

For general release

REPORT TO:	Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub Committee 11th December 2018
SUBJECT:	Cabinet Member Question Time
LEAD OFFICERS:	Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director – Place Hazel Simmonds, Director of Council Homes Districts Centres and Regeneration Paula Murray, Creative Director
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Oliver Lewis Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Councillor Oliver Lewis Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item has been identified by the Scrutiny Committee as an area of scrutiny.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Committee is asked to consider the update on areas of the Cabinet Members portfolio and consider if it wishes to make any recommendations.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report sets out a review of 2018/19 which focuses on current issues, and headlines, including any key decisions made in the last year. It also covers service budget issues, both for the immediate and longer term, plus any future strategies and policies that will be worked on over the coming 12 months.
- 1.2. Provides a progress update and response to the conclusions and recommendations made at meetings concerning the areas of this portfolio

2. REVIEW OF 2018,

Libraries

- 2.1 Our Library Service underwent a major change when in January this year, following the announcement of liquidation by Carillion PLC, Croydon terminated the service contract and brought the statutory library service back in house. There are 13 Croydon libraries, receiving around 2 million visits each year. Just over 15% of Croydon's population are active library users. Central Library is busiest with around 900,000 visits annually, followed by Thornton Heath with around 180,000. The least visited library is Sanderstead with 36,000

visits in 17/18. Nationally, library usage is changing. Library footfall and books loans are decreasing and these trends appear in Croydon too. Approximately 50% of library visits in Croydon do not result in a book loan.

- 2.2 Croydon libraries need to modernise to ensure they are fit for purpose and relevant for all Croydon residents. A libraries strategy will be taken to cabinet for approval in early 2019 and will set out the council's vision for libraries to be places that inform, involve and inspire Croydon residents and visitors. The strategy will set out ambitions for libraries over the next ten years, focusing on:
- Library buildings and technology
 - Shaping the core library offer with residents input and widening access to and use of library services
 - The role of libraries in delivering on wider corporate plan priorities within the context of the council's operating model
 - Libraries within the context of the council's culture strategy (also currently in development)
- 2.3 Over the coming years the council will embark upon a programme of library refurbishments that aim to ensure that our libraries are modern and relevant to community needs. Our libraries will be seen as inspiring local community and cultural hubs where communities can access information and get involved with a range of activities. Within the wider context of Croydon's growing cultural offer, libraries will focus on the spoken and written word.
- 2.4 Due to open in 2019, the new library at South Norwood will showcase a modern library facility which encompasses modern IT and facilities for visitors and flexible space that can be made available for events or meetings when not in use for library activities.
- 2.5 Libraries have received £212k of capital funds in 18/19 for the development of plans, pilot studies and a full business case for capital improvements to libraries over the coming four years. In addition, £555k has been set aside for a new modern library facility in South Norwood, as the current building is no longer fit for purpose.

Arts and Culture

- 2.6 In general we have made good progress in the development of a programme of arts and culture for Croydon. The quantity and quality of bids for external funding from our cultural sector has grown. In February of this year, however, Croydon was not successful in its bid to be the first London Borough of Culture for 2019. Whilst this was disappointing, the work undertaken in Croydon last year to develop the bid and the partnerships to deliver it was a valuable exercise and will act as a foundation for future growth. Two further developments have built upon the experience of the Borough of Culture bidding process: Croydon was able to develop quite quickly a bid to the GLA to be a Creative Enterprise Zone which was successful at stage 1 with a final decision on stage 2 expected in January of next year. Secondly we have been well placed to start to develop a Cultural Strategy for Croydon with partners and building on the relationships established.

- 2.7 The programme of events in Croydon over the last year have build on the success of the year before and a strong annual, regular programme is emerging. The events are at a range of scales with some events, such as Croydon Pride and the International Mela, returning and some new or one off for this year such as the Peace Festival in the summer and the programme of events to mark the armistice for 2018.
- 2.8 The challenges ahead will be how to maintain momentum and growth of this kind of activity, finding sustainable funding models for cultural programmes and events. The importance of free events within the annual programme is key in terms of access for everyone to a vibrant cultural offer. Another important element of the programme will be to attract further commercial events to Croydon to our parks and spaces. There are a number of event organisers interested in the potential of Croydon and work to be done to prepare our spaces and policies to accommodate this in the future.
- 2.9 The refurbishment work on the Fairfield Halls continues, however, the challenges of the project have resulted in a change to the projected timescale for the full opening of the venue. BHLive, the operator for the Halls, will be operating full scale from September 2019 rather than earlier in the year as originally hoped. In terms of the issues that this has caused for the operational side of Fairfield Halls, the new venue director has had to build partnerships and work on bookings from September and the 15 year term of operation will start from that point.
- 2.10 A further change under consideration is the removal from the scheme of the plans for the separate gallery space. A number of factors have influenced this potential change: this aspect of the scheme was formed nearly four years ago and during the course of the last four years, the cultural sector in Croydon has changed and developed and there are currently six additional gallery spaces either operating or in the pipeline for Croydon. Additionally, BHLive, the operator for Fairfield Halls has plans to use spaces within the Halls for gallery activity working with organisations such as the V&A for example to secure touring exhibitions. Finally, the specification on the venue spaces within Fairfield Halls has developed over the period of time and with having an operator on board, and the funding originally allocated to a separate gallery space from Coast the Capital, would be better used for the delivery of the spaces within the Halls itself, such as the new studio space and glass box studio and coffee bar in particular.

Museums and Archives

- 2.11 The major issue for Croydon Museum, Galleries and Archives, is that it is approaching the time when it can reapply to the Arts Council for accreditation, having lost this nearly 5 years ago. Following a review of the Accreditation System by Arts Council, officers are in discussion with the Arts Council museum lead to plan out the process and timetable for us in Croydon, including the implications of the review. This, coupled with involvement in the plans, currently at an initial stage of redesign, for the spaces and the way they are used in the Croydon Clocktower will be the main area of focus for the Museum, Archive and Gallery service going forward.

Sports and Leisure

2.12 The major development for leisure over the past year was the awarding of the contract to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) who took over the running of the council's leisure centres and Ashburton Hall in April 2018. The new leisure contract includes the introduction of Ourparks and Silver Fit programmes along with supporting and managing a comprehensive Tennis programme in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association and partners.

2.13 The budget implications from the contract award are positive. The contract aims to achieve a cost-neutral position over its term; there will be a significantly reduced revenue subsidy from the Council in years 2018/19 to 2020/21, saving £1m by 2021 and resulting in a zero contribution from 2021/22 until the end of the contract.

2.14 Further added value that the new contract is projected to bring includes:

- **Capital Investment:** Over the life of the contract £3million will be invested which will include refurbishments to leisure facilities, outdoor hardcourt facilities and open space activity.
- **Outdoor activation programme:** GLL will coordinate a programme of outdoor activity to facilitate increased usage of Croydon's parks and green spaces.
- **Ashburton Hall:** The inclusion of Ashburton Hall provides an opportunity to create a community hub within Ashburton Park, providing a day nursery, community hall, performance arts hub, training and development and revitalisation of outdoor sporting facilities.
- **GLL Sport Foundation:** Forty eight talented young athletes from Croydon have benefited from a £27,900 fund to date and athletes will continue to be supported through the GLL Sport Foundation (GSF) awards, the largest independent athlete support programme in the UK.
- **The London Youth Games:** GLL has contributed sponsorship to support the Croydon Squad for the 2018 London Youth Games
- **Apprenticeships:** Through the GLL Academy 9 apprenticeships will be offered each year along with Recruitment fairs. This will be launched from September 2018 and will provide pathways through to Leisure Management positions within GLL and beyond.

2.15 A further key piece of strategy development supporting sport and physical activity in the borough was the development of [Croydon's Facilities Strategy](#) which highlights supply and demand for a variety of sports. Primarily focusing on five sports (Bowls, Cricket, Football, Hockey and Tennis), the Strategy supports future planning, providing a framework for investment from partners such as Sport England, National Governing Bodies and GLL. One particularly notable recent success, is the successful funding bids enabling us to build two new state-of-the-art football 'hub' facilities proposed for Ashburton Playing Fields and Purley Way Playing Fields. These are supported by Sport England and the Football Foundation.

Parks and Green Spaces

2.16 Over the last two years the council has listened to resident views and undertaken wide ranging planning exercise plus resident consultation. In 2016, 'Ambitious for Parks' highlighted the importance of Croydon's parks and open spaces. 'Croydon Talks Parks', a large scale consultation, engaged over 1500 residents. A number of workstreams have been progressed over the last year including:

- Community Small Grants: funds were disbursed to community groups for projects that addressed the themes of health and well-being, the cultural offer, community stewardship and environmental sustainability and biodiversity across parks, open spaces, woodlands and allotments. Projects delivered included: a wayfinding project by Croydon Striders to encourage more people to exercise independently, a new composting toilet for Surrey Beekeepers Association and local community events as well as numerous projects to improve signage and interpretation.
- Outdoor Active Spaces: £470k was invested by S106, the Matt Palmer Trust and councillor ward budgets to support the design and installation of five innovative and unique 'spaces' in local parks that are free, accessible and encourage physical activity. To date four spaces have been installed and a further 'active space' is planned for Norbury Park alongside a borough-wide activation programme in Spring 2019.
- Croydon Parks Vision: six 'masterplans' have been developed to support the regeneration of six parks and open spaces (Ashburton Park, Park Hill Park, Lloyd Park, South Norwood Lake & Grounds, Norbury Park and Happy Valley). Elements of these plans will be delivered in the year ahead with key deliverables including but not limited to the regeneration of South Norwood's fishing platforms and improved signage and interpretation.
- Play spaces review: in the past two years the Council has worked with local Friends groups to regenerate Grange Park and South Norwood Lake & Grounds play spaces and the Council is undertaking a review of the current play offer across its 55 parks playgrounds with a view to informing capital investment in the year ahead.
- Supporting parks to play an important role as cultural spaces where communities can come together to celebrate and enjoy performance, activities and events. Larger scale events held in parks this summer have included the Butterfly Festival at Lloyd Park, Croydon Pride and the Croydon Mela in Wandle Park. Smaller scale events have also taken place across other parks including the Environmental Fair and Summer of Love Festival in Wandle Park for example.

2.17 The challenges for working with our parks and green spaces are in terms of the historical levels of budgets available both for maintenance and development work. Croydon has 127 parks and green spaces and the council has to find ways to support, maintain and develop these in a sustainable way. It is crucial that we work with partners, with Friends' Groups and event organisers to find new ways of investing in our green spaces. We have had some significant success in fundraising for some parks, the Heritage Lottery Funded activity and improvements to Wandle Park over the last couple of years for example, and this is something we need to invest further resources into supporting.

2.18 Croydon's work in supporting land management and biodiversity is likewise delivered across a range of key partnerships and by bringing in significant external funding including:

- Great North Wood: the London Wildlife Trust secured £699,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund for a 4 year project (2017-21). The project will see more residents involved in the revival of the remnants of the Great North Wood, learn new skills, and take part in community events/ citizen science projects and will also fund small scale woodland management interventions on some of the sites, which include Beaulieu Heights, Biggin Wood, Spa Wood/The Lawns, Grangewood Park and Long Lane Wood. To date, sites have greatly benefited from increased public access and invasive species removal.
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) continue to deliver a 2-day mid-week conservation volunteer project, carrying out valuable nature conservation work. TCV has recently been successful in its £80,000 bid to Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver a 2 year Croydon Pond project, which aims to document the history of, record and survey all open water bodies in Croydon. In addition, volunteers will continue to support their ongoing management.
- Downlands Partnership Project delivers conservation grazing in Happy Valley, Sanderstead to Whyteleafe, Hutchinson's Bank and Foxley Wood. It also hosts the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area (SWCA) Warden, who delivers educational session for school, volunteer conservation opportunities, manages the countryside area and surveys for wildlife – the site has a very healthy population of dormice, a nationally rare species.
- London Bat Group carried out its annual bat box check at both South Norwood Lake and Addington Hills. Regular surveys confirm good numbers. Plans are underway to continue the work started on an international Nathusius Pippistrell survey programme, which involves trapping and ringing of the species to track its migration routes to Eastern Europe.
- The Council is currently working with Natural England and the City of London to achieve National Nature Reserve status for Happy Valley, SWCA, Riddlesdown (CBC area) and possibly Hawkhurst Wood, in addition to the surrounding City of London land.

2.19 There are currently six directly leased allotments sites in the borough and a commitment to work with the Federation of Allotment Societies to protect and support those sites. The challenges in this area are in the improvements that are needed to the allotment sites. The Council needs to invest in allotments capital infrastructure, digitally enhance the service, work with allotment holders to scope the potential for sites to become devolved, review fees and charges and actively seek out allotment opportunities in the north of the borough. Funding has been recently secured to support a £350k capital investment programme and online ICT resource.

Live Well Croydon

2.20 Live Well Croydon is a public-health funded healthy lifestyle service that is managed by the Active Lifestyle service in Council Homes, District Centres & Regeneration within Place. The service was launched in April 2017 and to date has seen over 1600 residents to support sustainable lifestyle behaviour change through goal setting and motivational support with a view to enabling residents to live healthier and happier lifestyles. A universal service is available via Just Be Croydon, where residents are triaged to a face-to-face service delivered by Lifestyle Advisors based in areas of deprivation. The Live Well service is instrumental in supporting Croydon's focus on prevention and tackling health inequalities to enable residents to benefit from better health and overall wellbeing. Following two years of successful delivery, the service contract has been extended until March 2020.

Registrars and Bereavement services

2.21 The Registrar's Service is facing a number of challenges and potential changes in response to those over the next year. Although down on the income target set for this year, their income to the end of October is 16% up on this time last year. One of the financial challenges facing Registration services will be the removal of a key income stream when services such as the nationality checking and passport checking go online in early 2019.

2.22 The service is looking at being based out of different locations, with death registration appointments set up at the Crematorium Office one half day per week for example and the potential for Birth and Death registration appointments to be held at Croydon University Hospital in early 2019. In more general terms, the location and facilities of the Registrar services need to be reviewed and improved, and the feasibility of a relocation of the archives considered.

2.23 Bereavement Services are currently on target to achieve the income target set for this year and are currently up 8.5% on their income on the same period last year. One of the main challenges facing the Bereavement Services, is the need to upgrade facilities and services to keep pace with local competition. The other major challenge facing these services is the need to find new burial land. The service is looking to replace its cremators in the summer of 2019 and the specification for that is currently out to tender. The service is also currently developing a proposal to upgrade and refurbish Croydon Crematorium Chapel and the public areas. There is also the potential for a partnership with Croydon University Hospital in terms of mortuary provision.

3 Historical Scrutiny recommendations

Committee	Meeting Date	Recommendation	Cabinet Response (Cabinet Meeting Date)	Cabinet Member Update
Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee	11 November 2014	To make a recommendation to the Cabinet that when considering names for new roads, the names of local sporting heroes and Olympians are included in any deliberations.	Accepted (22/06/2015)	August 2016 a new road was named Nihill Place, after Paul Nihill MBE, the Croydon Olympian who took silver in the 50km walk at the 1964 Tokyo Games. No other opportunities have become available to name a new street/road.
		To make recommendations to Cabinet to refer inequalities of access to sports facilities to the Fairness Commission.	Accepted (22/06/2015)	An indoor facilities strategy and outdoor play and pitch strategy were commissioned 2016-2018 and a final Facilities Strategy 2018-2023 published in November 2018 detailing 'supply' and 'demand' across a number of sports including football, rugby, cricket and tennis. Recommendations within the Strategy will be used to inform next steps and future investment.
		Recommend that the Cabinet continues to work with commercial landlords and other potential partners to address the lack of affordable venues for amateur groups in the borough	Accepted (22/06/2015)	The Active Lifestyle service continues to work with community clubs to identify appropriate facilities. Recent achievements include Ping! an initiative to provide table tennis facilities across parks and high street locations and the hosting of a BMX club and boxing club in a park pavilion in Norbury Park

<p>Scrutiny & Overview Committee</p>	<p>1 November 2016</p>	<p>The Council's Bylaws relating to Parks and Open Spaces to be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and enforceable.</p>	<p>Accept – during 17-18 financial year we will look at Bylaws within the context of existing more recent legislation to identify whether more relevant and effective enforcement mechanisms can be adopted.</p> <p>Review to be complete by March 2018.</p> <p>(20/03/2107)</p>	<p>Advice from the legal team was that bylaws are of minimum effectiveness and the process to review / introduce new byelaws is onerous compared to the value/effect other possible interventions.</p>
		<p>Council IT systems supporting services in parks and open spaces are improved to provide greater integration between the different performance management software systems and the council's resident reporting platforms</p>	<p>Accepted.</p> <p>Streets review of contract management systems is underway. Work is progressing through 17/18 financial year to introduce an integrated system by March 2018.</p> <p>(22/06/2015)</p>	<p>Asset mapping for parks and green spaces being explored by Street/ FM and the Active Lifestyle service are working with Highways and Pitney Bowes to scope the possibility of mapping playground assets within Confirm</p> <p>A recent application to the Place Tech Board has been approved to support an online booking system for Council allotments. This will make it easier for residents to book and pay for plots and decrease administrative support required.</p>