awarded.	Accepted
6/14/2022	That the estimated figures provided for the cost of the contract are reviewed and replaced with a cost range, to take account of the uncertainty in both the national and world economy.	Rejected
6/14/2022	That the tender documents explicitly set out the Council's social value priorities it expects bidders to help deliver, particularly in terms of local employment, supporting the local suppliers and climate change commitments.	Rejected

6/14/2022	That the measure to track the delivery of the social value aspect within the new contracts are reviewed by Scrutiny before they are signed off.	Rejected
6/27/2022	That the SRAs of Cabinet Members are revisited, in consultation with London Councils' Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Members in London, in light of the reduced responsibilities of Cabinet Members and the financial position of the Council and the need to protect public finances.	Partially Accepted
6/27/2022	To meet the Executive Mayors central priority of creating a Council that listens to residents, there needs to be an overarching Community Engagement Strategy to guide when and how the Council will engage with the local community. This should set out the Executive Mayor's vision for community engagement in the design of services and strategies and how the Council will actively look to engage with hard-to-reach groups.	Partially Accepted
6/27/2022	That consideration is given to the utilisation of citizen's assemblies to engage with residents on contentious topics such as carbon reduction and healthy neighbourhoods, alongside recommendations on resident engagement in the Independent Governance Review from 2020.	Partially Accepted
6/27/2022	Given the Mayor's acknowledgment that there was greater value for KPIs to be independently tested, the Committee would request to be involved in developing the KPIs which will monitor and evaluate the performance of implementing the Executive Mayor's priorities.	Accepted
6/27/2022	The role of Youth Mayor should be reviewed to ensure that it can be an effective mechanism for youth engagement and be involved in developing the Youth Safety Strategy.	Accepted
6/27/2022	That work to create a Bidding Unit to lever external funding into the Borough is prioritised.	Accepted
6/27/2022	That more detail on budgets, the new MTFS and prioritisation of services were required for the September 2022 Committee meeting.	Accepted
6/27/2022	That it was essential to launch a campaign for fairer funding if the Secretary of State does not respond satisfactorily to the initial letter from the Executive Mayor.	Accepted
6/27/2022	That there is engagement with the Committee as early as possible on the setting of the new MTFS in line with best practise.	Accepted
6/27/2022	That a paper on the number of properties built by area, and application approval rates alongside appeal outcomes information should be requested to inform the meeting of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee.	Rejected
6/27/2022	That a risk analysis on the revocation of SPD2 was provided to the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee including timescales for the replacement guidance to be enacted.	Rejected
6/27/2022	That a revised strategy for achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 is delivered as a priority, setting out a clear roadmap for how the target will be achieved and explaining the rationale for the measure that have not been included.	Accepted
6/27/2022	For more information to be provided on how future revisions to the Local Plan will help to achieve climate change targets.	Accepted

07/12/22	That the project to maximise the functionality of the Fusion Oracle financial software was treated as a priority and resourced accordingly, given the potential high level of risk in the Council budget.	Partially Accepted
07/12/22	That the Administration engages in pre-decision scrutiny at an early stage in the budget setting process to consult on significant changes to service provision.	Accepted
07/12/22	It is recommended that a robust training plan is prepared on the budget setting process for Members to ensure all have the requisite skills and knowledge to make an informed judgement on the budget at the Budget Council meeting.	Accepted
09/06/22	The Committee would recommend that the evaluation criteria for the Violence against Women and Girls Strategy should include space for victims' voices and exit questioning.	Accepted
09/06/22	The Committee urges the Council and the mayor to publicly recognise and celebrate frontline workers who works so hard to help with violence against women during the pandemic and beyond, particularly the independent domestic violence workers at the Family Justice Centre.	Accepted
09/06/22	The Committee welcomed the extra attention given to 'high priority areas' that suffer the vast majority of crime harm and recommends the creation of bespoke community plans to be created for these areas that involve their own unique community partners	Accepted
09/06/22	The Committee recommends the Police and the Council seek to partner with the voluntary sector on campaigns to de-normalise low level sexual harassment against women such as 'cat-calling'.	Accepted
09/06/22	As it was heard that it would increase the powers available to the Council to tackle antisocial behaviour in the private rented accommodation, the Committee recommends the development of a Landlord Licensing Scheme for Croydon being treated as a priority.	Under review
09/06/22	There was a recognition that at present there had been insufficient analysis to understand the links between the private rented sector and crime. As such the Committee would recommend that a workstream on this is created to ensure that an understanding is developed.	Partially Accepted
09/06/22	The Committee would recommend that an emphasis is placed upon community engagement in informing the review of the Community Safety Partnership, with engagement being as extensive as possible within available resources. This should include community, voluntary, faith and resident groups.	Accepted
09/06/22	The Committee was supportive of the proposed youth engagement work outlined at the meeting and would recommend that work aimed at preventing crime was well embedded in future strategies.	Accepted
09/06/22	That officers are asked to investigate the potential for introducing a scheme to train Domestic Abuse Champions within local communities across the borough as an action in the forthcoming Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.	Accepted
09/06/22	The Committee would request that a meeting is arranged with the Improvement and Assurance Panel, as part of the Budget Scrutiny process, to allow the Panel to share its insight on the Council's budget.	Accepted

09/06/22	<p>The Committee requests that future Cabinet Budget Monitoring reports to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An explanation of potential changes to the Council's reserves b. The use of a dashboard in the Executive Summary to provide an easily digestible overview of the budget position. c. The estimated financial value when outline risks and other issues in the budget (see para 2.12 in Month 4 report for example). d. When income projections are included, actual income figures from previous years should be included for comparison. <p>e. In light of being told it will possibly take 'two years' to get the Council's financial reporting systems up to standard, the Committee feels it would be beneficial to monitor how this is progressing through the inclusion of milestone targets that can be tracked.</p>	Accepted
10/11/22	That the Administration provides a response to the submissions of the South West London Law Centre and the Croydon CAB made at the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting, addressing the issues raised in these submissions.	Accepted
10/11/22	That officers are asked to review the literacy of formal communication with residents to ensure they meet best practice in terms of accessibility.	Accepted
10/11/22	That officers are asked to review and, subject to national requirements, amend the wording on the Taking Control of Good Notices, to ensure they reflect the Council's own approach to enforcement.	Rejected
10/11/22	That the Cabinet Member for Finance writes jointly to all three Croydon MPs asking them to: a. Champion in Parliament changing the legislated wording of the 'Taking Control of Goods Notices' and b. Champion in Parliament changing the legislation around enforcement, including the requirement preventing pay arrangements being reached following a summons being issued.	a) Accepted
		b) Rejected
10/11/22	That when they are next reviewed, officers are asked to ensure that the key performance indicators for Council Tax service present both a quantitative and qualitative overview.	Accepted
10/11/22	That officers are asked to review the Council's website to ensure that: a) residents' rights are clearly set out, including how to make a complaint, b) that advice and hardship services are signposted and c) the criteria for funds, such as the Hardship Fund, are clearly explained.	Accepted
10/11/22	As part of the wider improvement journey of the Council, consideration is given to the evidence that can be provided to reassure Members that there is improved collaboration across services to support residents with multiple needs.	Accepted
10/11/22	That the Monitoring Officer be asked to: - a) review the Council position on the disclosure of information to ensure that there is a presumption toward publication, unless doing so would present an obvious legal risk, and b) provide clear, practical guidance on what information should be provided in Part A & B reports to provide clarity for both report authors and Members.	Accepted

10/11/22	That the Monitoring Officer be asked to review the provision of legal guidance contained in reports to ensure: - a) The potential risks and their mitigations of a decision are clearly explained and avoid ambiguity, and b) Where a confidential report is required, there needs to be a clear explanation of the grounds for this in the public part of the agenda	Accepted
10/11/22	That all Members are offered training on what information should be available in Parts A and B of a meeting and why.	Accepted
10/11/22	That any contracts awarded by the Council need to have a qualitative framework in place to ensure that an evaluation can be made on the success of the contract beyond the purely financial, and that staff from a variety of levels are included in this process.	Accepted
10/11/22	That officers are asked to proactively track data on how many times individual staff contracts are re-extended to be able to better evaluate the service.	Accepted
10/11/22	That officers are asked to engage with organisations including the Greater London Employment Forum when preparing the People Strategy.	Accepted
10/11/22	That the Chair of Scrutiny is given the opportunity to input into the latest constitutional review, where appropriate	Accepted
12/06/22	That an all-Member Briefing is provided in advance of the launch event to update Councillors on the Borough of Culture programme, explain how to encourage community involvement and detail the support available for individual artists wanting to participate.	Rejected
12/06/22	That the evaluation of the success of the Borough of Culture is tested by a group made up of Members and Officers.	Accepted
28/03/23	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommended as a method of testing the effectiveness of the Council Tax Hardship Scheme, that once a sufficient level of base data was available, ward level data on the distribution of the fund was shared with Ward Councillors. This would allow any potential discrepancies in the volume of applications to be highlighted and appropriate action to be taken to target areas of concern.	Accepted
28/03/23	To ensure there was both clarity of purpose and transparency, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that reporting on the Transformation Programme should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cover all transformation projects, including those delivered through the Housing Revenue Account and any delivered in partnership with external bodies such as local healthcare providers. - Set out the intended outcomes for individual transformation projects to ensure there is clarity of purpose and enable the relative success of each project to be easily assessed. For example, where savings are targeted, any reporting should include the cost of delivering a service before and after conclusion of a transformation project as well as the project spend to date. 	Partially Accepted
22/05/23	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommended that, given the precarious nature of the Council's finances, the process for publishing monthly Financial Performance Monitoring reports is sped up, with the aim of achieving a maximum turnaround of eight week to finalise checks and go through the sign-off process before publication.	Rejected

22/05/23	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that the process of adding assets to the disposal list should, as a minimum, include notifying ward councillors and where those assets are in use or occupied, there should be active engagement with ward councillors, and where appropriate the local community, to understand and manage the local implications of the sale.	Rejected
22/05/23	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that any users of assets are notified as soon as possible after they have been agreed for disposal by the Mayor, to allay any anxiety about the uncertainty on the future of their service and to give them the opportunity to present any business case that may be in the long term financial and public interests of the Council.	Rejected

Streets & Environment Sub-Committee		
Meeting Date	Recommendation	Status
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee asked for better communications on the Council Website around how to report waste collection issues and for the option to 'make an enquiry' to be made more prominent.	Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee recommended better data collection on areas where there were repeated missed waste collections that could be due to obstructions or narrow roads to inform a more proactive approach that was less reliant on reporting.	Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment investigate pilots on waste collection trails for flats above shops.	Partially Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Council produce a Litter Strategy in line with good practice.	Partially Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee recommended Ward Councillor visits to assess street cleaning grading were resumed.	Partially Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee requested clarity on timescales for the new parking strategy and for information on how this would contribute to over net zero plans.	Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee requested that the policy on residential extensions and alterations in national, regional and local planning framework that would be used to determine applications in the absence of SPD2 be provided to the Sub-Committee.	Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee requested more information on the timescales in developing and adopting the new documentation on residential extensions and alterations be provided.	Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee felt that there needed to be a greater emphasis on private sector rental accommodation and recommended that the work undertaken by Generation Rent be reviewed by the directorate and Cabinet Member for Housing to investigate best practice.	Accepted
7/20/2022	The Sub-Committee felt that there needed to be greater engagement and partnership working with registered social landlords to increase the numbers of residents moving from temporary and emergency accommodation into permanent housing.	Accepted
7/20/2022	That greater detail on the proposed move to an early intervention and prevention model be provided to Members alongside additional information on information management.	Accepted

10/04/22	The Sub-Committee agreed that signposting of Housing Needs services should be improved on the Council website.	Rejected
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the service should commence a proactive communications drive to all residents in Temporary Accommodation to encourage reporting of poor conditions, which ensured that residents were reassured that reporting issues would not result in them losing their homes.	Rejected
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Housing Needs service ensure that occupancy checks are conducted in line with best practice and trauma informed practice.	Rejected
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee noted the interdependency between the Housing Improvement Plan work on voids and the Housing Needs Transformation Plan and asked that the directorate look at how the work on void turnarounds affected plans to reduce the time that customers spent in Temporary Accommodation.	Rejected
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that key stakeholders were identified and engaged before the implementation of any new Healthy Neighbourhood schemes.	Accepted
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Council look at developing a cohesive Active Travel policy that brought all these schemes together in a coherent and strategic way that provided a narrative that residents could easily understand.	Partially Accepted
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that there needed to be better communications with residents about the outcomes of Healthy Neighbourhood and School Street schemes that were in their localities.	Accepted
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Council investigate developing a Kerbside Strategy to work in an integrated way alongside the Walking and Cycling Strategies.	Rejected
10/04/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Council investigate attracting an e-bike hire scheme into the borough, possibly through Section 106 funding.	Rejected
11/08/22	The Sub-Committee were of the view that improvements to communications with residents needed to be a priority and should include updating the website and an explanation of street grading.	Accepted
11/08/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that communication with residents who had submitted reports on the 'Love Clean Streets' app needed to be improved to notify them on the resolution of the report.	Rejected
11/08/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that Veolia and the Council work with Friends and Residents groups to analyse and help to resolve issues with repeat missed collections. Members recommended that this is achieved through mapping areas of repeated missed bin collections, especially in relation to access issues, particularly with communal recycling bins.	Rejected
11/08/22	The Sub-Committee were of the view that the option to 'raise an enquiry' needed to be more prominent on the Council website when residents were trying to submit a missed collection report following 48 hours of the intended collection date, or when making a report was otherwise unavailable.	Rejected

11/08/22	The Sub-Committee requested that the Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment provided a full update on his data gathering and plans for reducing fly tipping in Croydon.	Accepted
11/08/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that a Cross-Party working group be established to input into the development of any new Service Delivery Options for Waste Collection and Street Cleansing.	Rejected
1/31/2023	The Sub-Committee recommended that recruitment and retention formed a key workstream in the transformation work taking place in Building Control and the Planning Service, as it was felt this would be key to ensuring this could be delivered with sufficient capacity to also successfully engage with residents and stakeholders.	Accepted
1/31/2023	The Sub-Committee recommended that recruitment and retention formed a key workstream in the transformation work taking place in Parking Services, as it was felt this would be key to ensuring this could be delivered with sufficient capacity to also successfully engage with residents and stakeholders.	Rejected
14/01/23	The Sub-Committee recognised there was a large number of households in the Borough that used communal bins and recommends that the specification of the Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing contract includes a requirement for identifying a successful solution for managing waste and recycling collections from these properties.	Rejected
14/01/23	The Sub-Committee recommends that the Council plans some specific actions to help resident engagement, communication and behavioural change under the new waste contract, using data to ensure the borough's recycling rates are maximised and that residents get the most out of the contract.	Rejected
14/01/23	The Sub-Committee recommended that there was a continuation of an 'as-is' service for residents in terms of collection frequency.	Rejected
14/01/23	The Sub-Committee recommended that Councillors be invited to attend future Resident Engagement events.	Accepted

Children & Young People Sub-Committee

Meeting Date	Recommendation	Status
9/27/2022	That the Sub-Committee be invited to visit the Children's Centres with the Cabinet Member in the North or Central areas, with a visit to a Children's Centre in the South once this has had a chance to bed in.	Partially Accepted
9/27/2022	That all future versions of the report provide commentary for any indicators with a RAG rating of red or amber	Accepted

Health & Social Care Sub-Committee

Meeting Date	Recommendation	Status
10/18/2022	The Sub-Committee recommended that information in the report from the 2011 Census was replaced with more up-to-date information or predictions, and that ethnicity data distinguished between 'White – Other' and 'White – British'.	Not applicable
10/18/2022	The Sub-Committee requested the inclusion of more quantitative data in the next Croydon Safeguarding Adult Board (CSAB) Annual Report	Not applicable

	including trends and comparisons over previous years and with other similar local authorities.	
10/18/2022	The Sub-Committee recommended that future financial reports provide the most up to date budget figures for the most current period, even if these were only in draft.	Partially Accepted

Homes Sub-Committee		
Meeting Date	Recommendation	Status
12/06/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Action Plan is updated to show overall timeline of the action plan, key milestones, deliverables for each workstream and that interdependencies and associated risks be highlighted and included in the action plan.	Partially Accepted
12/06/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Action Plan is updated to show that the Occupancy Checks workstream covered both the remit of ensuring the accommodation is occupied by homeless households placed by the Council to meet housing duty and of monitoring how long new clients were staying in Temporary or Emergency accommodation (to be updated by next 6th Feb Sub-Committee meeting and updated version to be sent to committee members).	Partially Accepted
12/06/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that Occupancy Checks proactively looked to see that accommodation was still meeting the needs of clients that had been placed there and that this was supported by appropriate staff training to empower them to anticipate and identify changing needs (e.g. pregnancies/overcrowding, disability)	Accepted
12/06/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that suitable policy or guidance is in place once Occupancy Checks started, to ensure those who had left accommodation were not penalised if they had done so for legitimate reasons.	Accepted
12/06/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that the Executive Mayor write to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to lobby for additional homelessness funding for Croydon, recognising the homelessness situation is acute in Croydon on a par with inner London boroughs.	Partially Accepted
12/06/22	Members recommended that publicity be clear on the criteria and exceptions relating to the distribution of the Discretionary part of the fund and to consider using of social media advertising (including Facebook paid ads) to proactively publicise the Fund. It was further recommended that all councillors were provided with the information in a timely manner so they can promote through community networks and other social media channels incl. Next Door. (Chair and Vice-Chair to be updated on communication of the grant before Christmas break 2022)	Accepted
12/06/22	The Sub-Committee recommended that a provision for emergency situations be investigated for the discretionary element of the Fund. This could be in the form of faster processing of the grant (days instead of a two week turnaround) and/or vouchers. (Chair and Vice Chair to be updated on feasibility before the Christmas break 2022)	Accepted

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	COUNCIL
DATE OF DECISION	11 OCTOBER 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Refreshed Croydon Equality Strategy 2023-27
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Katherine Kerswell, Chief Executive David Courcoux, Director of Policy, Programmes & Performance
LEAD OFFICER:	Denise McCausland, Equalities Programme Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Jason Perry, Mayor of Croydon Councillor Andy Stranack, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture
KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Croydon Equality Strategy, refreshed for 2023-2027 and the updated Equality Objectives.
- 1.2 In early 2021 the Council adopted a new Equality Strategy which it was anticipated would run to 2024. The Strategy was adopted amid a period of dramatic change, with the Covid-19 Pandemic still affecting local communities and resulting in long-term changes to working practices, and the Council undergoing significant transformation following the 2020 Report in the Public Interest.
- 1.3 This Equality Strategy, refreshed for 2023-2027, seeks to build on the foundations of the 2020-2024 Strategy, reflect the results of those changes and embed the initiatives the Council has introduced since 2021. For example, the adoption of the George Floyd Race Matters Pledge and the Croydon Equality Pledge have introduced new areas of focus for our equalities work; a new People and Cultural Transformation Strategy has been agreed, including a pillar of work focused on “building an equality driven, diverse and inclusive workplace;” and the Council has also participated as a pilot organisation on the Chief Executives London Committee (CELC) Tackling Racial Inequality Programme. Each of these initiatives and others have been incorporated in the refreshed Strategy, which has also been aligned with the Mayor’s Business Plan, adopted by Council in 2022.
- 1.4 Following feedback from the Mayor, Cabinet Member, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Board and Scrutiny Committee, the format of the Strategy has been updated to reduce

duplication and focus on actions and measurable outcomes wherever possible. The four outcomes of the original strategy have been reduced to three and the objectives redistributed between the remaining outcomes. It is primarily the actions, performance measures and narrative sections which have been updated. In addition, there are slight amendments to Outcome 3 (formerly Outcome 4) to better reflect the Council's responsibilities for health and social care, and two additional objectives under Outcome 1 have been added, to deepen accountability and effect systemic change within the authority, and reflect its work to become an anti-racist organisation.

- 1.5** The original Strategy was based on 2011 Census data as this was the latest available at the time of adoption. The refresh uses data from the 2021 Census, giving a more accurate picture of the challenges in Croydon.
- 1.6** As part of the CELC Tackling Racial Inequality (TRI) programme, each council is requested to adopt the London Local Government Anti-Racism Statement, developed by the CELC, to declare its commitment to achieving racial equality. The purpose is to ensure a consistent approach, underpinned by CELC TRI standards, to drive systemic cultural change across London councils. The standards also require that each council appoint a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for race from both the organisational and political leadership.
- 1.7** On 27 September 2023, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet formally adopted the CELC TRI and appointed the Chief Executive as the internal SRO and the Executive Mayor as the political lead. He also delegated authority to the co-chairs of the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board, in consultation with the Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities, to approve and monitor the delivery plan for the refreshed Equality Strategy once adopted.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet recommends that full Council:

- 2.1** approve the refreshed Equality Strategy 2023-2027 (Appendix A) and the updated Equality Objectives at paragraph 4.11.
- 2.2** note the adoption on 27 September 2023 by the Executive Mayor in Cabinet of the London Local Government Anti-Racism Statement, developed by the London Councils Chief Executives London Committee (Appendix B).

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** Adoption of the updated Equality Objectives, incorporated in the refreshed Equality Strategy 2023-2027, complies with the Council legal requirement to publish its equality objectives every four years.

- 3.2 Adoption of the [London Local Government Anti-Racism Statement](#) and appointment of a Senior Responsible Officer and political lead for race will ensure that the Council goes beyond compliance, taking a systemic approach to equality and inclusion and working in line with the [CELC Tackling Racial Inequality Standards](#) to become an anti-racist organisation.

4 BACKGROUND

Statutory obligations

- 4.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) contains the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. The general equality duty requires the Council, in the exercise of functions, to have “due regard” to the need to:
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- 4.2 In addition, the Council is required to publish one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve to comply with the general duty.
- 4.3 The Council meets this duty through the adoption and delivery of its Equality Strategy. This refreshed Equality Strategy sets out the Council’s intended equality objectives and the associated actions it will take, both as an employer and a community leader, to meet the PSED and improve equality outcomes.

Strategy outcomes and objectives

- 4.4 The current Equality Strategy was adopted by Cabinet and Council in early 2021 and runs until 2024.
- 4.5 Since the strategy was adopted, there has been significant change in both the Council and global environment, which includes:
- The Covid 19-Pandemic and its long-term impacts.
 - The Black Lives Matter movement.
 - Significant changes in working practices post-pandemic.
 - Croydon Council Reports in the Public Interest and Section 114 notices.
 - Establishment of a new Corporate Management Team and an Equalities Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board.
 - Development and adoption of the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026.
- 4.6 These factors have driven changes in Croydon’s approach which the refreshed Equality Strategy seeks to address. The refresh builds on the progress in delivering the current strategy, incorporates equality initiatives, draws on 2021 Census data and reflects the

priorities of the Mayor's Business Plan. The original objectives have been broadly retained and built upon, with actions and associated outcomes shaped to be more easily measurable.

- 4.7** Since 2021, initiatives and policies have been adopted which have been incorporated into the refreshed Strategy, including:
- People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-26: seven pillars for organisational change, one of which is focused on equalities, diversity and inclusion.
 - Croydon Equality Pledge (2022).
 - George Floyd Race Matters Pledge (2022).
 - CELC Tackling Racial Inequality Standard.
 - Council adopted definitions of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
- 4.8** The number of outcomes in the refreshed strategy has been reduced from four to three. As Outcome 2 in the 2020-24 Equality Strategy ('We work with our residents to better understand our communities') read more as an action than an outcome, it has been deleted and its three objectives have been redistributed between two other outcomes.
- 4.9** In addition to two objectives moved from Outcome 2 of the 2020-24 strategy, Outcome 1 has two new objectives. Objective 6 deepens the transformation of the Council, moving on from the training specified in Objective 3, to strengthen internal challenge and accountability and tackle systemic issues. Objective 7 is derived from one of the Council's George Floyd Race Matters pledges.
- 4.10** Outcome 3 (formerly Outcome 4 in the 2020-24 strategy) has been reshaped to better reflect the interdependence of health and social care and the scope of the Council's responsibility within the system, but the impact sought by the objectives is the same.
- 4.11** The refreshed strategy therefore sets out three outcomes, each with a set of objectives that inform the actions that will be delivered over the course of the next four years:

Outcome 1: The Council addresses social inequities as a community leader and employer

Objectives

1. The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society.
2. Continue to increase our network across underserved groups (from Outcome 2 in the original strategy).
3. Data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services (from Outcome 2 in the original strategy).
4. The Council's workforce reflects our diverse communities at all levels.
5. We ensure equality training is central to the way we work, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs.

6. Council staff proactively hold challenging, targeted conversations, holding ourselves to account, listening, learning, believing and taking action on systemic issues concerning inequality (a new objective).
7. The Council demonstrates that it is becoming an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist organisation, by embedding this principle in its strategies, decision-making, actions and behaviours, and promotes anti-racist practice (a new objective).

Outcome 2: Use partnerships to improve access and meet individual needs as they arise

Objectives

1. Information about the Council's work towards tackling inequality is easy to access and understand.
2. Enable better education outcomes by offering support to groups who need it most.
3. Systemic inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed.
4. Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life.
5. Services are proactive in targeting groups that have accessibility issues.

Outcome 3: People in Croydon are supported to lead healthier and independent lives for longer

Objectives

1. Work with partners to tackle social isolation.
2. Work with our partners to understand and reduce health inequalities.
3. Work with our partners to ensure equitable access to health and care services, and enable residents to know where and how to access services.

4.12 The actions and performance measures have been updated, taking account of achievements so far, as well as commitments in the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy, the Croydon Equalities pledges and guidance by the Chief Executives London Committee Tackling Racial Inequality Programme. It will maintain the ambition of the Council to achieve the vision and go beyond compliance to best practice.

4.13 At its meeting on 12 July, the Council agreed a motion proposing to recognise 'care experienced young people' as a local protected characteristic. In response, the Executive Mayor stated his intention to seek the view of the Corporate Parenting Board on how principles set out in the motion could be best adopted with input from care experienced young people themselves. As this process is ongoing, reference to 'care-experience' is not made in the Strategy. However, it could be incorporated at a later date pending the recommendations of the Corporate Parenting Board.

- 4.14** In February 2023, the Council agreed to be a pilot organisation in the Chief Executives London Committee (CELC) Tackling Racial Inequality (TRI) Programme. As part of the programme, each council is requested to adopt the London Local Government Anti-Racism Statement. This sets out the purpose behind the statement, how it was developed, the commitment required from organisations and the reasons for all London local authorities to adopt it. It is key to driving systemic cultural change across London authorities and is attached at Appendix B. On 27 September 2023, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet adopted the London Local Government Anti-Racism Statement.
- 4.15** The CELC TRI standards also require that each council appoint a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for race from both organisational and political leadership. The Chief Executive and Executive Mayor were appointed as the internal officer and political SROs on 27 September 2023.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1** Retain the 2020-2024 Equality Strategy until it expires. There is no legal obligation to review equality objectives until 2024, but revision now supports implementation of the equality pledges made in 2022 and work to become an anti-racist organisation and provides clarity by bringing together into one strategy the actions and targets contained in various equality policy documents.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1** At its meeting on 25 July 2023, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered the Council's proposed approach in updating the Equality Strategy. It welcomed confirmation that the Equalities Impact Assessment was being refreshed and endorsed the approach of requiring the equalities implications of a decision to be assessed at an early stage in the decision-making process, rather than being left to a later stage when it could be more challenging to meaningfully take account of the potential equalities implications. The Committee welcomed that the Equalities Strategy Delivery Plan would focus on measurable outcomes using SMART targets, which ensure that its success could be assessed.
- 6.2** The Committee made the following recommendations. Responses will be published as an addendum to this report once finalised:
- 6.2.1 that there be further consideration of how the refreshed Equalities Strategy can reflect the intersectionality between protected characteristics.
 - 6.2.2 that a process for holding regular challenge sessions with those officers responsible for specific actions/workstreams within the Strategy be developed as part of the ongoing monitoring of delivery, in order to improve accountability for the delivery of the Equalities Strategy.
 - 6.2.3 that given its scope, the Equalities Strategy should have a longer-term end date, but that key review points be built into the Strategy at appropriate intervals to allow for adjustments and the opportunity to refocus as needed; and that the

refreshed strategy be sufficiently dynamic to take account of any new initiatives or legislation that may arise over its lifespan.

6.2.4 That the EDI Board consider embedding Equalities Champions within directorates to complement existing structures and systems within the Council aimed at promoting equalities and inclusivity.

- 6.3** The Council has consulted on individual elements that make up significant parts of the strategy, such as the Equality Pledge and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge in 2021. There has been extensive staff engagement in the development of the Council's People and Cultural Transformation Strategy. Both the Pledges and the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy have informed the update of the Equality Strategy. Moreover, the updated strategy retains the original objectives, with a few minor adjustments detailed at paragraphs 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10.
- 6.4** Workshops have been held with staff to receive their feedback on the update of the strategy. In addition, officers across council directorates have been involved in reviewing and updating supporting actions and performance measures to ensure that they are effective and fit for purpose.
- 6.5** The Council will continue to engage with residents on equality issues during the life of the strategy. It will also ensure that council employees have an opportunity to give their views on the progress achieved and co-create where possible. In particular, as part of the CELC TRI initiative, staff will be involved in exploring anti-racism, which will be followed by public engagement on residents' perceptions of the Council as an anti-racist organisation.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 7.1** The Equality Strategy supports two priorities under Outcome 1 of the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-26:
- Become a council which listens to, respects and works in partnership with Croydon's diverse communities and businesses.
 - Develop our workforce to deliver in a manner that respects the diversity of our communities.
- 7.2** We will work to increase opportunities for residents to get involved in decisions and improvements that affect their lives and to put local voices at the heart of the Council's work. We will ensure that all residents are treated fairly, with respect and dignity. We need to strengthen leadership and management, develop behaviours aligned with the Council's values, improve staff skills, and create a psychologically safe and inclusive environment for all staff. We will support, develop and value our staff to ensure the Council is accessible and visible to our diverse communities and that it delivers the proactive and respectful services they expect and deserve.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1.1** There are no direct financial implications arising from the updated Equality Strategy 2023-27.
- 8.1.2** Comments approved by Lesley Shields, Head of Finance for Assistant Chief Executive and Resources on behalf of the Director of Finance. 17/08/23.

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.2.1** Section 149(1) (a) to (c) of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty (PSED) with which the Council is required to comply. This provides that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2.2** The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 imposes specific duties on the Council to enable better performance by the Council of the PSED. Under Regulation 4 ('Publication of information') the Council must publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the duty imposed by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. Under Regulation 5 (Equality Objectives), the Council is also required to publish one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve to do any of the things mentioned section 149 (1) (a) to (c). Regulations 4 and 5 both require the information to be first published not later than 30th March 2018 and thereafter, in respect of Regulation 4 yearly and Regulation 5 at intervals not greater than every 4years.
- 8.2.4** Regulation 6 ('Manner of publication') provides that the requirements in regulations 4 and 5 to publish information are requirements to publish the information in a manner that is accessible to the public. The Council may comply with the requirements to publish information by publishing the information within another published document.
- 8.2.5** The Equality Strategy enables the Council to comply with the statutory requirements under Regulation 4 to 6 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.
- 8.2.6** The Equality Strategy, which includes the equality Objectives, is part of the Council's Policy Framework under Article 4 of the Constitution and must be adopted or approved by Full Council. In addition, the adoption or approval of plans and strategies comprising the Policy Framework must comply with the provisions of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in Part 4C of the Constitution.

8.2.7 Failure to publish information to demonstrate the Council’s compliance with the duties imposed under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 together with one or more Objectives that the Council can achieve to do any of the things mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 set out above would be a breach of Regulation 4 and Regulation 5 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

Comments approved by: Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer.

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 As a public body, the Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty [PSED], as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The PSED requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities and functions. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the Council being exposed to costly, time consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.

8.3.2 The update of the 2020-24 Equality Strategy seeks to achieve the same vision: for Croydon to be “a place of opportunity where everyone can belong, addressing the needs and aspirations of all those who live and work in the borough.” The updated strategy also retains the equality objectives the Council adopted for 2020-2024 but updates the actions and performance measures for the period 2023-2027, to take account of the progress achieved so far and maintain the ambition.

8.3.3 The revised strategy will help the Council to meet the PSED in full, and the supporting Action Plan, along with the approach to monitor its success and deliverability, will also assist the Council in meeting its specific duties imposed by Regulations made under Section 153 of the Act, thus minimising any reason or likelihood of a successful legal challenge on this.

8.3.4 The 2020-24 strategy was developed in partnership with Croydon’s residents, businesses, Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) and staff. We gathered information from a range of impact and needs assessments, identified key challenges and invited a range of internal and external stakeholders to confirm these. We also utilised information a range of national and local sources, some of which are outlined in section 6 of the report. The refreshed strategy takes account of Croydon’s Equality Pledge and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge which were consulted on in 2021. The renewed strategy also includes our commitment to systemic change with regard to anti-racism as detailed in the London Local Government Anti Racism Statement and includes objectives from the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-2026.

8.3.5 The Council is taking a positive action approach to equality, which is permissible under Equality Act 2010. Positive action is defined as taking

“proportionate” steps to improve equality in the workplace by removing or reducing barriers faced by certain groups with shared protected characteristics.

8.3.6 An equality analysis (Appendix C) has been completed and highlights the positive impact that the revised strategy has on all protected characteristics. It also includes data about our residents from Census 2021, along with data about our employees including non-disclosure and details of some of the initiatives that are being carried out to address our public sector duty. We are committed to improving the lived experience of all our residents and employees, in particular those who are underserved. We will listen to our residents and employees and ensure that the systemic change that we are making benefits those who live, work and visit our borough.

8.3.7 Comments approved by Denise McCausland, Equalities Programme Manager. (09/08/2023)

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.4 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

8.4.3 Equality is integral to our workforce processes, policies and practices, including becoming an employer of choice. We continue to make positive progress towards having a workforce that reflects its community and where inclusivity is embedded in our practice, though it is recognised that there is more to do.

8.4.4 The strategy will help the Council achieve its ambition to be an organisation that is collaborative, inclusive and innovative, an employer that lets talent flourish and build workforce capability to meet our ambitions and reflect Croydon’s communities.

8.4.5 Approved by: Gillian Bevan, Head of HR, Resources and Assistant Chief Executives Directorates on behalf of Dean Shoemith, Chief People Officer. (Date 10/08/2023)

9 APPENDICES

- 9.1 A. *Croydon Equality Strategy 2023-27*
- B. *London Local Government Anti-Racism Statement*
- C. *Equality Analysis Form*
- D. *Scrutiny and Overview Committee Minutes, 25 July 2023*

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 None

EQUALITY STRATEGY FOR CROYDON

2023 - 2027

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FOREWORD

Over the past three years Croydon has seen major change. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on inequalities and transformed the way many of us work. The global rise in the cost of living has put extra strain on our communities. In Croydon, the two Reports in the Public Interest and declaration of Section 114 notices have fundamentally changed how the Council will have to operate in the future. These changes, as well as a new political direction for the Council, have triggered this early refresh of the Council's Equality Strategy 2020-2024.

The Council's public sector equality duty is to advance equality of opportunity, foster good community relations and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We will have regard to it in all council functions, going further where possible by demonstrating best practice in equality.

Whilst the refreshed strategy keeps almost all the Outcomes and Objectives of its predecessor, it is informed by data from Census 2021 and our progress to date. It reflects the initiatives and activities now under way, including work to deliver the George Floyd Race Matters and Croydon Equality Pledges, and the inclusion of Gender and Anti-racism in equality impact assessments of our decisions and policies. The refreshed strategy provides a clear, measurable strategic framework for equality in Croydon.

The Strategy also reflects the unprecedented financial challenge facing the Council and the new direction set out in the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-26 to transform it into one which balances its books, listens to residents and delivers sound and sustainable local government services. To achieve that, the coming years will see significant transformation of the Council as it seeks to reduce costs. This will inevitably mean doing less, but working hard to be better at what we continue to do. To succeed, we must consider equality from the earliest stage as we design new service models around those who need them most.

Not only does the Council have duties to its residents, it also has responsibilities to its staff as an employer. The work done by our staff, often under very challenging circumstances, is vital to deliver services that are responsive to the needs of our residents. As we transform the way the Council operates, we need to be sure we are listening to our staff, creating a safe inclusive culture for collaboration and challenge and equipping them with the tools and training they need to deliver the change our residents expect. We need to continue tackling pay gaps, ensuring reasonable adjustments are in place and remembering that, like our borough, our employees are a diverse group who should be supported and celebrated. This strategy, with the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-26, sets out our updated plans for how we will provide a safe environment that supports our employees' health and wellbeing.

Of course, we cannot achieve our ambition to enhance and embed equality alone. It is a priority for us to become a council which listens to, respects and works in partnership with Croydon's diverse communities, businesses and other public sector organisations like the NHS. Collectively we will work to make Croydon a place where people feel valued and can have a voice, a place free from prejudice and discrimination.

Jason Perry, Executive Mayor of Croydon

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Council's Equality Strategy is to provide a detailed insight into our ongoing commitment to equality, set out in one place our equality objectives and other arrangements for embedding equality into everything we do and, perhaps most importantly, set out where we will focus improvements.

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This refreshed Equality Strategy reflects the exceptional financial and governance challenges facing the Council. Equalities considerations will need to be at the heart of the Council's thinking, given the level of change and service transformation expected over the coming years. This Strategy sets out a framework for the actions we will take, and the values we will be guided by, as the council transforms to reduce costs, improve outcomes and reduce inequality for residents.

Developing the strategy and its objectives

The Council, like other public bodies, must publish information about equality every year and equality objectives every four years. Our approach in 2020 built on the partnership work undertaken the previous year to identify priorities through assessments, surveys and consultation exercises. These activities highlighted issues that need to be addressed in the years ahead. From this information our equality objectives were drafted and adopted after a final consultation.

It should be noted that many council services are currently contributing through their strategies to tackle inequalities and address disadvantage for protected groups across the borough. Some of the equality objectives will be found embedded in other relevant strategies and plans that are published, such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Adult Social Care and Health Strategy. Importantly, the absence of an equality issue in these objectives does not mean that it is insignificant, or that we will ignore that issue; rather, it signifies that we focus our effort and limited resource on addressing the greatest inequalities.

Updating the strategy

We have updated the strategy at a time of great change for Croydon. In doing so we have been informed by the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026, the Council's main strategic document, the progress that we have made, and new equality initiatives. We are also giving effect to the Chief Executives London Committee's (CELC) Tackling Racial Inequality Standard. Equality Impact Assessments in Croydon will consider anti-racism and gender in addition to protected characteristics specified by the Equality Act 2010. Key to delivering this strategy will be the allocation of limited resources to deliver positive outcomes, as far as is practicable at a time when the organisation is under significant financial pressure.

This strategy supports the following objectives of the Mayor's Business Plan:

- **Become a council which listens to, respects and works in partnership with Croydon's diverse communities** through committing to work with residents to better understand our communities by increasing our network across seldom heard groups; to use data about local communities to inform decisions and improve services; and to ensure services proactively target groups that have accessibility issues as a result of age, mental health, disability, language, digital and or physical barriers. We will also develop our understanding of the intersectionality between protected characteristics.
- **Develop our workforce to deliver in a manner that respects the diversity of our communities** through ensuring it reflects our diverse communities at all levels and receives regular, updated equality training, holding ourselves to account and tackling systemic issues concerning equality issues and becoming an anti-racist organisation.
- **Deliver a vibrant London Borough of Culture which showcases local talent and supports Croydon's recovery** through a programme that reflects the borough authentically and shines a light on our diverse communities.
- **Support the local economy and enable residents to upskill and access job opportunities** through ensuring that people with protected characteristics are able to benefit.
- **Ensure children and young people have opportunities to learn, develop and fulfil their potential** through enabling better education outcomes by groups who need support and addressing inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system.
- **Tackle anti-social behaviour, knife crime and violence against women and girls so that Croydon feels safer** through committing to the development of a strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.

- **Work with partners and the voluntary community and faith sector (VCFS) to promote independence, health and wellbeing and keep vulnerable adults safe** through committing to joint work to ensure equitable access to health and care services and enable residents to know where and how to access services.
- **Work closely with health services and the VCFS to improve resident health and reduce health inequalities** through committing to joint work to understand and reduce health inequalities.

Progress highlights

- An improvement in the proportion of staff preferring not to disclose their equality information between 2019/20 and 2022/23, e.g. from 32% to 20% for ethnicity; 34% to 22% for disability; and 36% to 23% for sexual orientation
- The gender pay gap for council staff was eliminated and the disability pay gap is low.
- There has been a general improvement in reducing the gap between the council's staffing profile and Croydon's population in terms of ethnicity.
- Developed the Equalities Pledge and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge in 2022, to engender a societal change in the borough and cultural change at the Council, other Croydon places of employment and voluntary and community groups. 37 organisations signed up to one or both. We will continue to encourage other community, voluntary and faith groups along with businesses and statutory organisations to adopt the pledges.
- Adopted the all-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia in January 2022.
- Croydon Council was designated a Spotlight Organisation for Race Equality Week in 2022 and 2023.
- Introduced Tea Break staff meetings to raise awareness on equality issues and support culture change. Received the Bronze Trailbreaker Award for Tea Breaks from Race Equality Matters in November 2022
- Developed a Guardian's Programme to give employees a safe space to talk about issues of concern relating to the organisational culture, bullying or other forms of inappropriate behaviour.
- Council staff diversity network groups have supported change to our workforce profile by their visibility of staff diversity through awareness raising events, communications campaigns and role modelling. Two new staff network groups were integrated into council decision making process: the Christian Network in May 2022 and the Young Professionals Network in February 2023.

We have established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Internal Control Board which meets every month to provide equality governance and coordinate arrangements for monitoring progress against the strategy and for embedding equality into council functions. Progress is reported

to the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet. Supported by the Council's Equality Programme Manager, the EDI Board has been responsible for overseeing the review of this strategy.

We will strive to ensure that the equality objectives in this strategy are owned by all leaders, managers and employees and embedded across the organisation, through commitments in service plans, personal objective setting and pledges. The EDI Board will hold directorates to account on progress in implementing this strategy. We will report on the implementation of this plan every year, using updates from all directorates and partnerships that own the objectives, measures and actions, to ensure that council policies and practice take account of our progress, the lessons we have learnt, and any emerging and prevalent national and local priorities. Ahead of the development of a new equality strategy for 2027-2031, we will conduct a comprehensive analysis of our measures and progress to date.

We face difficult decisions ahead and cannot do everything we would like or see a need for. We will however improve our work with our partners and our communities to meet rising demand and the challenges ahead, while remaining conscious that equality, diversity and inclusion must be at the heart of the design and delivery of our services and the achievement of best value.

PLAN ON A PAGE

VISION

Croydon is a place of opportunity where everyone can belong, addressing the needs and aspirations of all who live and work in the borough

The Council addresses social inequities as a community leader and employer

- OBJECTIVE 1: The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society.
- OBJECTIVE 2: Continue to increase our network across underserved groups.
- OBJECTIVE 3: Data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services.
- OBJECTIVE 4: The Council's workforce reflects our diverse communities at all levels.
- OBJECTIVE 5: We ensure equality training is central to the way we work, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs.
- OBJECTIVE 6: Council staff proactively hold challenging, targeted conversations, holding ourselves to account, listening, learning, believing and taking action on systemic issues concerning inequality.
- OBJECTIVE 7: The Council demonstrates that it is becoming an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist organisation, by embedding this principle in its strategies, decision-making, actions and behaviours, and promotes anti-racist practices.

Strong partner working ensures improved access to opportunities and meets individual needs as they arise

- OBJECTIVE 1: Information about the Council's work towards tackling inequality is easy to access and understand.
- OBJECTIVE 2: Enable better education outcomes by offering support to groups who need it most.
- OBJECTIVE 3: Systemic inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed.
- OBJECTIVE 4: Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life.
- OBJECTIVE 5: Services are proactive in targeting groups that have accessibility issues.

People in Croydon are supported to lead healthier and independent lives for longer

- OBJECTIVE 1: Work with partners to tackle social isolation.
- OBJECTIVE 2: Work with our partners to understand and reduce health inequalities.
- OBJECTIVE 3: Work with our partners to ensure equitable access to health and care services and enable residents to know where and how to access services.

OUTCOME ONE:

The Council addresses social inequities as a community leader and an employer

The Council believes in the dignity of all people and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We are proud of the diversity of our staff and residents and regard this as a strength of our borough. Our aspiration is for Croydon to be safe, welcoming and inclusive. Our People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-26 aims to build an equality driven, diverse and inclusive workplace. The Council recognises its role as both a community leader and an employer reducing inequalities and championing a fairer society. Strong, visible leadership is essential to embed equality, anti-racism and zero tolerance of all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying in the organisation and the community. For this reason, in 2022 we co-created and adopted the Borough-wide [Equalities Pledge](#) and [George Floyd Race Matters Pledge](#) (Appendix 2), which we encourage other organisations in the Borough to adopt.

Objective 1: The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society.

We believe equality is everyone's business: all staff, including anyone we work with or commission to work on our behalf, must advance equality, promote good relations and eliminate discrimination in their work. The Council should continue to lead by example and demonstrably comply with the statutory Public Sector Equality Duty in the services it delivers directly, as well as those it commissions from other providers. It should also seek to influence other organisations and partners to advance equality, diversity and inclusion.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure our Equality Impact Assessments are data and evidence driven. 2. Ensure that council contracts comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. 3. Encourage other organisations to adopt the Equality Pledge and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge. 4. Promote equality of opportunity for individuals of all protected characteristics by recognising and promoting significant celebrations and awareness days and ensuring that workplace practices do not discriminate against any groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equalities pledges have been incorporated into the practice of the Council and promoted to Croydon's VCFS, statutory organisations and businesses. 2. More Croydon organisations are registered as signatories to the pledges. 3. Every new strategy, service plan and staff appraisal has equality objectives. 4. All Council contracts comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. 5. Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are data driven and demonstrate evidence and impact (where change has been made in relation to the EQIA).

We will also:

5. Ensure that every new strategy, service plan and staff appraisal has an equality objective linked to it and reflects our commitment to anti-racism.
6. Develop a culture in the Council which puts equality at the centre of service delivery through delivery of the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-26.
7. Develop a three-year partnership plan to tackle violence against women and girls.
8. Develop a youth safety plan with partners and young people to reduce serious youth violence and exploitation.
9. Develop with our community partners a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024-2028 as well as a financial inclusion strategy for council tenants.
10. As part of Borough of Culture, have a cultural programme that reflects Croydon authentically, is accessible to all and highlights communities that have been under-represented through ways such as film screenings and museum exhibitions.

Objective 2: Continue to increase our network across groups that are underserved

While we engage meaningfully with large parts of the community, like other councils we must continue to develop better ways of reaching those groups that are underserved, for example LGBT+, refugees, asylum seekers, homeless people, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, people with disabilities including those with communication impairments. Given the scale of change in Croydon, it is important that the voices of all communities are heard. Drawing on the 2021 Census data, our Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) will enable us to consider the best methods to consult and identify which groups we need to do more to reach. We will review our corporate approach to community engagement and produce guidance for council services on their consultations and engagements to support inclusion and demographic diversity. We will also introduce a resident survey to increase the opportunity for local people to give their feedback on the Council, its policies and culture.

What actions will we take?

What will success look like?

We will continue to:

- 11. Establish and embed effective arrangements for participation to ensure that the voice of the child and the voice of the parent/carer informs service delivery improvement.
- 12. Co-design new resident voices model for adult social care to enable people with lived experience to contribute to policy making, commissioning and service delivery.
- 13. Ensure service user surveys contain “how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the council listens and acts on your feedback”.

We will also:

- 14. Review our corporate approach to community engagement, to ensure that it is effective in reaching all communities including minoritised groups and promotes a culture of sustained and equitable engagement and participation within all areas of the organisation.
- 15. Actively listen to and take account of resident feedback, give guidance to services on their consultations and engagements, and introduce a resident survey.
- 16. Hold regular question time sessions with the Executive Mayor around the borough.
- 17. Ensure formal consultations and service user surveys collect data on protected characteristics of respondents and use this data to identify and target improvements to services.

- 6. Baseline data on who is engaging with the Council enables us to focus efforts on engaging with those who are not; ongoing data tracks progress.
- 7. We have clearer data on service user satisfaction and know where we are doing well and where we must improve.
- 8. The Council engages with all communities and seeks to involve residents as much as possible to co-create services and define actions to tackle inequalities and promote anti racist practice.
- 9. Young people, parents, carers and adult social care users feel that improvement of the services they access is informed by their views.
- 10. The Council listens to and responds to views from all communities and gives feedback on how this is incorporated into decisions to ensure transparency and trust are maintained.

Objective 3: Data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services.

Good policy development should be informed by accurate, comprehensive and timely equality information from the outset wherever possible to allow policies to target resources and improve outcomes for those who need it most. Currently, data mostly relates to age, gender, disability and ethnicity with lower levels of data held about other minoritised groups. Our information is not always sophisticated enough to allow us to draw useful inferences, for example our data on religious/faith groups; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender; members of newer communities, and some other protected characteristics, depends on the 2021 Census which will become outdated with time. To improve decision making further, we will develop a consistent approach to data collection and quality across the organisation with a lens for inequalities.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <p>18. Support staff to improve the collection of accurate, complete and up to date equality data about the Croydon population and council service users.</p> <p>19. Use equality data and information intelligently to inform priorities and policies, as well as target interventions and resources.</p> <p>We will also:</p> <p>20. Adopt gender as a local characteristic to ensure that we continue to hear the voices of people who identify differently from their sex identified at birth. EQIAs to consider both sex and gender separately.</p>	<p>11. Standardised equalities data is captured by council services and is updated, shared, analysed and used to help inform decisions, policies and service improvements.</p>

Objective 4: The Council's workforce reflects our diverse communities at all levels.

For the Council to serve the people of Croydon effectively, its workforce needs to reflect the borough's population in all respects at all levels of the organisation – from front line staff to strategic decision-makers. Progress has been made on this front and the proportion of staff preferring not to disclose their equality information is falling significantly. The council workforce is becoming more representative of the borough's population in terms of ethnicity and sex. Croydon has not seen gender and disability median pay gaps in recent years. However, there is more to do to tackle the ethnicity pay gap and to reflect our borough's diversity, particularly at senior levels of the organisation and at grade 15 and above. This requires further work to eliminate conscious and unconscious bias at all stages of the employee cycle: recruitment; induction and supervision; training and development; retention and reward; and disciplinary and grievances.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Support staff to share their equality data to improve the disclosure rates by increasing understanding of how we use it to drive positive change. 22. Develop annual performance indicators to measure recruitment, learning and development, career progression and employee relations, analyse and publish data and take action to address identified trends. 23. Publish an annual pay audit by gender, disability and ethnicity and implement an action plan to reduce the gaps. 24. Ensure all council recruitment panels represent the diversity of Croydon's population wherever possible. 25. Use anonymous recruitment processes which don't reveal details of race, age, gender, disability or socio-economic status. 26. Provide reasonable adjustments for disabled staff in interviews and employment. 27. Positively encourage applications from diverse and under-represented groups when advertising for posts and taking actions to respond to under representation in this area identified by organisational data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Equality disclosure rate among council staff is increased to 85% across all protected characteristics. 13. Published data shows that the council workforce's profile reflects Croydon's communities and under-represented groups - including at grade 15 and above. 14. More staff from all under-represented protected characteristics participate on available leadership programmes. 15. Gender and disability pay gaps in the Council remain at zero and the ethnicity pay gap continues to reduce and remains below the London average.

Objective 5: The Council ensures equality training is central to the way we work, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs.

We will develop our workforce to deliver in a manner that respects the diversity of our communities. In working towards this aim, we regularly review the training in equality, diversity and inclusion provided to all staff, so they gain the relevant knowledge and skills to mainstream equality best practice. Councillors will receive training too. We will also run action leadership and talent development programmes for staff from minoritised groups.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <p>28. Review current equality skills, knowledge and training available to meet service needs and identify gaps.</p> <p>We will also:</p> <p>29. Ensure that all staff complete mandatory training in equality, diversity and inclusion, including anti-racism, every two years, attendance is monitored and managers are held to account; all officers who write reports to complete EQIA training.</p> <p>30. Provide training in equality, diversity and inclusion, now including anti-racism, for Councillors in line with staff training. Member attendance will be reported to the Ethics Committee.</p>	<p>16. All new starters (officers and Members) have completed Equality Essentials, conscious inclusion training and other appropriate designated training.</p> <p>17. Consistent high-quality of EQIAs.</p> <p>18. Equalities training is regularly reviewed.</p>

Objective 6: Council staff proactively hold challenging, targeted conversations, holding ourselves to account, listening, learning, believing and taking action on systemic issues concerning inequality.

We will ensure a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying from employees, residents, customers and service users, publicising the staff code of conduct and providing staff with information on what it is. We will encourage people to safely challenge negative behaviours, including bias and the use of stereotypes, ensuring that they are not treated less favourably for doing so. We will build on the successful ‘Tea Talks’ and staff Guardians programmes to ensure safe spaces are in place to increase the staff voice and engagement, including supporting our range of staff diversity networks (Race Equality Network, Disability Network, Women’s Network, LGBT+Allies Network, Carers Network, Christian Network, Croydon Young Staff Network and Mental Health and Wellbeing Network). We will support our managers to manage diverse teams and resolve equity related issues by ensuring that we have equipped them with the knowledge and skills to do so.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will:</p> <p>31. Ensure a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying, publicising the staff code of conduct, providing staff with information on what it is and encouraging people to safely challenge this where it occurs ensuring that people are not treated less favourably for doing so.</p> <p>32. Ensure reasonable adjustments are available (including when working from home) for those who need them, including reflecting the needs of neurodiverse staff.</p> <p>33. Conduct pulse surveys to identify the impact of organisational actions on employees’ lived experience and psychological safety at work and ask: ‘How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the Council as your employer listens and acts on your feedback?’</p> <p>34. Continue the programme of ‘tea talks’ for staff exploring issues, led by staff networks, to create safe spaces for collective staff learning and discussion.</p> <p>35. Ensure leadership and project meetings at all levels dedicate time to EDI issues, creating actions, identifying inequalities, tracking progress against the equality strategy, and ensuring accountability.</p>	<p>19. Staff and managers feel safe to discuss their lived experience and be their authentic selves at work with no expectation of retaliation.</p> <p>20. Tackling race inequality is part of everyday conversation. This is measured in pulse surveys.</p> <p>21. Employee surveys show an increase in satisfaction levels.</p> <p>22. Senior leaders personally challenge race and other inequalities and drive an improvement agenda. They are able to demonstrate instances of allyship around anti-racist practice and race-related issues.</p> <p>23. Senior leaders and managers demonstrate their commitment to equality in decision-making and have specific equality, diversity and inclusion performance objectives and accountabilities, including tackling racial inequalities.</p>

Objective 7: The Council demonstrates that it is becoming an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist organisation, by embedding this principle in its strategies, decision-making, actions and behaviours, and promotes anti-racist practices.

We want to go beyond compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and become a council which actively champions the values and behaviours of a diverse and inclusive organisation committed to continuous improvement. Our People and Cultural Transformation Strategy supports the cultural and behavioural change required at all levels of the organisation. Alongside this, we are piloting the Chief Executives London Committee (CELC) Tackling Racial Inequality Standard. We will apply the good practice we learn from this beyond race equality to all our equalities work.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will:</p> <p>36. Adopt the London Councils anti-racist statement at Cabinet in September 2023 and develop anti-racist framework for Croydon which embeds anti-racism in our strategies, actions, behaviours, EQIAs and decision making.</p> <p>37. Building on action 31 above, commit to zero tolerance of racism from employees, residents, customers, suppliers and service users by challenging racist behaviour or stereotypes expressed by individuals.</p> <p>38. Deliver positive action leadership and talent development programmes for staff from all minoritised groups.</p> <p>39. Establish reciprocal mentoring partnerships between Corporate Management Team / Senior Leadership and Global Majority staff and other racialised and minoritised staff.</p> <p>40. Engage with staff to explore anti-racism and how it can be promoted through employment practice and service delivery.</p> <p>41. Conduct pulse surveys of staff, firstly to establish a baseline of how many consider the Council to be an anti-racist organisation and then to assess improvement.</p> <p>42. Seek feedback from the public on whether they consider the Council to be an anti-racist organisation.</p>	<p>24. Race and equality considerations are visibly evaluated and reflected in our strategies and action plans. They are clearly communicated to staff, residents, suppliers and partners and embedded into processes and procedures.</p> <p>25. The organisation can evidence change/improvement in habits, behaviours and ways of working via informal and formal mechanisms such as staff surveys, staff networks, and feedback across all levels in the organisation.</p> <p>26. The impact of anti-racist training delivered to the workforce is visible in the council's culture and an increasing percentage of residents and staff consider the Council to be an anti-racist organisation.</p> <p>27. Reciprocal mentoring enables Global Majority employees to learn from the experience of senior staff, who in turn learn from the experiences of Global Majority and other racialised council colleagues and develop a better understanding of how to tackle racial inequality in the workplace.</p>

OUTCOME TWO:

Strong partner working ensures improved access to opportunities and meets individual needs as they arise.

Our goal is to break the cycle of inter-generational disadvantage starting in early childhood and reoccurring throughout life and improve the outcomes for all our residents, but particularly those experiencing inadequate housing, poor diet, lack of access to decent open spaces and other factors which compound disadvantage for those from less well-off backgrounds. There is a clear linkage between poverty and underserved communities. Data for 2021/22, for example, show that in the UK the proportion of people in relative poverty after housing costs was 31% for families in which someone had a disability, compared with 18% for those where nobody was disabled. This means that family income, excluding disability benefits, was below 60% of average household income. Data for 2019/20 to 2021/22 show that some ethnic groups also face much higher rates of relative poverty after housing costs than others, particularly those who are from a Bangladeshi ethnic group (53%), Pakistani (49%) or Black (40%), compared with those from a White ethnic group (19%). The Council cannot tackle the underlying causes of inequality alone, but we will seek to use our partnerships to tackle the inequality of life chances. For instance, with our community partners we will develop a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2024-2028 as well as a financial inclusion strategy for council tenants. Progress will require a concerted effort from the Council and its partners.

Objective 1: Information about the council's work towards tackling inequality is easy to access and understand.

We will be open and transparent about what we are doing to tackle inequality, the progress we have made as well as the challenges we face. Equality data is published on the Croydon Observatory, to ensure that voluntary, community and faith sector partners, health colleagues and partners can use the information and the Council to work with them to identify gaps, assess needs, set priorities and equalities objectives.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide open and transparent communications about our progress against equality objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - publish an accessible equality annual report demonstrating progress and share this with our community and partners. - Continue to publish up-to-date equality data on the Croydon Observatory. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equalities information and progress against objectives is published regularly on the Croydon Observatory. This is easy to access and understand. 2. The Council uses consistent and understandable terminology which is explained and accessible to residents.

<p>We will also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Use the terms Global Majority, racialised groups and minoritised groups in everyday conversation, articles, reports and strategies, explaining why they are needed (see Glossary at Appendix 1). 3. Use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), definition of anti-Semitism and All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia as adopted by full Council. (See Glossary) 	
<p>Objective 2: Enable better education outcomes by offering support to vulnerable groups in targeted areas of the borough, including boys and those eligible for the PPG (pupil premium grant).</p> <p>Progress has been made improving education outcomes in Croydon in recent years, but there remain significant inequalities in attainment. The early years challenge is the most profound for the borough as a whole and particularly for children from specific racialised groups, namely the African and African Caribbean communities. Training and challenge are offered to school leaders on adultification and other topics which help to safeguard and improve outcomes for these groups. We focus on developing inclusive practices for schools, including anti-racist strategies in conversations with school leaders. Children getting free school meals in Croydon have access to a range of year-round activities and provisions aimed at raising their attainment.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">What actions will we take?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">What will success look like?</p>
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Work in partnership with all Croydon schools, settings and partners to share best practice, deliver the very best for all our young people and ensure resources are targeted at intervening in exclusion and suspension practices where issues of disproportionality arise. 5. Analyse the achievement of specific pupil groups and take action to enable better outcomes to address gaps. 6. Signpost to information available on education, training and employment opportunities, qualifications and careers guidance, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A narrower outcome gap for groups identified as underachieving, especially at Key Stages 1, 2, 4 and 5. 4. A higher % of residents from protected groups and disadvantaged areas gaining qualifications (inc. English) and training opportunities via Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT).

<p>including basic English skills, post-16 provision, financial management and additionally guidance for over-50s.</p> <p>7. Share best practice and learn from our partners, for example through the Pupil Premium Network, to include best practice on wellbeing and emotional needs support.</p>	
<p>Objective 3: Systemic inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed</p> <p>Improving outcomes for young people is best achieved when they are able to remain in school. We work to improve attendance of all pupils but with areas of focus on White working-class boys, boys of African and African Caribbean heritage, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers and those accessing free school meals, through frontline engagement workers and the Team Around the School model.</p>	
<p>What actions will we take?</p>	<p>What will success look like?</p>
<p><i>We will continue to:</i></p> <p>8. In partnership with the health service, work with education and training settings to listen to the voice of children and young people on their mental wellbeing, the availability of pastoral and therapeutic support in schools, and their links to support networks outside schools.</p> <p>9. Monitor attendance and exclusion rates and take action to address over-representation where identified.</p>	<p>5. Increase in the % of young people who feel they are listened to - including looked after children and young carers.</p> <p>6. Improved school attendance and reduced suspension and permanent exclusion rates for all identified groups.</p> <p>7. Reduced proportion of Global Majority and other racialised young people listed for youth justice cautions, conditional cautions and community resolutions ('out of court disposals').</p>
<p>Objective 4: Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life, particularly targeting those under-represented in the employment sector</p> <p>We want to build an inclusive economy in Croydon, supporting the creation of fair employment and good quality jobs for local people. The long-term unemployed which is statistically more likely to include the over-50s, disabled people, Global Majority and other racialised groups, women, young people, lone parents, and people with mental health diagnosis, as well as those lacking basic English skills or with low levels of literacy, are most likely to face barriers to full employment, as people with established work skills and experience re-enter the employment market. Some of the most disadvantaged people often lack basic information and skills. Every major ethnic group in London has seen a fall in the proportion of people who are not in paid work in the decade up to 2022.</p>	

In Croydon some communities were further away from the jobs market than others. According to the 2021 census, the Bangladeshi population of working age had the highest rate of economic inactivity (40.4%), followed by Pakistani residents (40.3%). This compares with residents from Indian and White ethnic backgrounds who had the lowest rates (25.1% and 24.2% respectively). With regard to disability, 12.2% of working age residents who had a work-limiting disability were unemployed, compared with 5.6% of those who did not. Age is also a factor: 87.0% of residents aged 25-49 had a job in 2022, compared with 72.5% of those aged 50-64.

The Council’s apprenticeship programme works with providers to support 300 businesses to develop training programmes and new employment pathways for Croydon residents. 324 employers have adopted the Good Work Standard that provides employers with a set of best employment practice.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Engage with local employers to increase the number and range of apprenticeships, work experience placements, improve access to career opportunities, and pay the London Living Wage. 11. Promote the Good Work Standard in Croydon and support new and emerging entrepreneurs from underserved communities. 12. Working with the South London Partnership, use the Work and Health Programme to ensure that residents with disabilities, care leavers and those further away from the job market receive targeted personalised support into employment. 13. Work with the education sector and others to increase the number of people with the skills needed to contribute to our local digital economy. <p>We will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Ensure a renewed Economic Growth Strategy creates inclusive education and employment opportunities for Croydon residents, including those with protected characteristics who are most likely to be impacted socio-economically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Fewer 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training. 9. 200 residents a year supported into work through Croydon Works. 10. There is an Increase In the number and range of apprenticeships and work placements provided by local employers.

Objective 5: Services are proactive in targeting groups that have accessibility issues.

Breaking down barriers to accessing services is vital if we are to ensure our residents have fair and equitable opportunities. These barriers can arise as a result of disability, age, mental health, language, digital and/ or physical barriers, and seeking asylum. We will continue to support access to translation and accommodate the needs of sight and hearing impaired staff and members of the public. As digital access increases, we will continue to design services to best meet the needs of citizens, ensuring technology is an enabler rather than a barrier to service improvements and access. In recent years the Council has worked with community partners to support asylum seekers temporarily placed in the borough, including a disproportionately high number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The support includes English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) provision, community integration and school places for these groups. The Council will continue to fulfil its duties to them whilst pressing government to fund the full cost of this support and to ensure accommodation standards are improved.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <p>15. Raise awareness of our partner support services, such as for translation, interpretation, Braille, easy read and digital support and hearing impairment support.</p> <p>16. Use data collected by services about accessibility to inform equality analyses.</p> <p>17. Design services to best meet the needs of all residents, including an appreciation and mitigations to ensure residents to not become digitally excluded.</p> <p>18. Support asylum seekers with access to English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) provision, community integration and school places for these groups.</p>	<p>11. The default for service user satisfaction surveys includes the collection and monitoring of protected characteristics.</p> <p>12. Service assessments, user research and co-design are increasingly used as the basis of service improvements.</p> <p>13. Digital services also offer alternative access routes for the digitally excluded.</p> <p>14. Asylum seekers are able to integrate in the community.</p>

OUTCOME THREE:

People in Croydon are supported to lead healthier and independent lives for longer

The Council's [Adult Social Care and Health Strategy 2022-25](#) details how we will achieve our vision for adult social care: residents should live as independent lives as possible; carers are supported in their caring role and our adults at risk of abuse or neglect are kept safe from harm. In delivering this strategy, our mission is to make the best use of available resources to keep people in Croydon safe and independent.

The strategic approach is to:

- Prevent need through universal services promoting wellbeing.
- Reduce need, with targeted interventions for those at risk.
- Delay need, through reablement, rehabilitation and recovery.
- Meet need through progressive planning, using a broad set of social resources.

We will identify and reduce any inequality in care quality or access to care, ensuring service users can experience positive outcomes and be supported with regard to physical and mental wellbeing. We will also support [Croydon's Autism Strategy 2021-24](#), developed with NHS partners and Croydon Mencap to make life easier for thousands of autistic residents and their families and increase awareness and understanding of autism across the whole of our population. In June 2023 Croydon became a dementia friendly borough. We will support Croydon's Dementia Strategic Plan (due in September 2023) developed with NHS partners and Croydon Dementia Action Alliance to make life easier for our residents living with dementia, their families and carers.

Objective 1: Work with partners to further tackle social isolation.

Multiple and complex risk factors can influence social isolation and loneliness. These range from level of education, employment status, wealth, income, housing, crime, ethnicity, gender, disability, age and mental health. These risks factors are more likely to affect some groups, such as people with mental health needs, people with dementia, refugees and asylum seekers. Taking on full time unpaid caring duties can also lead to being more isolated, with these roles likely to be performed by women. Social isolation and loneliness disproportionately affect groups that share protected characteristics and can compound discrimination and disadvantage they experience.

At a time when council budgets are stretched, work with the VCFS will be key to recognising untapped possibilities within every community. We will continue to encourage council staff to volunteer on social priorities in Croydon. We will also work with South West London Integrated Care Board and GP practices to support outreach services, work within communities to signpost socially isolated

people to services and promote online and offline directories of services. This can have a positive impact on mental health and social isolation and reduce the use of costly statutory services. We have commissioned a volunteering brokerage service which will enable VCFS organisations and others to access volunteers, and people who want to volunteer to find out local volunteering opportunities. Befriending is one of the categories of volunteering, which will help to reduce social isolation. We are also promoting volunteering as a form of social value to contractors and collaborating with Friends of Parks groups.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with VCFS partners to increase the number of volunteers and volunteering opportunities. 2. Work with Health partners to support outreach services and signpost socially isolated people to outreach and support services. <p>We will also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop a menu of volunteering options and encourage Council staff to use their volunteer days on social priorities, for example supporting work to reduce social isolation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council staff are aware of volunteering days, and we know the number of staff hours given. 2. Positive impacts on social isolation are reported from the beneficiaries of staff volunteering.

Objective 2: Work with our partners to understand and reduce health inequalities.

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. They can involve differences in health; access to care; quality and experience of care; behavioural risks to health (for example, smoking or alcohol use); and wider determinants of health (such as quality of housing or employment) (The King's Fund, 2022). The health inequalities that existed within Croydon before the Covid-19 pandemic have increased. The [Director of Public Health Report 2022](#) highlights differences in health outcomes between the most and the least deprived wards: in life expectancy at birth; low birth weight; obesity; emergency hospital admissions; the incidence of all cancers; and deaths. We want to close the gaps by identifying and tackling these issues at a local level using a collaborative approach and joint engagement from all partners and communities.

The Council will work with partners and the voluntary, community and faith sector to promote independence, health and wellbeing and keep vulnerable adults safe as set out in [Croydon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024](#). The strategy's overarching principles are: reducing inequalities (with people experiencing the worst health improving their health the fastest); focusing on prevention (which includes addressing avoidable harm caused by inequality); and increased integration (to provide joined up health and care services). We are currently reviewing the carers strategy due to be completed in 2024.

What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Work with partners to implement the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy. 5. Listen to underserved groups and protected groups most likely to be impacted such as autistic people and people living with dementia and their carers, and take account of their views when we commission and develop health services. <p>We will also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Target health checks to eligible residents identified as high risk and/or living in areas of high deprivation. 7. Respond to the recommendations of the Director of Public Health Report 2022. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Earlier interventions across organisations to prevent greater support needs later in childhood for particular groups – e.g., those who are autistic. 4. The views of protected groups and particularly seldom heard groups such as autistic people and people living with dementia are taken into account when we commission and develop health services. 5. Increase in the number of delivery providers of health checks in the community.
<p>Objective 3: Work with our partners to ensure equitable access to health and care services and enable residents to know where and how to access services.</p> <p>Co-locating services makes it far easier for residents to access services, particularly in the health, care and community sector. By working with partners, we will continue to define, map and develop community hubs to bring support services closer to residents. As part of this, local people will be empowered to identify the needs most important to them and how they should be addressed. We work with social prescribers, social workers, voluntary, community and faith sector organisations and residents to support the development of hubs which bring together complementary services and make it easier for residents to access.</p>	
What actions will we take?	What will success look like?
<p>We will continue to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Work with partners to implement the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Strategy and develop a new strategy for 2024 onwards. 9. Continue to support the development of local community partnerships and hubs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Raised awareness among residents around prevention and where and how they can receive support. 7. A Health Inequalities Outcomes Framework is developed and embedded in practice across partnership groups, e.g. Croydon Health and Care Board and Health and Wellbeing Board.

We will also:

10. Support the NHS to develop new Health Centres to increase access to primary care, community services and work with the voluntary sector, to reduce inequalities in access to health and social care across the borough.
11. Work as part of a Croydon system to reduce barriers to access mental health services and support shifts to more culturally appropriate provision, for example by maximising the impact of and amplifying the learning from the Ethnic Minority Health Improvement Project (EMHIP) work and South London Listens.
12. Develop an updated multi-agency harm reduction and suicide prevention strategy.

Key Statistics



- 390, 727 current total population (highest in London)
- 406, 650 population by 2031 and just under 500,000 by 2050.
- 0-19 years – 97,925 (highest in London)
- 20-64 years – 239, 761 (highest in London)
- 65+ - 53, 114 (3rd highest in London)
- 48% male
- 52% female

Croydon has the largest population of all the boroughs in London. The 2021 Census shows that its population has grown by 7.5% (27,349) since 2011 and life expectancy at birth is continuing to increase for both males and females.

For further information on the Croydon's population overview [click here.](#)

Age Profile in Croydon

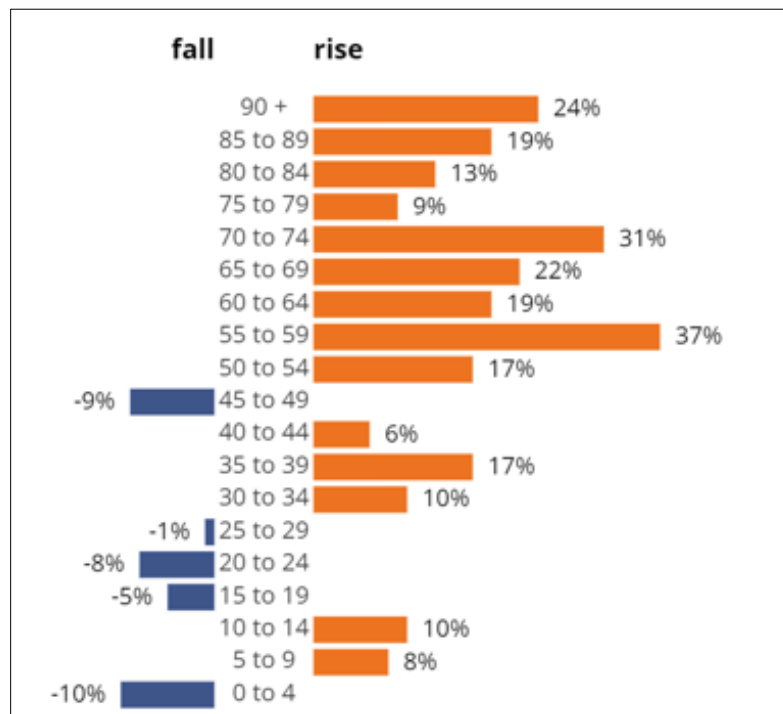
The 2021 Census shows that Croydon has the most people aged 0-19 years and 20-64 years in London, and the third most over-65s. The 0-19 age group makes up 25% of the borough's population, 20-64 year olds represent 61.4% of the borough's population and over 65s make up 13.6% of the Croydon population.

Croydon's large young population makes it the youngest borough in London. This has implications on the types of support that are required to cater to this demographic such as providing sufficient

education provision, training and employment opportunities, childcare and children's social care. The number of looked after children in Croydon remains the highest in London.

There has also been a large increase (19.7%) since 2011 in over-65s. This is much larger than the increases in other age groups, with only a 1.9% increase in people aged 0-15 and a 7% increase in people aged 16-64. The increase in people aged 75+ in particular has significant implications on adult social care costs, which are very high in Croydon in comparison to other London boroughs.

Population change (%) by age group in Croydon 2011-2021

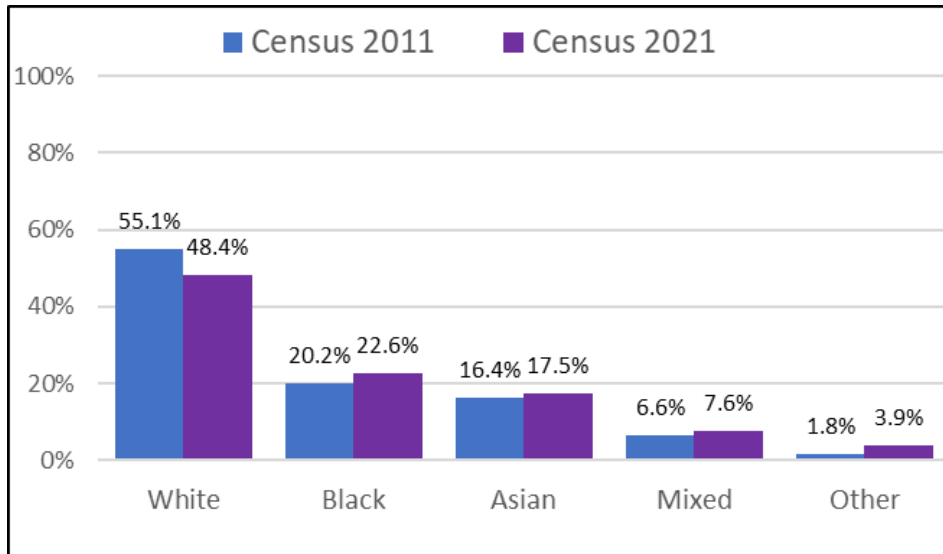


For a London borough, Croydon has the most care homes and until recently the most expensive cost per head for adult social care. This has implications on which types of residents can access quality care, in particular those with protected characteristics. However, Croydon’s cost per head is now falling more in line with the London and national averages which may improve accessibility.

For further information on children and young people in Croydon [click here](#). For further information on the overall age profile of the people in Croydon [click here](#).

Ethnicity

Change in Croydon’s broad ethnic group profile 2011-2021



Croydon is one of London’s most diverse boroughs with over half (51.6%) of its population from Global Majority and other racialised backgrounds. The figures for these ethnic groups have all increased

since 2011. The remaining 48.4% of Croydon’s population identify as white, which has decreased since 2011.

The large diversity of Croydon’s population has significant implications for equalities. The diverse needs of residents must be met across all areas of life in the borough, such as in education, employment, housing and social care.

For further information on Croydon’s breakdown by ethnicity [click here](#).

Deprivation

Croydon has become relatively less deprived compared to other local authorities in England between the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) published in 2015 and the latest IMD from 2019. The proportion of income deprivation for under 15s and over 60s has decreased and there are fewer very deprived areas in Croydon under the three domains of Employment; Health deprivation & disability; and Education, skills & training.

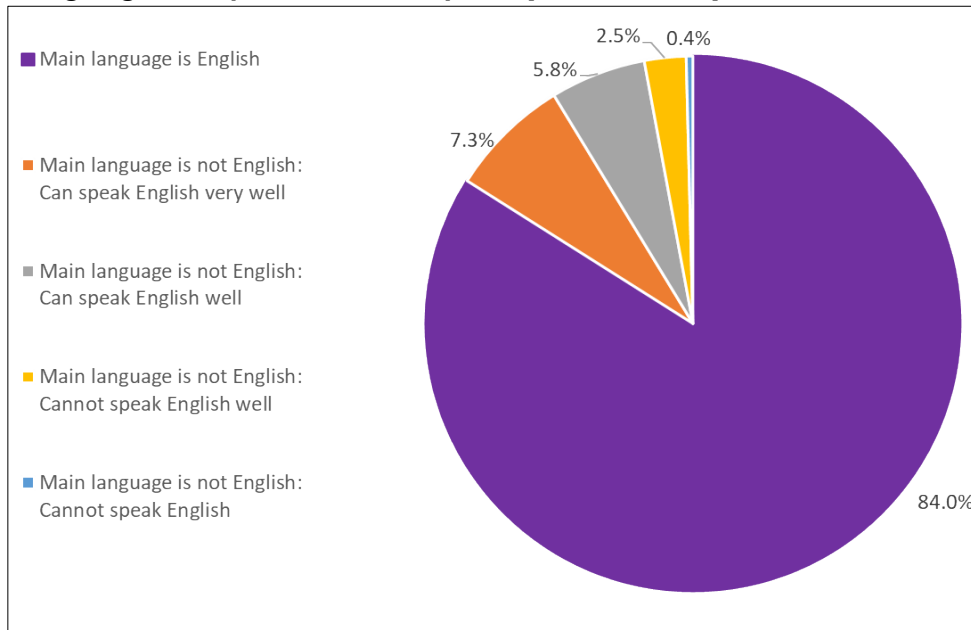
However, IMD 2019 reveals that Croydon is the most deprived of the six Southern Region boroughs in London. Crime remains relatively high across Croydon and under the Barriers to housing & services deprivation domain, more than a third (37.4%) of all LSOAs in Croydon have deprivation scores which put them into the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in the country for this domain. The North and East of the borough remain more deprived than the South.

Deprivation has negative implications on the economic position, health and access to opportunities for residents. It is important to

consider which groups may disproportionately struggle with deprivation, such as those from the Global Majority. Putting measures in place to reduce deprivation across Croydon will improve outcomes for its people and is likely to produce lower crime rates, with people less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour and less reliant on illegal methods to provide for themselves.

Proficiency in English

Language competence in Croydon (Census 2021)



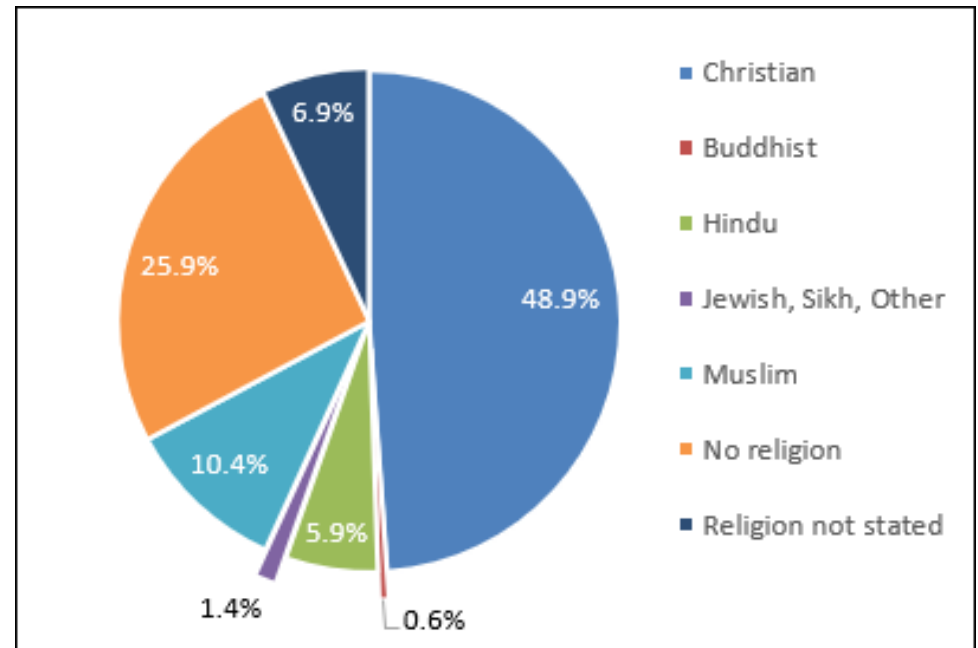
- The vast majority of Croydon’s population speak English, with only 2.9% of people unable to speak English well or at all.
- 16% of Croydon’s population have a main language other than English. 13% of this figure can speak English very well or well.
- Croydon has a much higher proportion of primary and secondary school pupils whose first language is not English compared to Croydon’s Statistical neighbours. Both these

proportions are greater than the national averages in primary (21%) and secondary schools (17%) over the last 5 years.

- Approximately 11,330 people do not speak the language well or at all. We should consider how to meet their needs and explore ways that English proficiency can be improved for this group, to widen their access to public life and reduce their dependency on others to meet their needs such as family members or carers.

Religion

Religion of Croydon residents (Census 2021)



The 2021 Census data shows a significant decline in practice of religion since 2011. Croydon’s Christian population has declined by 7.5% and there has been a 5.9% rise in people that don’t follow any

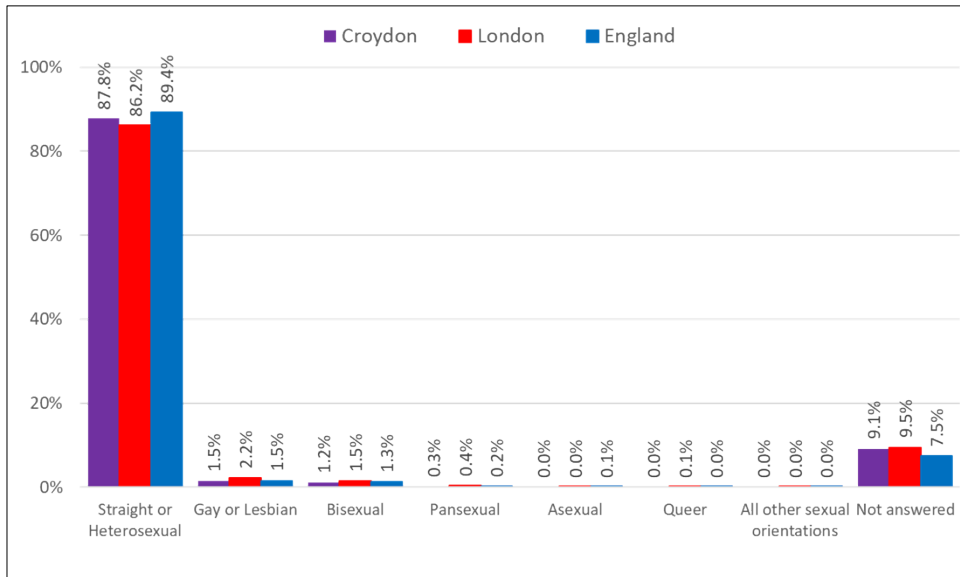
religion. The only religious group which has seen a noticeable increase is the Muslim community with a rise of 2.3%.

The implications of a decline in religious practice may include people of faith being less confident to publicly practise their religion and a lesser understanding in the wider public of religious practices.

For further information on Religion and Belief in Croydon [click here](#).

Sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation (16 year or above) Census 2021



Overall, 3.1% of Croydon respondents to the 2021 Census identified themselves as LGBT+, 1.5% as gay or lesbian, 1.2% bisexual and 0.4% all other sexual orientations. This is lower than the London averages. It is important to note that 9.1% of Croydon

respondents chose not to answer this question, which is also below the London average of 9.5%. This data was not captured in 2011.

Gender identity

In the 2021 Census, 0.2% of people in Croydon identified as a trans man, 0.2% as a trans woman, 0.5% identified differently to their sex registered at birth but gave no specific identity and 0.1% all other gender identities. These are all equivalent to the London averages. It is important to note however that 7.5% of respondents in Croydon chose not to answer this question.

This data was not captured in 2011. The Gender Identity and Research Society (<http://www.gires.org.uk/>) has estimated that nationally 1% of the population may be gender variant to some degree, with 0.2% of the population likely to seek medical treatment, at some stage, to present in the opposite gender.

Disability

The 2021 Census figures showed that 14% of the population in Croydon have a disability under the 2010 Equality Act. This is similar to the London average and below the national average.

8% of disabled Croydon residents said that their disability slightly limited their day-to-day activities, and the other 6% stated that it limited their day-to-day activities significantly. This is similar to the London and national averages.

For further information on individuals with long term health or a disability in Croydon [click here](#).



Education and Skills

Educational outcomes are important as they impact on the level of access to opportunities for people, the employment rates, the economic activity in the borough and levels of deprivation.

- Levels of permanent exclusions from primary and secondary schools are similar to the regional average and lower than the national average.
- Early Years Foundation Stage – the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development (GLD) in Croydon has been improving every year since 2015 and is above average, nationally and regionally.
- Key Stage 1 – The performance of Croydon pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, maths and science is below the London average for these four areas. However, excluding science, this is better than the national average in all these areas. (2021/22)
- Key Stage 2 - Attainment is improving in Croydon. 60% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, which is below the London average (65%) but above the national average (58%) (2021/22).
- Take up of funded hours in early years settings is still below national and regional levels.
- Key Stage 4 - The average Attainment 8 score per pupil is 47.4, compared with the London average of 52.6 and national average of 48.8 (2021/22).
- Key Stage 5 - The proportion of pupils achieving grades AAB or above continues to be much lower than the regional and national averages.

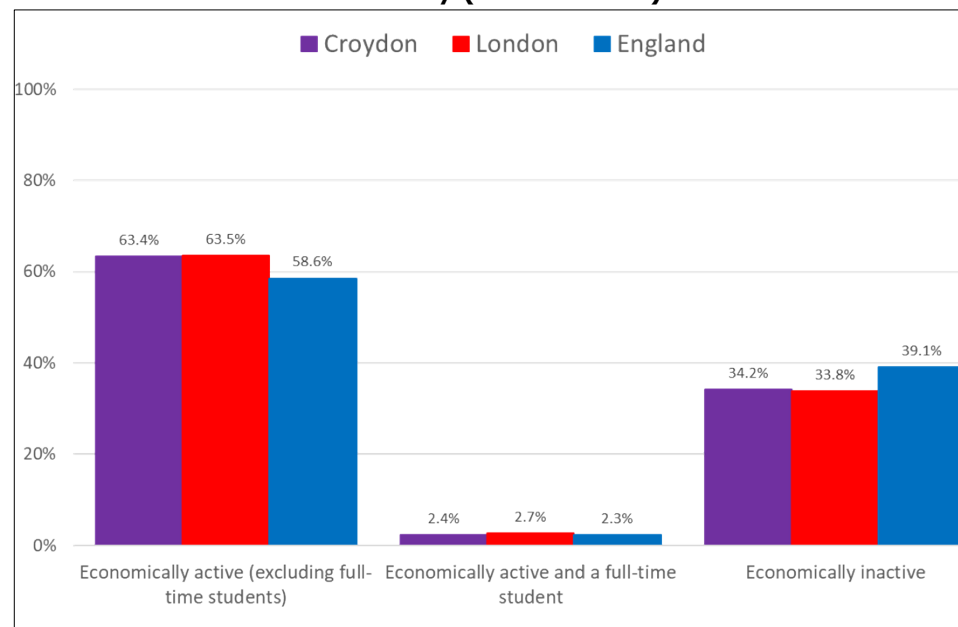


Economy

Croydon has a good level of economic activity but at the same time struggles with a very low job density. A lack of jobs in the borough may increase unemployment rates going forward and this would perpetuate inequalities. A weaker economic position for the people in Croydon may reduce their access to adequate housing, childcare and opportunities for training and education.

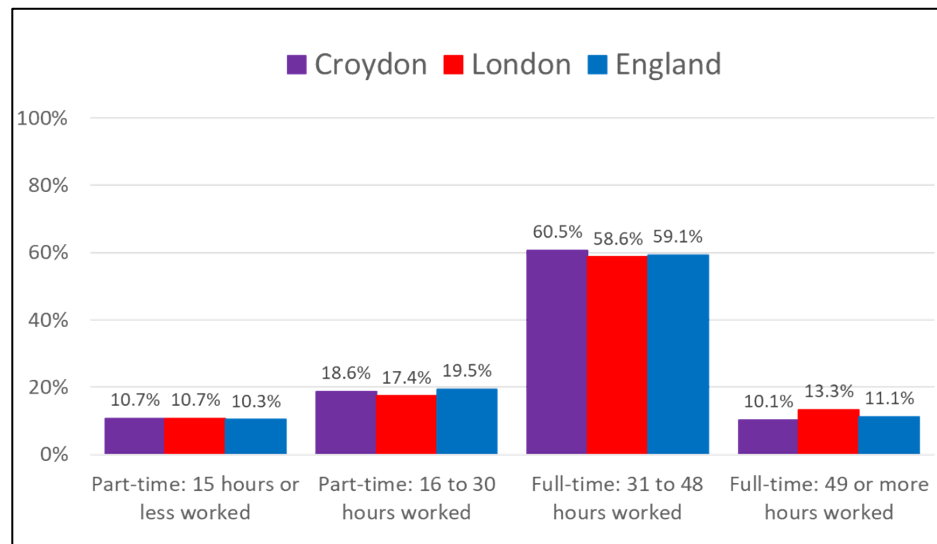
- Croydon's economic activity status is similar to London and above the national level, but job density is 0.55 (2021), much lower than London (1.02) and national (0.85) levels.

Individuals – economic activity (Census 2021)



- The proportion of out of work claimants is falling in all age ranges but is still higher than the regional and national averages.
- The number of businesses is falling but survival rates in Croydon are higher than the regional and national averages.
- The retail industry only makes up 10% of all Croydon industries. If Croydon is to attract more people, the retail offer needs to be improved.
- 70% of the Croydon workforce work fulltime for a minimum of 31 hours a week, and some of this cohort work in excess of 49 hours a week.
- 1 in 10 (9.6%) of Croydon’s working age population have never worked or been long-term employed. This is similar to the London average (10.1%).
- There has been a huge increase in unemployment for 18-24 year olds and 50-64 year olds since April 2020.

Individuals – hours worked (Census 2021)



Although Croydon is one of the more affordable boroughs in London, insufficient housing for groups such as the Global Majority and single parents is a significant challenge for Croydon. A lack of adequate housing perpetuates inequalities in other areas of life such as education, employment, and overall wellbeing.

- Croydon remains one of the more affordable areas live in London, for both buying and renting.
- As of the 2021 Census, Croydon has 152, 900 households which is the highest number in London.
- In 2020/21, Croydon was in the second quartile in London for providing affordable units of housing. In 2021/22, 338 of the 2,121 new dwellings built were affordable homes.
- In 2020/21, approximately three quarters of homeless households in Croydon were made up of residents from Global Majority and other racialised backgrounds.
- The percentage of care leavers in Croydon known to be in suitable accommodation is much lower than the regional and national figures.
- Social housing in Croydon is mainly concentrated in the northern parts and the eastern edge of the borough.
- Most people who approach the Council for help due to being homeless or at risk of homelessness are lone parents with dependent children. They currently make up just over 50% of the Council’s accepted cases for temporary accommodation.

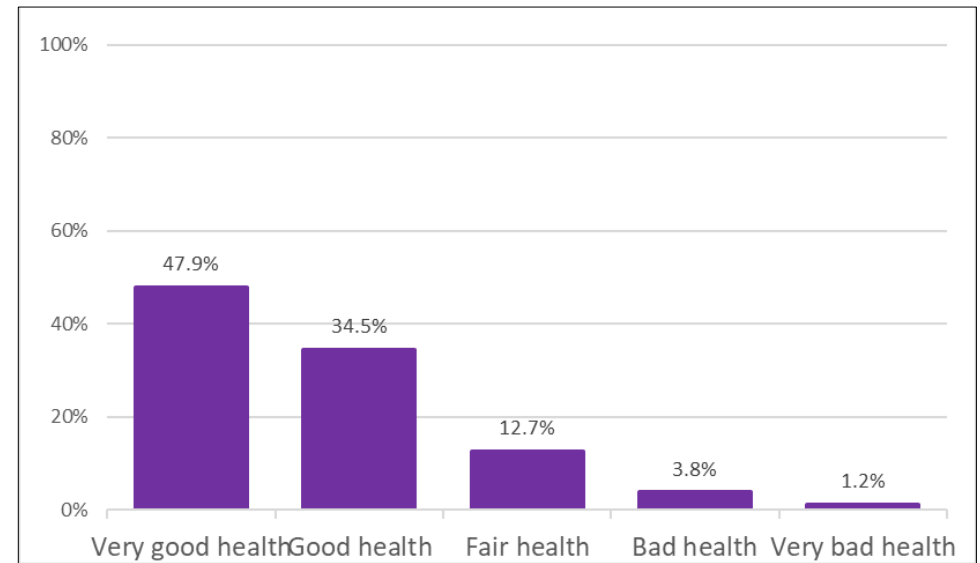


The average life expectancy has increased, which can be seen in the large proportion of Croydon residents who stated they are in very good or good health. This is a great sign of progress, but this also raises challenges on how to meet increased demand on services. Furthermore, a high proportion of overweight and obese adults may lead to increased costs for health services. Certain groups may face greater barriers to living a healthy lifestyle such as the Global Majority and those with disabilities, which must be considered when addressing health outcomes.

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- The majority of Croydon residents (82.4%) who answered the General Health question in the 2021 Census stated that they were in very good or good health.
- Over the last 5 years, the estimated dementia diagnosis rate for over 65s has been going up every year. For the past 2 years, this has been higher than the rate in London and England.
- The conception rate of under 18s is on a downward trend and is below the national average and close to the London average (2020 OHID Fingertips Public Health Data).
- Childhood immunisation rates continue to be lower in Croydon than across London and England.
- Croydon has the 7th highest proportion of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese in London. (2020/21).

General health in Croydon (Census 2021)



Croydon Equalities Pledges

The Croydon Equalities Pledges have been created so that organisations can reinforce the borough's commitment to treat everyone equally and fairly and giving them the freedom to be who they are.

Equalities Pledge

1. Positively promote the equality of opportunity for individuals of all characteristics namely: disability, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership and gender identity, by recognising significant celebrations and awareness days and ensuring that workplace practices do not discriminate against any groups.
2. Ensure that there is mandatory training for all staff at all levels in equality, diversity and inclusion every two years, attendance is monitored, and 100% targets set with staff and managers held to account.
3. Ensure a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying, publicising the staff code of conduct, providing staff with information on what it is and encouraging people to safely challenge this where it occurs ensuring that people are not treated less favourably for doing so.
4. Positively encourage applications from diverse and under-represented groups when advertising for posts and taking actions to respond to under representation in this area identified by organisational data.
5. Use anonymous recruitment processes which don't reveal details of race, age, gender, disability or socio-economic status.
6. Identify and annually publish pay gaps based on ethnicity, disability and gender and putting actions in place to reduce such pay gaps.
7. Provide reasonable adjustments for disabled staff in interviews and employment.
8. Develop and agree an equality policy for the organisation which all staff sign up to and review it every 3 years.
9. Collect data on the protected characteristics of staff and aiming to have a workforce which reflects the Croydon community by using positive action recruitment practices and encourage career development for underrepresented staff.
10. Undertake annual staff surveys to identify the impact of organisational actions on employees lived experience and psychological safety at work.

George Floyd Race Matters Pledge

1. We are working to become an anti-racist organisation by embedding this in our strategies, actions and behaviours and by making a difference to the lived experience of our communities.
2. Committing to zero tolerance of racism from employees, residents, customers and service users by challenging racist behaviour or stereotypes expressed by individuals.

3. Developing our knowledge of anti-racist practice by listening and responding to experiences of staff and the wider community.
4. Developing an understanding of the role that power, privilege, identity and disadvantage that impacts on the lived experience of all staff in particular those from African/African Caribbean, other African heritage communities.
5. Undertaking whole workforce training on unconscious bias and encouraging staff to safely challenge such bias during day to day conversations.
6. Developing cultural awareness by learning more about African/African Caribbean and African other history and cultural practices to develop understanding of staff and customers through podcasts, videos, documentaries and by attending events.
7. Promoting good relationships between groups which share cultural similarities and those that don't by encouraging communities to celebrate together as one.
8. Identifying and addressing any ethnicity pay gaps.
9. Ensuring that recruitment processes from application, shortlisting, interview and appointment conducted in a manner that facilitates positive action in recruitment such as media campaigns, advertising imagery and interview panels that represent the diversity of the borough's population where possible.
10. Developing plans to address challenges where race may not be the only factor and the needs of people may also be in relation to: disability, age, sexual orientation, sex or other protected characteristics.

Glossary

Ally

An individual who supports and advocates for people from a protected characteristic that is not their own (typically) straight and/or cis person who supports members of the LGBT community.

Antisemitism

The following working definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance was adopted by the Council in [2018](#):

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Cisgender or cis

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.

Discrimination and Harassment

- Discrimination is treating someone less favourably based on their membership of a protected characteristic (for example, because of your gender, race or disability) [[EHRC](#)].
- Harassment is unwanted attention that violates the dignity of individuals and creates an intimidating, offensive and hostile environment. This may range from mildly unpleasant remarks to physical violence [[EHRC](#)].

Diverse or diversity

A mix of different kinds of people in the broadest sense, encompassing both physical and intrinsic differences including, young and old people, disabled and non-disabled people, occupations, personalities, or family composition [[EHRC](#)].

Duties

These are things the law says a public body must do.

Equality

Creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and fulfil their potential. It is part of a legislative framework which addresses unfair discrimination.

Equity

This term acknowledges that we don't all start at the same starting point, so adjustments can be used to redress the balance.

Equality Duty

As a public body, the Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty [PSED], as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The PSED requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the Council being exposed to costly, time consuming and reputation-damaging legal challenges.

Gender reassignment

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex [[Equality Act 2010, Section 7\(1\)](#)].

Global Majority

A collective term for people who identify as African, Asian, African Caribbean, Dual Heritage or originating from the Global South. The phrase 'Global South' refers broadly to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Oceania. It refers to countries many of which were previously termed 'Third World' and 'Periphery'. It refers to regions outside Europe and North America that are mostly (though not exclusively) low-income countries, often politically or culturally marginalised. Globally this community currently represents approximately 80% of the world's population [Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE, Leeds Beckett University].

Good Level of Development (GLD)

GLD is the most widely used single measure of child development in the early years. It is a measure of attainment, not progress.

Inequity

This means lack of fairness and/or justice.

Inclusion

The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.

Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD)

Indices of multiple deprivation are widely used datasets within the UK to classify the relative deprivation of small areas. Multiple components of deprivation are weighted with different strengths and compiled into a single score of deprivation. [[GOV.UK](#)]

Islamophobia

The following working definition, developed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, was adopted by the Council in [2021](#):

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in encounters between religions and non-religions in the public sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism, and claims of a demographic 'threat' posed by Muslims or of a 'Muslim takeover'.
- Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.
- Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.
- Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the 'Ummah' (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying Muslim populations the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, e.g. loyalty tests.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia (e.g. Muhammad being a paedophile, claims of Muslims spreading Islam by the sword or subjugating minority groups under their rule) to characterize Muslims as being 'sex groomers', inherently violent or incapable of living harmoniously in plural societies.
- Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.

LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi, trans)

- **Lesbian** - Refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.
- **Gay** - Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. It is also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.
- **Bi** - Bi is an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and non-monoromantic identities.
- **Trans** - An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to)

transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, a gender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

LSOAs

A Lower Super Output Area typically contains around 1,500 residents. Super output areas produce a set of areas of consistent size, whose boundaries would not change (unlike electoral wards), suitable for the publication of data such as the Indices of Deprivation. [\[ONS\]](#)

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage and Civil Partnership means someone who is legally married or in a civil partnership. Marriage can either be between a man and a woman, or between partners of the same sex. Civil partnership is between a man and a woman, or of partners of the same sex [\[EHRC\]](#).

Minoritised

This refers to groups who have been oppressed by social power structures and systems. The term may be used to describe the LGBT+ community, disabled people, women and groups experiencing poverty or who are affected by socio economic impact. Minoritised groups may also be racialised groups; however, the term minoritised has wider implications.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. [\[EHRC\]](#)

Protected characteristics

These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Public bodies

Public bodies include government departments, schools, hospitals and councils.

Racialised groups

This refers to racial groups that have been racialised by the structural and social power structures. This term is often used by academics.

Vulnerability

A combined range of factors could make people more vulnerable or place them in situations that lead to greater vulnerability. For example, some people are vulnerable due to a particular condition such as mental or physical illness as well find themselves placed in vulnerable situations such as living in a poor area with a lack of access to jobs, healthcare or housing. It is a combination of social and economic factors that place them at a disadvantage.

London Local Government Anti-Racism Statement

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Purpose of statement, how it was developed, what next?

- To ensure there is a consistent approach across London, adopted by all local authorities, that is further underpinned by the CELC Tackling Racial Inequality Standards.
- The primary audience is the public and stakeholders who can hold local government to account.
- The statement has been developed by a working group of officers convened by CELC. We started by generating ideas about the key features we would want to see in a statement. This enabled some very open discussion about what to include and why. The statement was then refined over the course of two sessions.
- It has been reviewed by all other working groups on the Tackling Racial Inequality programme.
- The Anti-Racist Statement and CELC Standard was tabled at CELC on 21 October 2022 and we gained with regards to authorities adopting the statement and further.
- The Anti-Racist Statement and CELC Standard was briefed to Leader's on 24 October 2022 with the aiming of achieving sign-off by 13 Dec 2022 Leaders' Committee.

The statement

Local authorities in London are committed to achieving racial equality because we recognise that persistent racial inequalities are unacceptable and adversely affect all Londoners.

We know that certain groups are more likely to face inequality, experience poor outcomes and to live in poverty than others. Often these outcomes are used as an excuse not to acknowledge racial inequality, but groups are not more disadvantaged by chance. Structural disadvantage is rooted in racism and discrimination that is both historical and current.

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We do have legislation to protect against overt racism, negative attitudes and treatment, but many of the systems that discriminate do so because of more subtle and covert unchecked “prejudice, assumptions, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping.”

This wording draws on the Macpherson Report 1999 definition of institutional racism which is still relevant today. This is a dehumanising process that is unacceptable and communities are tired of being treated this way. We cannot let another generation down by not actively responding to what remains a clear and compelling articulation of what needs to change.

Why it matters that we take an anti racist approach

All local authorities should be committed to taking an anti-racist approach because the most damaging aspects of inequality and racism are embedded in society. It is not enough to “not be racist” or to focus on tackling conscious hatred, like racial abuse. It is everyone’s responsibility to proactively and continuously:

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- Unpack and reset beliefs, assumptions and values;
- Take action when we observe racism come into play, in beliefs, assumptions and values and the decision and actions that follow, however subtle;
- Be humble and educate ourselves in what we don’t know about racial inequalities and racism that exists, rather than putting the onus on others to educate us.

The commitment

Our collective commitment to achieve racial equality focuses on what London councils can do together to have a positive impact on life outcomes at all stages, including in relation to health and wellbeing, employment and education. This is about social justice and promoting equality because all Londoners should be able to reach their potential in all spheres.

To be proactive in meeting this commitment, we expect all local authorities to:

1. Build a picture of what the key inequalities are in their area and look at what is driving these.
2. Shape solutions by listening to residents, communities and frontline staff and by responsibly drawing on their lived experience to understand what the issues are and what works, without putting the burden on them to educate us.
3. Set expectations of leaders to make the connection between achieving positive outcomes, their own leadership style and diversity, and to take personal responsibility for what they can do now to bring about change. This acknowledges that residents have worked hard to achieve social justice and rightly expect to see leadership that reflects their position, to see action, and to be part of solution.

The common approach

This commitment to achieve racial equality should be publicly adopted by all local authorities using a consistent approach driving change. Everyone should:

1. Work together as a whole system across London and influence other public bodies and civil society to adopt a common commitment and approach to tackling racial inequality.
2. Build on strengths in communities and be ready to devise solutions with them.
3. Focus on changing our institutional leadership and organisational cultures.
4. Understand and acknowledge that racism is a form of trauma, which impacts on individuals and communities, and can also be intergenerational and that the answer is not just about support for individuals but undoing the systems and processes within our organisations which continue to do harm.
5. Use the disaggregated data intelligently to inform policy and planning. We need to look at where there are patterns of discrimination experienced by ethnically diverse groups, but also move beyond the 'broad brush' data about communities from Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic backgrounds. This means understanding specific needs, impacts and experiences of distinct groups and taking an intersectional approach to identifying and tackling issues by recognising that there is diversity within all groups: socio-economic background; gender; sexuality; faith and other identities that can exacerbate and compound racial inequalities. A central component and initial step is for all local authority to openly publish ethnicity pay data.

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	Assistant Chief Executive
Title of proposed change	Equality Annual Report 2023 and Updated Croydon Equality Strategy 2023-27
Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	Denise McCausland

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

Briefly summarise the proposed change and why it is being considered/anticipated outcomes. What is meant to achieve and how is it seeking to achieve this? Please also state if it is an amendment to an existing arrangement or a new proposal.

- 1.1** This Equality Strategy refresh seeks to build on the foundations of the 2020-2024 Strategy, reflect the results of those changes and embed the initiatives the Council has introduced since 2021. For example, the adoption of the George Floyd Race Matters Pledge and the Croydon Equality Pledge has introduced new areas of focus for our equalities work; a new People and Cultural Transformation Strategy has been agreed, including a pillar of work focused on “building an equality driven, diverse and inclusive workplace;” and the Council has also participated as a pilot organisation on the Chief Executives London Committee (CELC) Tackling Racial Inequality Programme. Each of these initiatives and others have been incorporated in the refreshed Strategy, which has also been aligned with the Mayor’s Business Plan, adopted by Council in 2022.
- 1.2** The four outcomes of the original strategy have been reduced to three and the objectives redistributed between the remaining outcomes. It is the actions, performance measures and narrative that have been updated. In addition, there are slight amendments to Outcome 3 (formerly Outcome 4) to better reflect the Council’s responsibilities for health and social care, and two additional objectives under Outcome 1, to deepen accountability and effect systemic change within the authority, and to become an anti-racist organisation.
- 1.3** The original Strategy was based on 2011 Census data as this was the latest available at the time of adoption. The refresh uses data from the 2021 Census, giving a more accurate picture of the challenges in Croydon.
- 1.4** The Equality Annual Report enclosed in the cabinet report sets out a summary of progress made against each outcome in the current Strategy as well as key challenges facing the organisation.

The refreshed Equality Strategy will provide a framework for the Council to take positive action for all underrepresented characteristics both as an employer and a community leader, leading to equality of opportunity both in the organisation and the borough alike. The

Strategy sets out clear actions the Council take over the period to 2027. The Annual report details the actions undertaken to enhance equality in the borough in the year 2022-23.

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

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	<p>The Equality Strategy will have a positive impact on age. The council has an older workforce and needs to attract younger employees. Work is currently being undertaken on the People Strategy which is intended to increase underrepresented young people who only make up 2% of the workforce at aged 24 and under.</p> <p>A new young professional Staff Network Group to listen to the views and recommendations from younger staff was established during 2022.</p>		<p>According to the 2021 census, the split of ages across all wards in Croydon are somewhat comparable with each other. An outlier to note is Fairfield has a considerably lower average age than the rest of the borough's wards.</p>

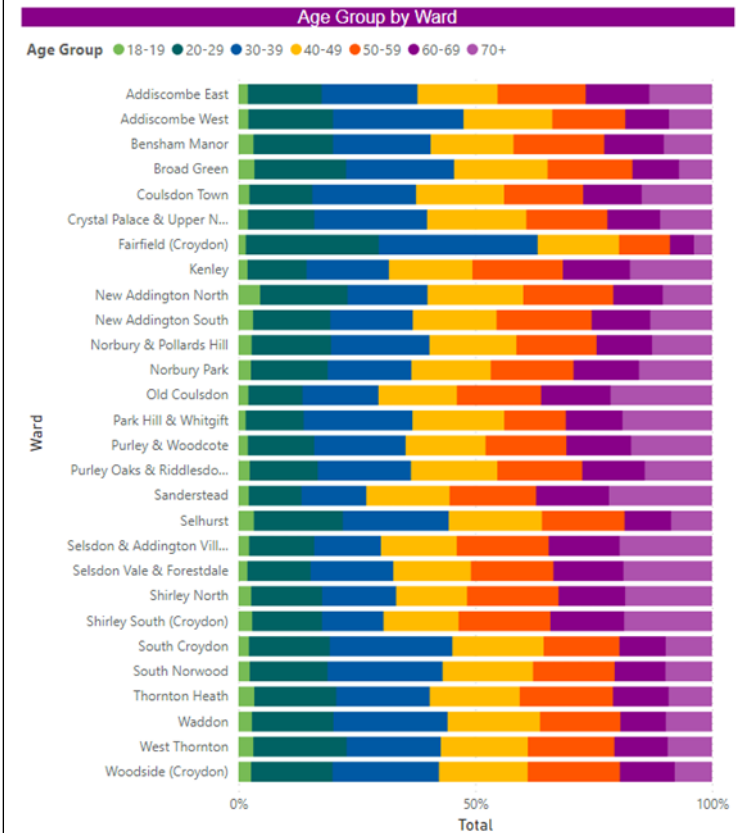
Diverse interview panels where possible will include younger panel members.

The Council will develop a youth safety plan with partners and young people to reduce serious youth violence and exploitation.

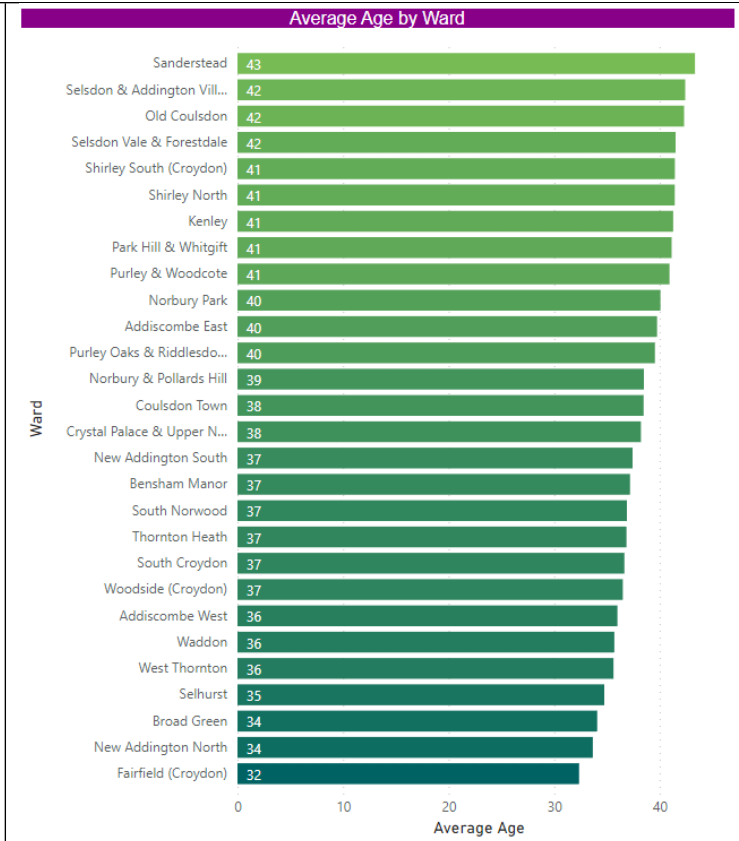
In partnership with the health service, work with education and training settings to listen to the voice of children and young people on their mental wellbeing, the availability of pastoral and therapeutic support in schools, and their links to support networks outside schools.

Working with the South London Partnership, we will use the Work and Health Programme to ensure that residents with disabilities, care leavers and those further away from the job market receive targeted personalized support into employment.

The requirements that recruitment panels are diverse is applicable to this and other characteristics, the impact of which will be monitored by the EDI Board.



The average age by ward is shown below, again noting Fairfield has the lowest average age.



Earnings by age

Whilst it is difficult to obtain data on Croydon specifically there are datasets available from the ONS which review earnings by age at a higher level.

From the below it is shown that in London and in the South East in full-time employment lower income ages are 18 to 29.

			<table border="1"> <caption>Median Salary by Age</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>London (£)</th> <th>South East (£)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age 18-21</td> <td>436</td> <td>389</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 22-29</td> <td>644</td> <td>519</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 30-39</td> <td>874</td> <td>671</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 40-49</td> <td>908</td> <td>729</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 50-59</td> <td>825</td> <td>697</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age 60+</td> <td>697</td> <td>606</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Group	London (£)	South East (£)	Age 18-21	436	389	Age 22-29	644	519	Age 30-39	874	671	Age 40-49	908	729	Age 50-59	825	697	Age 60+	697	606
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<p>Disability</p>	<p>The council is seeking to explore the impact of ableism on disabled staff, in particular regarding the psychological impact of disability in the workplace and the arrangements for reasonable adjustments for disabled staff, Work is also taking place to understand neurodiversity and the impact of hybrid working on non-neurotypical staff.</p> <p>The refreshed Equality Strategy and the recently agreed People and Culture strategy, which is incorporated into the Equality</p>		<p>The pay gap in relation to disability in 2022 was -1.2% in terms of mean pay and 0.0% in terms of median pay.</p> <p>Non-disclosure- prefer not to say 1.41% Not specified – 21.82</p> <p>The employment of disabled people 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>The ONS Census 2021 states that 14.8% of Croydon residents are disabled, a population of 390k would put the disabled population at approximately 58k.</p>																					

Strategy, will establish Positive Action training for underrepresented groups. The strategy aims to improve the lived experience of disabled staff in the workplace. This includes ensuring that reasonable adjustments are in place for staff and that there is a reduction in the number of disability employment tribunal cases.

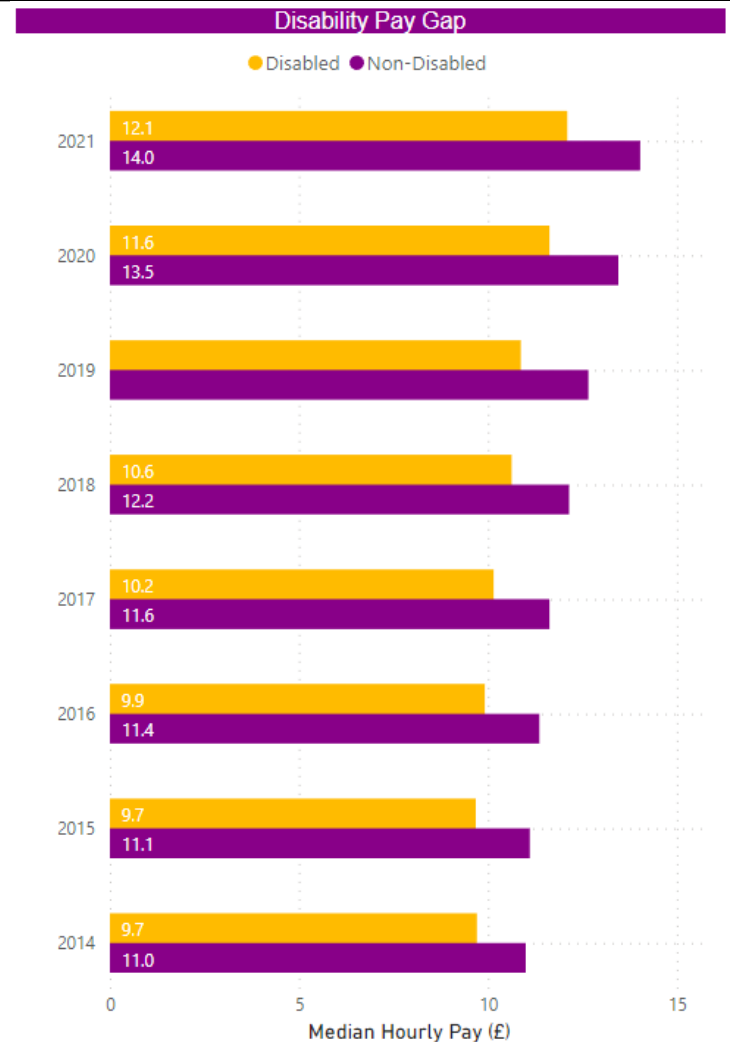
Working with the South London Partnership, we will use the Work and Health Programme to ensure that residents with disabilities, care leavers and those further away from the job market receive targeted personalized support into employment.

The requirements that recruitment panels are diverse is applicable to this and other characteristics, the impact of which will be monitored by the EDI Board.

Like other minorized groups, it is intended that Disabled groups are fully engaged in the Borough of Culture events.

Although 12% of staff within tier 1-3 have disclosed a disability, this figure is still lower than the resident population.

As of 2021 disability pay gaps for mean and median calculations are very low with no pay gap reported for the median calculation.



From the chart above it can be seen that having a disability is more likely to mean a lower hourly wage.

However, that is not the case for all disabilities, in fact some disabled categories in 2021 were earning a higher median hourly wage than non-disabled workers

			<table border="1"> <caption>Disability Pay Gap Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Condition</th> <th>Sum of Median Pay (£)</th> <th>Median Non-Disabled Pay (£)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Difficulty in hearing</td><td>14.7</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Severe disfigurements/skin conditions/allergies</td><td>14.4</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Difficulty in seeing</td><td>14.0</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>No long-lasting health condition or not disclosed</td><td>14.0</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Other problems or disabilities</td><td>13.0</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Heart/blood pressure or blood circulation problems</td><td>13.0</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Stomach/liver/kidney or digestion problems</td><td>13.0</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Problems or disabilities connected with back and neck</td><td>12.7</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Progressive illness n.e.c.</td><td>12.6</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Diabetes</td><td>12.5</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Chest or breathing problems/asthma/bronchitis</td><td>12.0</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Problems or disabilities connected with arms or hands</td><td>11.9</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Problems or disabilities connected with legs and feet</td><td>11.8</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Depression/bad nerves or anxiety</td><td>11.5</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Mental illness or other nervous disorders</td><td>10.9</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Epilepsy</td><td>10.5</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Severe or specific learning difficulties</td><td>9.9</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Autism</td><td>9.3</td><td>14.0</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Condition	Sum of Median Pay (£)	Median Non-Disabled Pay (£)	Difficulty in hearing	14.7	14.0	Severe disfigurements/skin conditions/allergies	14.4	14.0	Difficulty in seeing	14.0	14.0	No long-lasting health condition or not disclosed	14.0	14.0	Other problems or disabilities	13.0	14.0	Heart/blood pressure or blood circulation problems	13.0	14.0	Stomach/liver/kidney or digestion problems	13.0	14.0	Problems or disabilities connected with back and neck	12.7	14.0	Progressive illness n.e.c.	12.6	14.0	Diabetes	12.5	14.0	Chest or breathing problems/asthma/bronchitis	12.0	14.0	Problems or disabilities connected with arms or hands	11.9	14.0	Problems or disabilities connected with legs and feet	11.8	14.0	Depression/bad nerves or anxiety	11.5	14.0	Mental illness or other nervous disorders	10.9	14.0	Epilepsy	10.5	14.0	Severe or specific learning difficulties	9.9	14.0	Autism	9.3	14.0
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<p>Sex</p>	<p>The Women’s Staff Network group is thriving and has arranged several whole work force learning events. A menopause group has also been established and events are open for staff of both sexes.</p> <p>As set out in the Annual report, during 2022 a Men’s health event took place which specifically focused on men’s mental health and was supported by senior officers. Ap</p> <p>The refreshed Equality Strategy and the recently agreed People and Culture strategy, which is incorporated into the Equality Strategy, will establish Positive Action training for underrepresented</p>		<p>Council Corporately, 67.73% of staff are female and 32.27% are male.</p> <p>The Council has closed the pay gap in relation to gender. In 2022/23 the Council had zero gender pay gap.</p> <p>Croydon borough</p> <p>Croydon is split 52% female and 48% male according to the ONS Census from 2021.</p> <p>As shown below, broken down by ward, every ward in Croydon has a higher population of females than males with exception to Fairfield.</p>																																																									

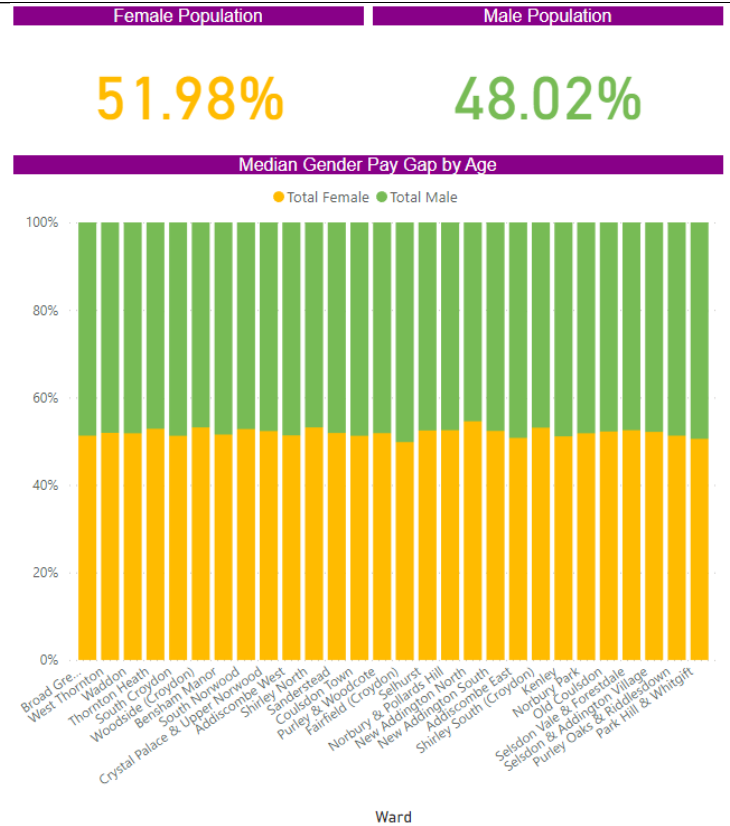
groups.

It also important to look at be mind full of issues around intersectionality where there are employees affected by changes in relation to both sex and age and sex and race.

The requirements that recruitment panels are diverse is applicable to this and other characteristics, the impact of which will be monitored by the EDI Board.

The Council plans to develop a three-year partnership plan to tackle violence against women and girls.

The 2021 and 2022 gender pay gap figures were calculated as 0% for the as both mean and median figures.

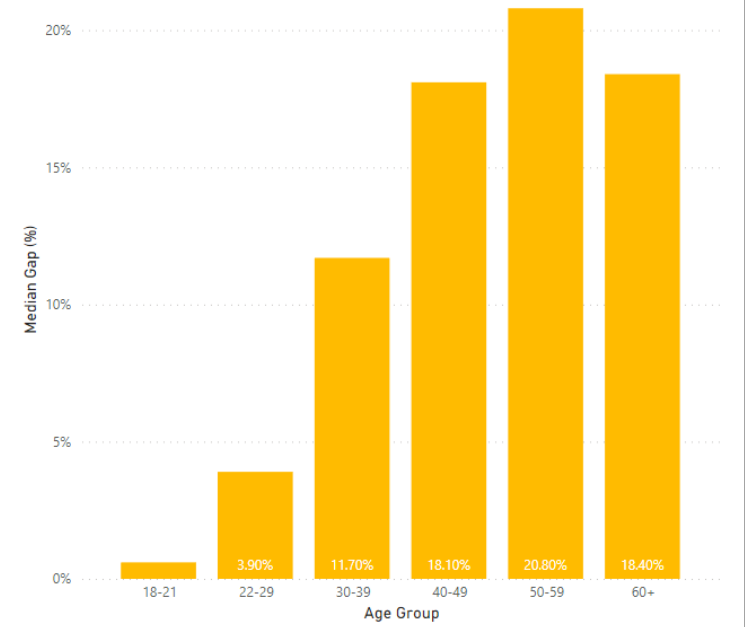


This first metric and chart shows that males are earning 14.9% more income for the same employment as women. When looked at by age it is clear to see that females under 30 are paid closer to 4% less than males and females over 40 are paid close to 20% less than males. Based on this is it could be said that employed males over 40 are likely to be earning more than females.

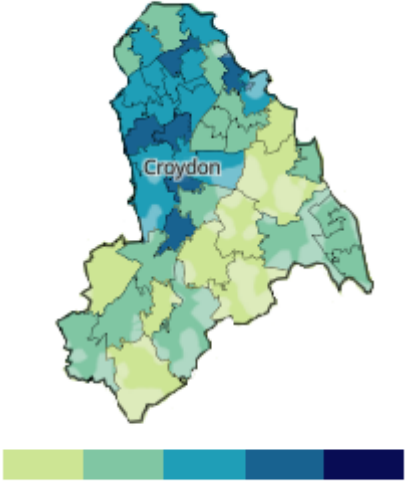
Gender Pay Gap

14.90%

Median Gender Pay Gap by Age



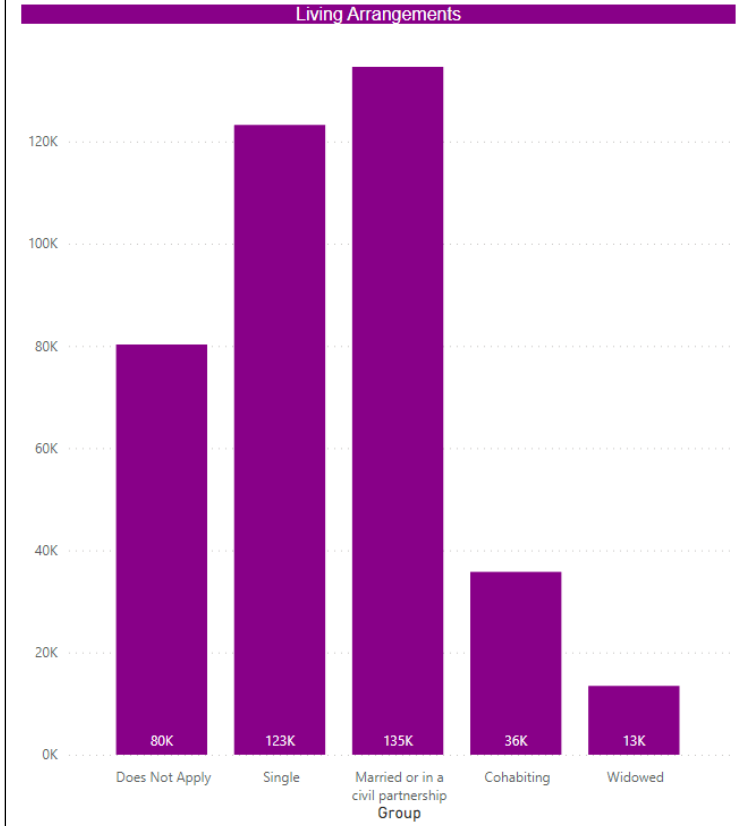
The ONS data does go on to confirm that there are certain occupations such as medical secretaries, information technology trainer, chartered surveyors and dancers or choreographers which are paid at a higher rate to females to males.

<p>Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>Disclosure rates for this minoritized group have increased.</p> <p>The LGBT+ group are represented at the EDI Internal Control Board.</p> <p>An LGBT+ Needs Assessment group has been formed by Public Health and works with statutory and voluntary partners in the borough to improve the lived experience of LGBT+ community in the organisation and the borough.</p> <p>Having diverse recruitment panels will also have an impact on this protected characteristic and is included in the refreshed Equality Strategy.</p> <p>LGBT+ community have been engaged in the Borough of Culture.</p>		<p>Workforce data:</p> <p>Non-disclosure- prefer not to say 0.97 % Not specified – 39.8%</p> <p>From that data 0.89% of Croydon residents identify as a gender different from sex registered at birth.</p> <p>With higher populations in Central Croydon and North Croydon, area to note are Broad Green & Waddon (1.86%), Purely North (1.56%), Selhurst South & West Croydon (1.49%) and Thornton Heath North West (1.48%).</p> <p>This can be seen from the map shown below.</p> <p>Gender Identity Different from Birth</p>  <p>0.02% 0.43% 0.82% 1.39% 2.73% 8.12%</p>
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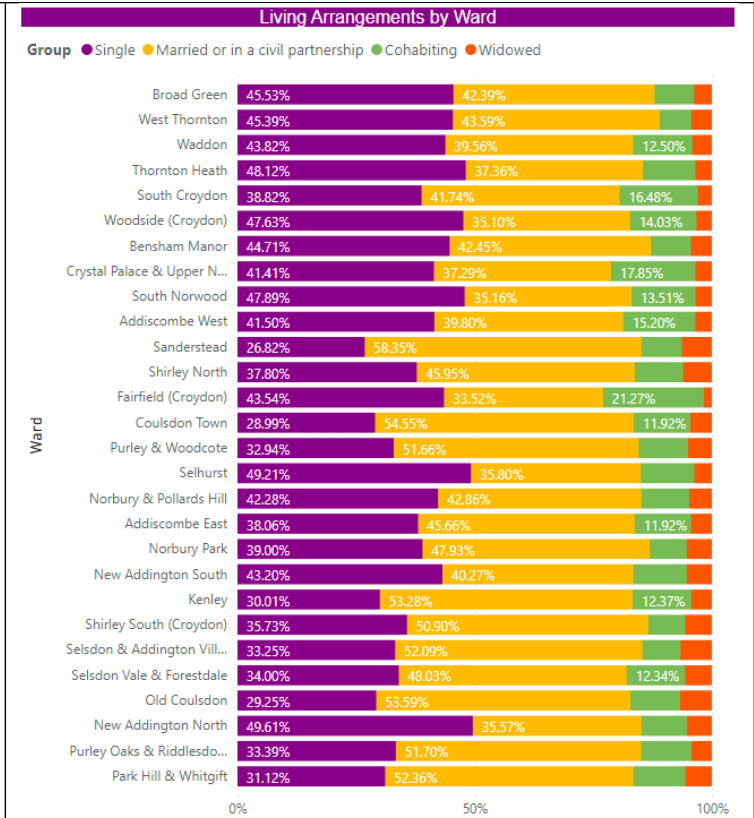
Marriage or Civil Partnership

There is no impact on this characteristic.

From the below it can be seen that the majority of Croydon residents are married, in civil partnerships or co-habiting.

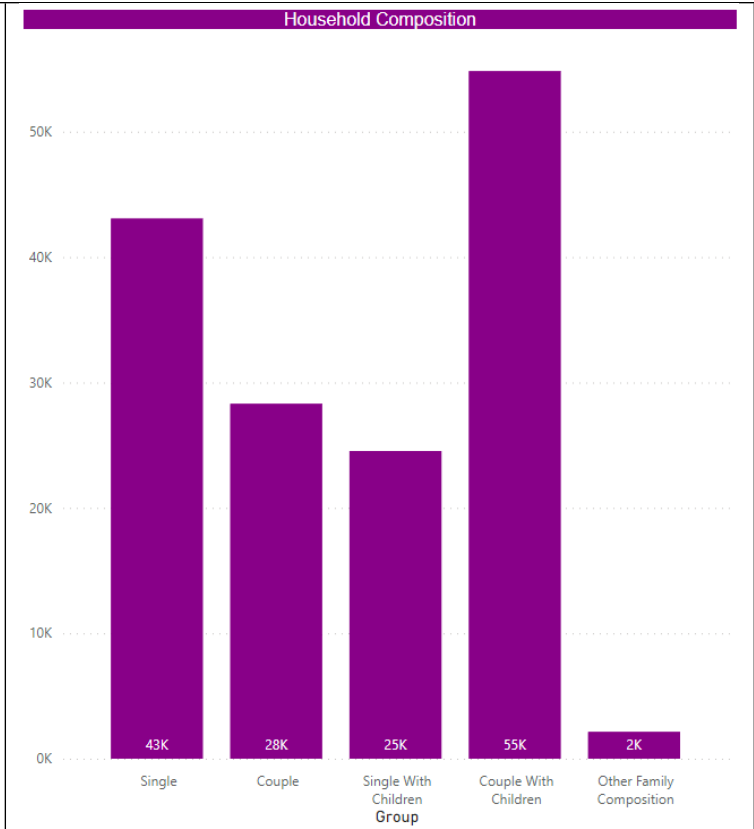


Broken into wards and excluding those that answered the census "do not apply", it can be seen that there are high rates of single living arrangements in Fairfield, Thornton Heath, Selhurst and New Addington



Data from Council Tax EQIA

A “male-female” household would have equal income opportunity to other “male-female” households. “Male-male” households would have higher income opportunity than “male-female” and “female-female” households.



Breaking this down to borough wards the areas of high singles without children, are Fairfield, Selhurst and South Norwood.

Religion or belief

Over the past year the Christian staff network has become firmly established in the organisation and has joined the EDI Internal Control Board and has a voice at monthly meetings.

The group has arranged a number of events such as the Christmas carol service which have been well attended.

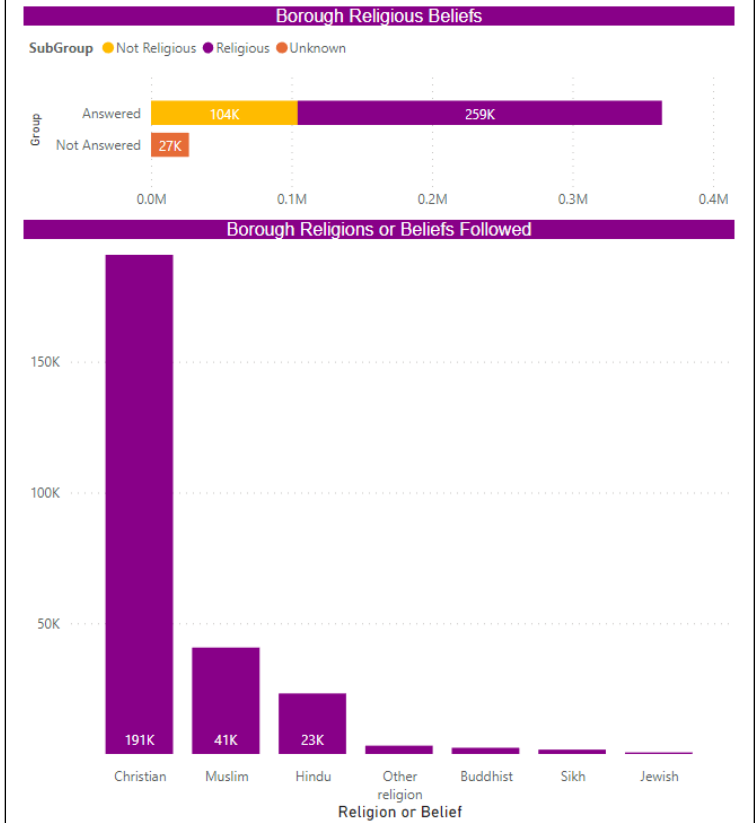
Members of other faith groups will be encouraged to establish their own Networks if they feel the need for them.

We will use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), definition of anti-Semitism and All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia as adopted by full Council. Some of these minoritized groups have also been racialized.

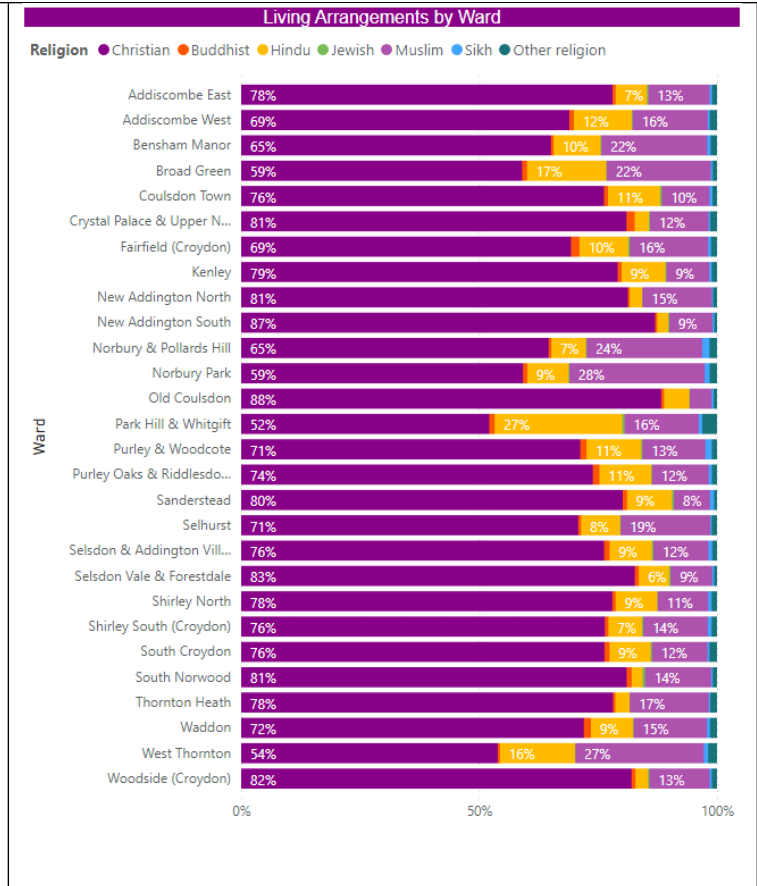
Faith groups have been engaged in the Borough of Culture events.

Non-disclosure- prefer not to say 7.83%
Not specified – 39.8%

29% of Croydon residents have declared they are not religious. Compared with 71% (259k) of residents stating they do hold a religious belief. The chart below shows that breakdown and what religion or belief those that answered follow.



Breaking this down to specific religions followed in each ward, as the chart above would indicate there is a strong Christian presence in every ward with significant Muslim and Hindu populations in most.



Race

In February 2023, the Council agreed to be a pilot organisation in the Chief Executive of London Council's (CELC) Tackling Racial Injustice (TRI) programme.

As part of the Programme each council is requested to adopt the London Council's anti racist statement. The programme of work includes seven workstreams, one of which is community engagement. Adoption of this as part of the

[December 2022 - GLA YouGov Cost of living poll results.pdf \(airdrive-secure.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com\)](#)

The mean ethnicity pay gap figure has risen by 0.7% from 2021 -22. 2021 (9.6% mean; 6.8% median)

Non-disclosure- prefer not to say 1.45%
Not specified – 19.71

The latest data from the ONS reveals that the group with the highest number of residents is White, which

Strategy will build on the Council’s already clear commitment to anti-racism.

The refreshed Equality Strategy and the recently agreed People and Culture strategy, which is incorporated into the Equality Strategy, will establish Positive Action training for underrepresented groups. The People Strategy will also support the aims of the council to work towards becoming an anti-racist organisation by providing training and support to staff.

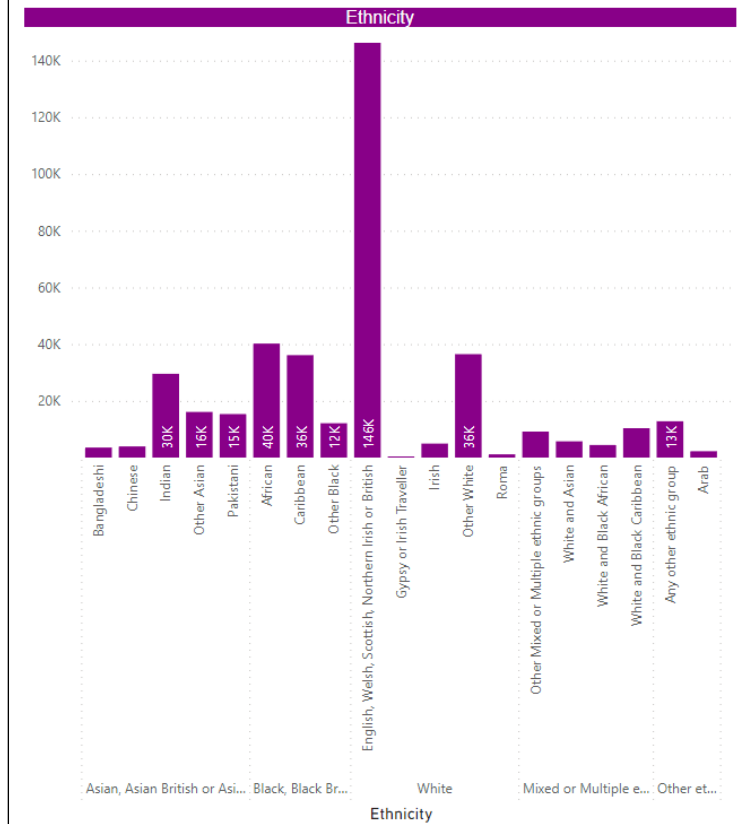
We no longer use the term BAME to describe ethnic groups. We use the terms Global Majority, racialised groups and minorized groups.

THE Global Majority and other racialized groups have been fully included in the Borough of Culture celebrations.

As set out in the Annual Report, CMT have committed to improve the lived experience of the Global Majority and other racialized groups as part of The Big Promise as part of Race Equality Week 2023.

We have committed to a mentoring programme for Global Majority employees to reduce under-representation of staff at grade 15 and above.

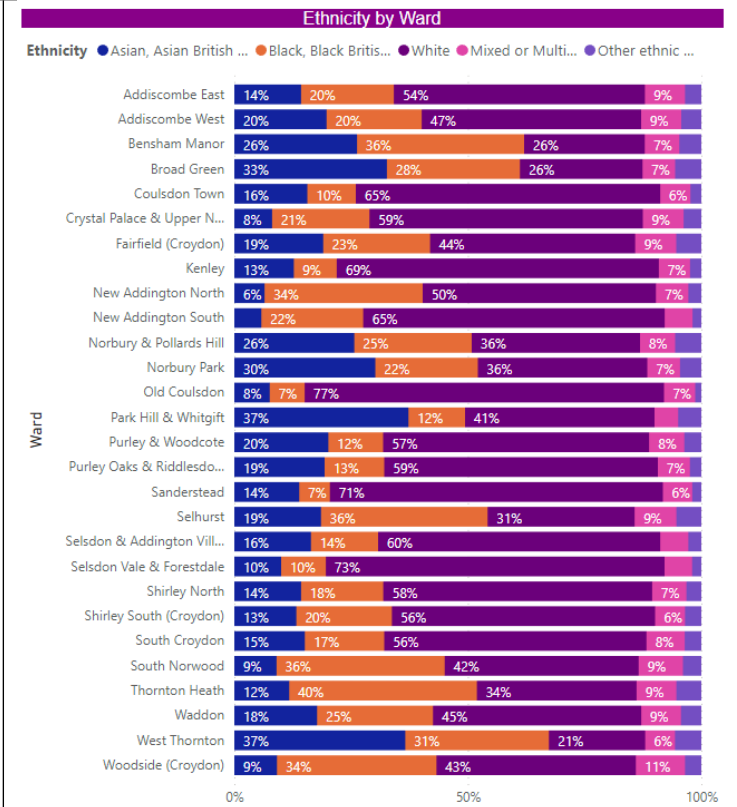
contains a few different groups as detailed in the chart below.



To determine if this is a representative picture of all areas of Croydon this data has also been reviewed at a ward level as well. This is shown in the chart below.

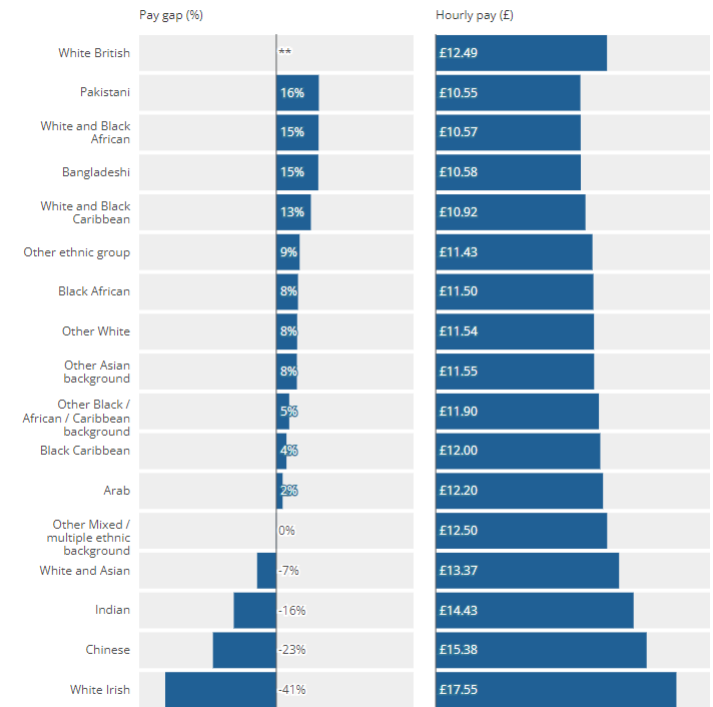
We will review our corporate approach to community engagement to ensure that it is effective in reaching all communities including minoritized groups, and promotes a culture of sustained and equitable engagement and participation within all areas of the organization.

The Global Majority have been included in the Borough of Culture events.



The below shows the ONS 2019 annual population survey which highlights that many ethnicities, when compared to the White British population are earning less at the same job. There are some ethnicities where earnings are higher than that of the White British counterpart.

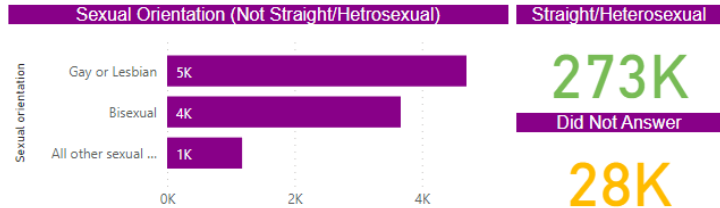
Median hourly pay and pay gap, 17 ethnic groups, England and Wales, 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey

However, the pay quartiles show that (typically) White employees occupy a higher proportion of the upper pay quartiles compared to their representation in the workforce, and Global Majority and other racialised employees occupy a lower proportion of upper pay quartiles compared to their representation in the workforce.

There is under-representation of Global Majority and other racialized staff at grade 15 and above.

<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>The LGBT+ group are represented at the EDI Internal Control Board. An LGBT+ Needs Assessment group has been formed by Public Health and works with statutory and voluntary partners in the borough to improve the lived experience of LGBT+ community in the organisation and the borough.</p> <p>LGBT+ groups have been fully included in the Borough of Culture celebrations.</p> <p>The People and Culture strategy will establish Positive Action training for minoritized groups.</p>		<p>Non-disclosure- prefer not to say 9.05% Not specified – 22.67%</p> <p>There are individual companies and organisation that have made assessments of their businesses and published their findings.</p> <p>For example, nationally PwC noted a 20.4% gap in their annual report. Annual Report 2022 - Inclusion and diversity - PwC UK</p> <p>There are other reports that have been published globally and in the UK that support this picture that gay, lesbian and bi-sexual workers are earning less than their straight counterparts.</p> <p>The ONS Census from 2021 is the available data for Croydon on sexual orientation.</p> <p>From this data a summary of Croydon is as follows:</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sexual Orientation (Not Straight/Hetrosexual)</th> <th>Straight/Heterosexual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gay or Lesbian: 5K</td> <td>273K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bisexual: 4K</td> <td>Did Not Answer: 28K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All other sexual ...: 1K</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sexual Orientation (Not Straight/Hetrosexual)	Straight/Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian: 5K	273K	Bisexual: 4K	Did Not Answer: 28K	All other sexual ...: 1K	
Sexual Orientation (Not Straight/Hetrosexual)	Straight/Heterosexual										
Gay or Lesbian: 5K	273K										
Bisexual: 4K	Did Not Answer: 28K										
All other sexual ...: 1K											
<p>Pregnancy or Maternity</p>	<p>The council continues to review its policies to ensure that thy are supportive and include adjustments for pregnancy and maternity.</p>		<p>The council does not have a way of identifying, or sizing, the number of residents that are pregnant or on maternity.</p>								

Important note: You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics. **Please use table 4 to record actions that will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact**

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

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**

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

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	3	1	3
Disability	3	1	3
Gender	3	1	3
Gender reassignment	3	1	3
Marriage / Civil Partnership	3	1	3
Race	3	1	3
Religion or belief	3	1	3
Sexual Orientation	3	1	3
Pregnancy or Maternity	2	1	2

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

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				
Race				
Sex (gender)				
Gender reassignment				
Sexual orientation				
Age				
Religion or belief				
Pregnancy or maternity				
Marriage/civil partnership				

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	<p>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.</p> <p>The Equality Strategy 2023-2027 has a positive impact on all protected characteristics and supports the Council in meeting the requirements of the Public sector Equality Duty, going beyond this duty towards best practice and cultural transformation.</p>	X
Adjust the proposed change	<p>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</p>	
Continue the proposed change	<p>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.</p>	
Stop or amend the proposed change	<p>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.</p>	
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet		Meeting title: Date:

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision	
Equalities Lead	<p>Name: Denise McCausland Date: 16 August 2023</p> <p>Position: Equality Programme Manager</p>
Director	<p>Name: David Courcoux Date: 17/08/23</p> <p>Position: Director - Policy, Programmes and Performance</p>

Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 25 July 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Rowenna Davis (Chair), Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair), Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Deputy-Chair) Councillors Jade Appleton, Simon Fox and Eunice O'Dame.

Also Present: Councillor Jason Cummings & Andy Stranack

Apologies: None.

PART A

43/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023 were agreed as a record.

44/23 Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest made at the meeting.

45/23 Urgent Business (if any)

The Chair highlighted the recent letter published by the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Michael Gove MP on 20 July 2023, which provided updated guidance on the statutory intervention at the London Borough of Croydon. As this was after the publication of the Committee's agenda, the Chair invited the Council's Chief Executive, Katherine Kerswell, to provide an update under 'Urgent Business' on the implications of the new guidance and to outline the next steps for the Council. Members of the Government's Improvement & Assurance Panel were in attendance at the meeting, and the Chief Executive invited the Panel Chair, Tony McArdle, to provide additional insight on behalf of the Panel as part of the update.

It was advised that the letter from DLUHC confirmed that the Council would be entering into statutory arrangements with the Improvement & Assurance Panel. Since the original letter from DLUHC about the statutory arrangements, received in March 2023, the Council and the Panel had continued to work together under the previously established arrangement, while waiting for further guidance. The letter from DLUHC highlighted three previously identified

areas of particular concern, namely finance, transformation, and housing. It was confirmed that the Council was not expecting any further guidance from DLUHC.

The ongoing role of the Improvement & Assurance Panel was to guide, challenge and advise the Council on its recovery. If the Panel felt it was needed, it also had the power to direct the Council to ensure it was meeting its best value duty. Tony McArdle would continue as Chair of the Panel, while Jon Wilson and Phil Brookes would continue in their respective roles as leads in adult social care, and commercial and asset disposal. There would be two new additions to the team, with Brian Roberts joining as financial lead and Pamela Leonce as housing lead.

It was confirmed that DLUHC had recently opened a consultation on the Best Value Duty of local authorities, a link to which would be circulated to the Committee following the meeting. This document explained what the Government meant by Best Value Duty. It was highlighted that a local authority was not expected to be perfect, but it should be working towards this and be able to deliver a sustainable budget, which the Council was not able to do until its debt issue was resolved.

Panel Chair, Tony McArdle, advised the Committee that the Panel looked forward to continuing to support the Council with its recovery. Although the Government had put statutory arrangements in place, it was not envisioned that the current relationship between the Panel and the Council would be significantly different. The Panel would remain in Croydon until 2025 and it was their role to provide reassurance to the DLUHC Secretary of State on the Council's journey towards ongoing sustainability.

A requirement of the statutory intervention was to have an exit strategy in place to set out where the Council was expected to be by the time the Panel was due to leave Croydon in 2025. Although, the Strategy was owned by the Panel and would set out their expectations for the Council on behalf of the Secretary of State, there had been conversations with the Mayor, Cabinet and officers as part of its development. It was hoped that the exit strategy would be available within a couple of months.

At the conclusion of the item, the Chair thanked the Chief Executive and Mr McArdle for the update provided.

Actions

Following consideration of this item, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed the following action to follow-up after the meeting: -

1. That the link to the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities' consultation 'Best value standards and intervention - a statutory guide for best value authorities' would be circulated to the Committee.

Conclusions

At the conclusion of this item, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reached the following conclusions: -

1. It was noted that a requirement of the statutory intervention was to have in place an 'Exit Strategy', setting out a range of criteria the Council was expected to have achieved by the time the Improvement & Assurance Panel was scheduled to leave Croydon in 2025. This document was currently being prepared.
2. Although the Improvement & Assurance Panel were the owners of the 'Exit Strategy', the Scrutiny & Overview Committee welcomed the reassurance given that the Mayor, the Cabinet and council officers were engaged with the Panel on its development.

46/23 Month 2 Financial Performance Monitoring

The Committee considered a report on pages 19 to 52 of the agenda that provided an overview of the latest budget position for 2023-24 up until the end of Month 2 (May 2023). This report was included on the agenda as part of the Committee's ongoing scrutiny of the delivery of 2023-24 budget.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, Chief Executive, Katherine Kerswell, Corporate Director for Resources, Jane West, and Director of Finance, Allister Bannin were in attendance for this item at the meeting.

The first question from the Committee related to the forecast that, based on the current projection, there would be an overspend of £3.6m at year end, which would require the use of contingency funding to deliver a balanced budget. It was questioned whether it was normal accounting practice to allocate contingency funding at such an early stage in the year and whether this would discourage services from addressing any such overspends. In response, it was clarified that £3.6m figure in the report was not a current overspend, instead it was a year-end forecast, which should it crystallise by the year end, could be met from contingency funds. Where potential overspends had been highlighted within individual service budgets, there was an expectation that the specific service would proactively work to recover this over the course of the year by either addressing the cause of the overspend or through identifying alternative savings.

It was confirmed that the report included a breakdown on the underspend within the budget arising from staffing vacancies, which was broken down by directorates. It was noted that there were particular underspends forecasted on staffing within services with hard to recruit roles, such as social care and planning. There were also instances where recruitment had been held where a restructure was planned.

In response to concerns about the potential impact of staffing vacancies, it was confirmed that the risk was being actively monitored and managed. There was a specific challenge within social care, with a national shortage of trained staff to fill specialised roles. This required a wider workforce strategy and separately work was underway on overseas recruitment. As well as working on encouraging new employees to join Croydon, given the need to make significant savings, it was also important for the Council to look at how it could do things differently and more efficiently through areas such as automation.

As the next meeting of the Committee on 26 September 2023 was due to include an item on the People and Cultural Transformation Strategy, it was agreed that further information on the work on recruitment and retention would be requested as part of this report.

Regarding transformation, it was confirmed that the Transformation Internal Control Board had been meeting for six months, which had helped to shape the programme. The various transformation projects were being loaded into the new Verto project management software and officers were being trained on how to use this system. Projects were underway, such as the one to improve the Council's business intelligence, which was already delivering savings through identifying where the Council was paying for services that were not needed like freedom passes or identifying council tenants sub-letting their properties. The new Director of Transformation was also due to start at the Council in mid-September and it was expected that they would be leading on the wider communication of the Council's vision for transformation and ensuring the residents voice was being captured in the improvement journey.

In response to a question about whether the Council would be putting more resources into areas such as tenancy checks, it was confirmed that it would be doing so. The Council worked in partnership with Lambeth Council on fraud and was in discussions with them about additional resource. Technology, such as data matching, would also be used to identify potential fraud and the Council had recently invested in the national fraud data hub, which was providing benefit.

It was questioned whether the Council would be able to present a full budget for transformation in 2024-25 as part of the budget setting process in early 2024. It was confirmed that this would be presented as part of the budget, as the transformation work streams were crucial to the improvement journey of the Council. The Cabinet Member for Finance emphasised the importance of transformation to the Council. The work was still at an early stage and had involved staff learning a lot of new processes, even so, it was already producing results. Outside of their normal workstreams, transformation was the largest part of the role for the Cabinet Members and needed to be looked at over a three to four year period.

It was noted that it could be challenging to engage effectively with residents and that any such communication would need to be carefully managed as transformation began to change the way services were delivered. Reassurance was given that the process for how the Council engaged with

residents on transformation was currently under consideration and if needed additional resource could be allocated for this within the transformation budget. It was highlighted that a new equalities screening tool was being used which would help to identify the projects where further consultation was needed.

In advance of the meeting, additional information had been requested by the Committee on the rate of Council tax collection and the number of applications to the new hardship scheme brought in as part of the budget to mitigate against the potential impact from the 15% Council Tax rise. It was noted that collection rate was currently 0.03% below the expected target, but it was expected that this would be recovered in the coming months.

There was surprise noted by some of the Committee that there had only been 283 applications to the Hardship Scheme and as such it was questioned whether knowledge of the scheme was reaching those in most need. In response, it was highlighted that the Hardship Scheme had been created to supplement other existing schemes that would be utilised first. When the scheme was created the level of need was not known, which was why a significant buffer was put in place. The Committee agreed that it would provide additional reassurance to confirm that information on the various support schemes available was being included with arrears letters when sent. In response to a question about whether the amount of housing benefit officers employed by the Council was being reduced, it was advised that these officers were being moved from the Housing team to the Revenue & Benefits team to maximise resources. There was no plan to make any officers redundant.

It was noted that the budget for Adult Social Care included the forecasted costs for three high cost care packages. If these care packages changed during the year, the forecast would be revised to take this into account. The increasing cost of adult social care was a national challenge, which would require long term transformation work to address. Although the Council had to meet its statutory duties to residents, it was important to ensure that best value was being provided as well.

In response to a question about planning income, it was confirmed that there had been lower activity in major applications, which if it continued would impact upon the budget. The main issue was the timing of applications being submitted which was beyond the Council's control, however the service was working on modelling the applications expected to come through the planning system to provide greater certainty.

At the conclusion of this item, the Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their attendance at the meeting.

Actions

Following consideration of this item, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed the following action to follow-up after the meeting: -

1. The Committee agreed that an item on staffing and recruitment across the Council would be added to its work programme for 2023-24 as part of its review of the action plan for the People & Cultural Transformation Strategy.
2. Although it was accepted the data would be continually fluctuating, the Committee agreed that the provision of data on the level of staff vacancies across the organisation would help it better understand the scale of the challenge with recruitment and retention. The Committee requested the provision of data on the Council's workforce, to include: -
 - a. The number of vacancies across the organisation, broken down by service areas and compared to the expected full staff complement within each area.
 - b. A breakdown on the number of permanent, temporary and agency staff in post across each service area.
 - c. Any comparison data available with statistical neighbours on vacancy rates, mix of temporary and permanent staff and full staffing complement by area.
3. The Committee agreed that it would seek to engage with the new Transformation Director, once in post, about the transformation workstream on resident engagement.
4. In light of questions raised on the impact of the 15% Council Tax rise, agreed by Council in March 2023, the Committee agreed to request data comparing the current rate of Council Tax arrears against data from previous years.

Conclusions

At the conclusion of this item, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reached the following conclusions: -

1. The Committee welcomed the reassurance given by the Cabinet Member for Finance on progress made with the Council's Transformation Programmes and noted that the first quarterly Transformation Monitoring report was due to be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 27 September 2023.
2. Although it was accepted that some of the factors involved were not unique to Croydon and were either London-wide or national challenges, the Committee concluded that the vacancy rates within certain services of the Council presented a considerable risk to the delivery of both business as usual services and transformation programmes.

Recommendations

The Committee agreed to submit the following recommendation for the consideration of the Mayor: -

1. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee would like to recommend that the letters sent to residents regarding Council Tax arrears are reviewed to ensure they include information about the potential availability of support schemes, such as the Council Tax Hardship Scheme.

47/23 Equalities Strategy Refresh

The Committee considered a report set out in the supplementary agenda pack on the process for refreshing the Council's Equalities Strategy. The report also provided a summary of the possible areas for update for the Committee's feedback.

The Cabinet Member Communities & Culture, Councillor Andy Stranack, the Council's Chief Executive, Katherine Kerswell, Head of Policy & Strategy, David Courcoux, Head of Learning & Organisational Development, Grace Addy, Equalities Manager, Denise McCausland and Senior Strategy Officer, John Montes, attended the meeting for this item.

From the introduction to the report, it was noted that the current strategy had been in place since its approval in 2021. As there had been significant changes both across the Council and nationally since then, it was felt to be timely to revisit the strategy to ensure that it remained fit for purpose. Although there had been progress made with delivering the original strategy, it had been found that it was difficult to measure its impact in some areas. As part of the refresh, there would be an opportunity to ensure the strategy was measurable and included clear accountability for delivery.

The first question from the Committee asked what term the Council would be using to describe the different ethnic groups formally known as BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic). It was confirmed that following consultation within the Council and with staff networks, the term Global Majority would be used, although the terms racialised groups and minoritised groups were also in use. The term Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic was still used when referring to statistics, but not in its shortened form.

Regarding the action plan for delivering the Equalities Strategy, it was confirmed that it was being reviewed to ensure that measurable targets were included, allowing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board to hold officers to account on delivery. Although the current action plan contained a large amount of ambition, clarity was needed on its targets and deliverability. Work was also needed to ensure that the ambition of the Council for the Equalities Strategy could be balanced against the capacity for delivery.

The revised action plan would have a greater emphasis on statistical outcomes rather than the more narrative aims included in the current strategy. Another issue being addressed within the current action plan was the inclusion of actions aimed at the entire organisation, which had proved difficult to define how they would be delivered. It was planned that the revised Equalities Strategy would be considered by Cabinet in September, before going to Council in October for approval. The updated action plan would follow within a couple of months of the Strategy's approval. Although core accountability would be through direct line management and across directorates through the delivery of the work programmes, it was suggested that the EDI Board could be a mechanism for providing further challenge on the delivery of the strategy. It was agreed that a recommendation would be made on finding the most appropriate mechanism for regularly challenging those officers responsible for delivery.

It was questioned how the Equalities Strategy would address other protected characteristics and hard to reach groups. It was acknowledged that some characteristics were more visible than others in the original strategy and there was a need for all to be reflected in the revised strategy. Although it was intended that the term 'minoritised groups' referred to a wider range of groups, it was accepted that it needed to be made clearer which groups were included. The Council did try to ensure that there was support across all staff networks, which was reflected in the strategy, with the voice of the networks being reflected in everything the Council does. It was suggested that further consideration needed to be given to how the intersectionality between protected characteristics was reflected in the Equalities Strategy.

It was confirmed that best practice from other local authorities had been used to inform the refresh, although it was highlighted that the Council was at the cutting edge in some areas such as its menopause policy and network. It was suggested that the Employers Board at London Councils could also be a useful group to provide input into the development of the strategy.

Although the work delivered through the Equalities Strategy was welcomed, it was noted that a key challenge was to ensure that managers were taking account of training provided and whether there were any trends in the data around grievances related to protected characteristics. It was advised that the trends in the reasons for grievances tended to fluctuate. Although training was important, improvement could only be delivered in conjunction with other areas such as improved accountability and compliance. It was noted that the Council was seeing a much higher rate of disclosure from staff with protected characteristics, which had increased from 25% to almost 60%, which was a positive reflection of the changing culture.

It was questioned how the refreshed strategy would feed into the decision-making processes of the Council. In response, it was advised that once the strategy had been agreed, the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) completed by report authors and which informed the decision-making process, would be reviewed to make it more accessible and to ensure it was more data-driven. The refreshed Equalities Strategy would also link in with the

Mayor's Priorities. A driver for the refresh was the level of upcoming transformational change required across the Council and the need to ensure that equalities was taken into account and appropriate mitigation put into place. It was also important to ensure that the completion of the EQIA was much earlier in the decision-making process, so that any decisions took proper account of any issues identified.

It was confirmed that as part of the refresh, 2021 census data would be used to update the data used in the previous version, with an objective of the strategy being to ensure that the data underpinning it was as up to date as possible.

In response to a question about how progress with delivering the strategy would be tracked, it was advised that an annual review would be undertaken. Given an annual review was built into the process, the Committee agreed that it would be reasonable to extend the life of the refreshed strategy until after the next elections in 2026, when it could be reviewed by the new Administration. If the strategy was extended until 2026, it would allow the delivery of a range of short, medium and long term actions across its lifespan.

At the conclusion of this item, the Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their attendance at the meeting.

Actions

Following consideration of this item, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed the following action to follow-up after the meeting: -

1. The Committee agreed that it would want the opportunity to scrutinise the accompanying action plan to the refreshed Equalities Strategy, once it was available.
2. The Committee requested that further information on the Equalities Screening tool is shared with them.
3. The Committee requested that the updated Equalities Impact Assessment is shared with them, once it was available.

Conclusions

At the conclusion of this item, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reached the following conclusions: -

1. The Committee welcomed confirmation that the Equalities Impact Assessment was being refreshed and endorsed the approach of requiring the equalities implications of a decision to be assessed at an early stage in the decision-making process, rather than being left to a later stage when it could be more challenging to meaningfully take account of the potential equalities implications.

2. The Committee welcomed confirmation that the Equalities Strategy Action Plan would focus on measurable outcomes using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant & Time-Bound) targets, which ensure that its success could be assessed.

Recommendations

The Committee agreed to submit the following recommendations for the consideration of the Mayor: -

1. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that there is further consideration given to how the refreshed Equalities Strategy can reflect the intersectionality between protected characteristics.
2. In order to improve accountability for the delivery of the Equalities Strategy, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that a process for holding regular challenge sessions with those officers responsible for specific actions/workstreams within the Strategy is developed as part of the ongoing monitoring of delivery.
3. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed with the proposal of the Cabinet Member and Officers, that given its scope, the Equalities Strategy should have a longer term end date, but recommends that: -
 - a. key review points are built into the Strategy at appropriate intervals to allow for adjustments and the opportunity to refocus as needed.
 - b. it is sufficiently dynamic to take account of any new initiatives or legislation that may arise over its lifespan.
4. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that consideration is given to embedding Equalities Champions within directorates to complement existing structures and systems within the Council aimed at promoting equalities and inclusivity.

48/23 **Scrutiny Recommendations**

The Committee considered a report set out on pages 53 to 60 of the agenda which presented recommendations proposed by the scrutiny sub-committees for sign-off ahead of submission to the Executive Mayor.

It was noted that feedback from the Government on the Council's bid for levelling up funding had been shared with the Committee by the Mayor. The Committee agreed it would make a recommendation to the Mayor to explore whether it would be possible to publish this feedback.

Resolved: That the recommendations made by its Sub-Committees are approved for submission to the Executive Mayor for his consideration.

Conclusions

At the conclusion of this item, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reached the following conclusion: -

1. Arising from its discussion with the Executive Mayor at previous meeting on 6 June 2023, The Scrutiny & Overview Committee welcomed the sharing of the feedback received from the Department of Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities on the Council's bid for Levelling-Up funding and noted it reflected positively on the bid submitted.

Recommendations

The Committee agreed to submit the following recommendation for the consideration of the Mayor: -

1. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that the Mayor publishes the feedback received from the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities on the Council's bid for Levelling-Up funding.

49/23 Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24

The Committee considered a report set out on pages 61 to 82 of the agenda which set out the draft Scrutiny Work Programme for sign-off by the Committee.

As part of this item, feedback was provided on the activity outside of formal meetings. This included: -

- The Health & Social Care Sub-Committee, visiting the Croydon University Hospital to receive a guided tour by the Chief Executive. The tour focused on the changes made to facilities to improve both the patient experience and flow through the hospital environment.
- As part of its ongoing review of health visiting, the Children & Young People Sub-Committee had arranged to meet with frontline staff to hear their experience of the delivering the service, which had informed their in-committee scrutiny of the item.

The Chair of Scrutiny & Overview Committee, Councillor Davis, advised that she had recently met with the Director of Community Safety & Culture to receive an update on the delivery of the Borough of Culture programme, with a view to scheduling it for scrutiny later in the year. The Chair thanked the officers involved in delivering the programme and noted that there were some concerns, including around staff capacity, that needed to be kept under review. It had been agreed that it would best for the Committee to review the Borough of Culture after six months, once the first set of evaluation data had been received.

Resolved: That the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023-24 is agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Signed:

Date:

.....
.....

Proposed Amendment to Budget and Policy Framework Document

Date Received: Friday 6 October 2023

Councillor / Political Group	Mover	Seconded
Labour Group	Councillor Stuart King	Councillor Callton Young

Amendment:

To ensure that all councillors are able to debate the progress made delivering the Equality Strategy, this amendment proposes to add, under Outcome One, Objective One of the Strategy, a further action to read:

“11. Refer the Equality Annual Report for discussion at Full Council each year to ensure that progress delivering the strategy is visible and accountable to councillors and the community.”

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