

For general release

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| REPORT TO: | SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 25 February 2020 |
| SUBJECT: | CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME |
| LEAD OFFICER: | Jacqueline Harris Baker, Executive Director of Resources Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director of Place |
| CABINET MEMBER: | Councillor Hamida Ali Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon and Communities |
| PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING: | Councillor Hamida Ali |

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

This report details the diverse range of priorities within the Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon and Communities' portfolio. The report encompasses the range of officer and member actions taken since April 2019 to ensure the safety and cohesion of Croydon's communities. More specifically, the portfolio supports the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home;
- People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives;
- Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential.

The Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022 is available [here](#)

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| ORIGIN OF ITEM: | Annual report to Scrutiny & Overview Committee |
| BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE: | Delivering for Croydon, ensuring that safety and communities are at the heart of our delivery. To provide an update on all areas of the Cabinet Member's portfolio, and map the progress made against our priorities identified in the Corporate Plan. |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides a strategic overview of the progress and challenges of 2019/20. It further provides a summary of service budget issues, both for the immediate and longer term, in addition to any strategies and policies that will be worked on over the coming 12 months.

- 1.2. This report also acts as a progress update and response to the conclusions and recommendations made at meetings concerning the areas of this portfolio.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. This report highlights our accomplishments across what is a diverse portfolio of services. We are delivering our manifesto commitments as reflected in the council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022. Specifically this report will update on how the portfolio is delivering against the following Corporate Plan themes and objectives;

- Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home;
- People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives;
- Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential.

- 2.2. Adopted by the council on 8 October 2018, the Corporate Plan sets out how we will deliver against our manifesto commitments, working with businesses, residents and partners. Delivery Planning will ensure that service delivery and projects are driven with our new ways of working in mind, ensuring a system-wide approach to working with partners.

- 2.3. The Corporate Plan gives emphasis to delivering services that help residents and businesses thrive in Croydon; encouraging personal responsibility for positive outcomes. Our vision focusses on reducing inequalities, supporting health, happiness, and independence, and maintaining a safe place where people choose to live, work and socialise, and everyone has the opportunity to flourish.

3. EVERYONE FEELS SAFER IN THEIR STREET, NEIGHBOURHOOD AND HOME

- 3.1 Ensuring that Croydon is a safe place to live, work and visit is a clear commitment within the manifesto and Corporate Plan. We need to reduce the fear of crime and ensure more people feel safer in their street, neighbourhood and home. We have a responsibility to keep our residents safe.
- 3.2 The current community safety strategy runs from 2017 to 2020. At the next Safer Croydon Partnership meeting, the partnership will consider the Council's new strategic assessment, which the partnership has agreed to publish for the first time. This assessment, a detailed analysis of crime in our borough, will underpin our approach to developing a new community safety strategy. It is anticipated that this strategy will be much more focused towards reducing violence in order to provide strategic direction for the violence reduction network (VRN).
- 3.3 The VRN has produced an appendix that describes at a high level the statutory and organisational framework for the Safer Croydon Partnership. However, in brief it is a partnership body that oversees the delivery of Croydon's Community Safety Strategy, the partnership includes council departments, statutory partners, and members from both the public and private sector. A structure

chart of the Safer Croydon Partnership has been provided in Safer Croydon Partnership item of the agenda.

Context

3.4 The current Community Safety Strategy is coming to an end and it will be a key piece of work over the coming year to draw up and adopt our new strategy. **The portfolio holder hopes that overview and scrutiny will be willing to help with this work.** The current strategy focuses on five themes:

- Reduce the overall crime rate in Croydon with a focus on violent crime, and domestic and sexual violence.
- Safety of children and young people.
- Improving public confidence and community engagement.
- Anti-social behavior and environmental crimes.
- Improve support and reduce vulnerability for all victims of crime, focusing on hate crime.

3.5 A full data pack on these themes is included in the appendix. Reducing crime and ensuring our communities both are safer and feel safer is a key challenge for the Council and strong partnership working is key. Over the last year, the Council and its partners have had some successes and some areas where more work needs to be done. These are summarized below.

Key performance themes

3.6 It is important to recognise that a number of the issues that contribute to crime and safety are long term and entrenched social and public policy issues. Some types of crime are very sensitive to resources and so the performance of the partnership should be viewed in this light.

3.7 Our rates of domestic violence remain a concern. The FJC (the council's domestic abuse service) continues to perform at close to capacity with around 55-65 MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) cases per month. This includes new victims and people who've been referred before.

3.8 Despite our high rates of domestic violence, it is likely that, in line with the rest of London and the UK, the majority of domestic violence and abuse remains hidden. For this reason, and in line with the Mayor of London and national strategies we do not regard increased reporting to either our services, the police or other partners to be a bad thing or reflective of a true increase in rates of violence and abuse being perpetrated. A key part of helping people leave abusive situations is increasing confidence in the services around them.

3.9 The safety of children and young people remains a high priority for all of the partners on the Safer Croydon Partnership. While our rates of serious youth violence are lower than the 2016 peak, just before the current strategy was adopted, we know that this remains a serious issue for young people in the borough. Our ongoing challenges relate to both the safety of children and children's perceptions of their safety. Many young people carry weapons because they feel threatened. Both aspects will be central to our new strategy.

- 3.10 Children and young people are vulnerable to a range of other types of violence and coercion and for this reason the public health approach to violence reduction make explicit reference to criminal exploitation and modern slavery. The portfolio holder anticipates that this more holistic view of violence and safety of young people will be a strong theme in our new strategy.
- 3.11 Currently the partnership is using police confidence measured by the Metropolitan police as its proxy measure for our public confidence target. Croydon's confidence in the police is better than the met average, but below other boroughs. The partnership wants to explore whether there is a better measure that more accurately reflects people's experiences and perceptions of their safety in Croydon as we develop the new strategy. We know that some perceptions can be impacted by issues, like media coverage, beyond Croydon's control, but we do think with a better measure we could have a more meaningful impact on perceptions of and actual safety in Croydon.
- 3.12 Anti-social behavior (ASB) and environmental crimes are a key part of the partnerships work, and have seen significant successes and challenges. ASB casework continues to increase, but there have been a number of high profile successes, including business closures in Portland Road following a major undercover police operation. Other parts of regulatory services contribute to this work, Trading Standards for example, are doing nationally recognised work on illegal knife sales to children both on and off line.
- 3.13 Tackling hate crime has been a key area of success over the last year in particular. Our hate crime pledge was signed by 24,000 of individuals and organisations in the borough. The Prevent and community outreach teams have done work with a variety of different community organisations to equip them with the tools and knowledge to tackle hate crime and to support people to report it. We will look to build on this work as we develop the next strategy.

Future work

- 3.14 During the last year, the Council has adopted its public health approach to violence reduction, appointed the council's first director of violence reduction and restructured the community safety team to give a strategic and operational focus to reducing violence – an appendix is provided that explains the new team. There is a separate section on the progress of this work but it is relevant as we move towards developing our next community safety strategy.
- 3.15 The work starts with our annual Strategic Assessment which the board will have at its March meeting. This will help the board set the high-level framework for the new strategy. This will be followed by public engagement and consultation to understand the safety priorities of our many different communities. **The portfolio holder hopes that the Scrutiny and Overview committee will help the Council with this work, but through exploration of the potential themes of the new strategy and through helping us to engage.**
- 3.16 The existing strategy already has a strong focus on violence and its drivers. We propose to build on this work and align the major outcomes of the new strategy to our violence reduction aspirations outlined below. This doesn't mean ignoring volume crimes or crimes without violence present as many of these crimes help us identify the potential for violence and take preventative measures. This

evolution in our approach will need careful consideration within the partnership and with our communities.

- 3.17 As mentioned, the strategic assessment will be presented to the SCP board at the end of March to enable the partnership to set the framework for a thoughtful public consultation on how we work together across the borough to reduce violence and crime, and keep our communities safe.

Violence Reduction Network

Development of our public health approach to reducing violence

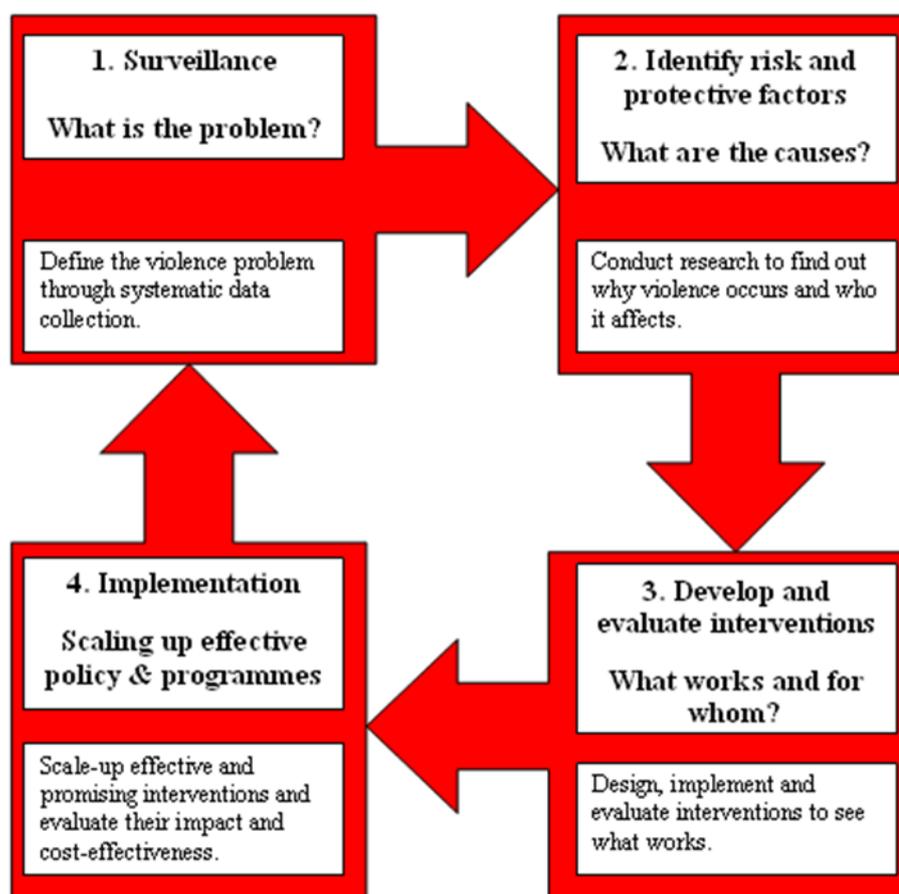
- 3.18 Last year, Croydon Council adopted a public health approach to violence reduction in Croydon. Since then, the Council has achieved the following milestones:
- Adopted a public health strategy to reduce violence
 - Appointed the first director of the violence reduction network
 - Restructured the community safety team to deliver our violence reduction work
 - Secured significant external funding and committed Council resources to reduce violence in Croydon
 - Started work to deliver the public health strategy (see below)
- 3.19 A true public health approach requires systemic change to how we approach violence in the borough, working at every stage of the life course to support people vulnerable to violence and divert potential perpetrators. This is an ambitious approach for Croydon and will take time to deliver but we hope this report demonstrates we are committed to our approach and already delivering.
- 3.20 The Violence Reduction Network are seeking to deliver this ambitious agenda in a very constrained financial climate. By bringing together different parts of the system and fully using the energy, experience, and knowledge of our communities we can make better use of limited resources to reduce violence. Strong partnership and multi-agency working already exists, and this provides a firm foundation, but further work needs to be done.
- 3.21 The Vulnerable Adolescent Review (VAR) demonstrated many of the underlying causes of and vulnerabilities to violence manifest themselves over individuals' and families' life courses. The evidence gathered in the VAR informed the development of the public health strategy to reduce violence in the borough. This is explained in greater detail below, but it is important to understand that this is a long-term approach. Interventions made during pregnancy, the early years or primary school may not deliver violence reduction results for many years.

Public health approach to reducing violence

- 3.22 A public health approach treats violence as if it were a disease. Episodes of violence are viewed as symptoms with an underlying cause. Work can be undertaken to treat the systems, i.e. through policing and criminal justice interventions. To ensure a lasting impact, the public health approach proposes that the causes of violence, common factors that make people vulnerable to

violence as a perpetrator, victim, or, in many cases, both, must be addressed. The link between traumatic experiences, particularly in early childhood, and violence later in life is increasingly well understood- and a key part of our approach. In 2019, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) published a report demonstrating the link between poverty and violence which can be found [here](#).

3.23 In response to an understanding of the long term and systemic drivers of violence, the Council's strategy recognises a need for treatment, early intervention and prevention to deal with both the symptoms and causes of violence in Croydon. The World Health Organisation visualises this explanation in the following diagram:



Developing the network and delivering our approach

3.24

The Violence Reduction Network is increasingly successful at bidding for and winning new investment for the Council's violence reduction approach. In recognition of the external investment, the administration has also made decisions to invest in this work:

Key external funding

- Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)/Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) funds: the Council was awarded £400,000 to be spend in 2019/20 and 2020/21 on various projects related to youth violence and drug related violence. The VRN is using this money both to boost the development of the network and to fund essential outcomes. Projects funded include trauma

informed training, investment in new software to support our evidence gathering and analysis, development work for our community navigators as well as a package of support for vulnerable adolescents and young adults including mentoring, an 18-25 worker in the gangs team, and support for 'Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) young people to gain skills and employment.

- Young Londoners Fund: a network of over 20 community organisations led by CVA and supported by the council successfully bid for £1.2m to spend over three years to develop the Croydon Community Partnership Against Trauma. This is one of just a handful of large bids across London, the bidding process is hugely competitive.
- MOPAC: the Council has been awarded funding from MOPAC to fund youth work at Croydon University Hospital provided by Redthread. This service is currently being mobilized, and will begin operating in late May/early June 2020.
- Drive: a pilot funded by MOPAC to test and evidence domestic abuse and violence approaches that focus on perpetrators to reduce their domestic abuse offending. MOPAC have invested a further £370,000 to continue the pilot for a further year to help develop the evidence base for investment that focuses on domestic abuse perpetrators who are responsible for the violence and harm they cause.
- IRISi: is a project funded by the London Violence Reduction Unit which will invest over £100,000 in support to GPs surgeries to increase understanding of domestic abuse and support referrals of victims to specialist services.

3.25 There is other ongoing external funding supporting work in a range of teams that supports reducing violence. Successfully securing external funding will continue to be an ongoing priority for the VRN.

Key internal funding

The administration is committed to support the VRN's work. In the early stages of establishing the VRN, the Council committed transformation funds to begin delivering the priorities of the strategy, and to boost our efforts to be successful at generating external funding for our work. Some of this funding is spent on staff to establish the work.

3.26 The Council has also committed £2m to upgrade the CCTV infrastructure in the borough. This will help with reducing violence both by providing vital evidence to catch perpetrators but also to help identify issues for proactive action before violence flares up. The VRN is also using existing budgets to invest in systems to support our evidence gathering and analysis, which is key to the public health approach.

Delivering our public health approach

3.27 Since 2019, a lot of the VRN's effort has gone into developing our strategy and this report has already outlined some of the actions we've take to start to make that a reality. This includes the staff changes and recruitment, presented in the appendices, and while this takes time we've also been working to deliver the approach, two examples are set out below.

Becoming a trauma informed borough

- 3.28 A working group of partners, including statutory and non-statutory organisations and community organisations has been developing the Council's approach to becoming a trauma informed borough.
- 3.29 The VRN is developing a practice guide to help partners, internal and external, understand why becoming trauma informed is important and how to get the right training for their staff and client group whatever the setting. The Council is developing a bespoke e-learning course that will be available to anyone in the borough for free. The VRN will provide some more specialist face to face training for those who need a higher level of trauma practice. Staff resource from the VRN will be dedicated to advocating a trauma informed approach, and has both external and internal funding to assist with the roll out of trauma training.
- 3.30 The VRN director is liaising with the World Health Organization regarding becoming a member of their Trauma Informed Communities Network.

Developing Community Navigators

- 3.31 Some of the MOPAC funding outlined above is being used to allocate staff time to developing our community navigators approach. This work is in its early stages and **the portfolio holder welcomes the opportunity to come back to scrutiny to share our thinking and involve you in the development of the work.**
- 3.32 Partnership development of approaches to violence reduction: a key benefit of a network is being able to bring others into our delivery. We've already done this with the trauma training and will do it as we develop the community navigators. A key part of this is understanding what our partners think about the issues we face. We are in the process of holding thematic workshops on our initial priorities, vulnerable adolescents, domestic abuse and violence and data and evidence. These workshops are helping us prioritize our work for the next year.

Data and evidence

- 3.33 One of the key elements to underpin a public health approach is our use of data and evidence. As part of the restructure we have created an intelligence and performance team. The manager is already working on improving our use of data to target key issues and locations to reduce violence. The Council and its partners own significant data sets that can be better brought together to understand violence and its drivers in Croydon.
- 3.34 Next month (March 2020) will see Croydon publish for the first time its Strategic Assessment – the holistic analysis of crime in the borough. In being more transparent with data the VRN can enable others to use it and develop their own interventions.
- 3.35 As outlined above, the VRN will be doing some thematic work with internal and external partners to explore how we can better gather, share, analyse and use

the data and information we all have access to, in order to target violence and ultimately reduce it in the borough.

Governance

- 3.36 The creation of a network rather than a unit does pose questions about governance. Each organisation involved will continue to be individually accountable for decisions, resources and performance. But we will seek to create spaces, both formal and informal, where different networks can come together to work on issues and locations.
- 3.37 The SCP will continue to be the statutory partnership for this work. This will be supported both on and off line in formal and informal ways as we seek to involve all of Croydon in our efforts to reduce violence. The SCP provides regular updates to the Local Strategic Partnership. This structure also enables joint working across different boards that are relevant to this work and ensures a genuine partnership approach.

Looking forward

- 3.38 Over the next year the VRN will:
- Roll out trauma information, awareness and practice
 - Develop community navigators to help Croydon become more resilient and to engage those who can't or won't access statutory services
 - Develop networks of interest and practice to work on key issues and locations to reduce violence
 - Develop our community safety partnership and strategy to focus on the Council's violence reduction aims

Community safety civic events

National Hate Crime Awareness Week

- 3.39 In October 2019, Croydon Council hosted a series of community events in addition to BAU actions taken against hate crime in the borough. Informal coffee mornings were hosted in partnership with VCS organisations and the police to provide support to residents who may have experienced hate crime, ensuring they understand how to report such offences. Launched at Croydon PrideFest 2019, the 'Say No to Hate' Safer Croydon Partnership pledge has been signed by 24,000 people. The number of hate crime offences reported is declining in Croydon.
- 3.40 Between April 1st 2018 and March 31st 2019 there were 661 hate crime offences recorded by the police in Croydon- compared to 699 recorded in the same period a year earlier. The statistics include racist and religious hate crime, disability hate crime, homophobic hate crime and transgender hate crime. Whilst the number of racist and religious hate crime offences recorded was lower between April 1st 2018 and March 31st 2019 than in the same period a year earlier, the number of disability, homophobic and transgender hate crimes increased. The full report is available [here](#). The recording of hate crimes and hate incidents is the responsibility of the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- 3.41 Croydon Council has taken a well-defined role in ensuring FGM is not tolerated and has taken steps to ensure its eradication across the borough. City University London has estimated that by 2011, 2,594 women in Croydon had been subjected to FGM, and it is estimated that 3% of maternities in Croydon are to women affected by FGM (approximately 200 births pa.). The full report can be found [here](#). In November 2019, the Council hosted a conference to raise awareness about the scope of the issue, and the facts and myths associated with the practice. Over 90 professionals, including health and social care practitioners, Croydon educators, and those affected by FGM both locally and in partner boroughs, attended.
- 3.42 Following feedback from the November conference, a training session for Croydon's education providers will be hosted on 26th February 2020. The session will provide practical support to those faced with identifying girls and women at risk, and how to initiate dialogue with potentially affected girls, women and their families. The Council has also recently recruited a FGM social worker to aid the wider social work team in supporting those vulnerable to FGM. The Policy & Partnerships team is currently working with partners and colleagues in the NHS to review the current FGM Strategy which expires in 2020. The Council plans to hold another conference later this year aimed at voluntary and community sector organisations, including faith groups, to raise awareness and build partnerships with these communities to further the work towards eradicating FGM.

4.0 Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime

The Neighbourhood Safety Team

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Safety Team (NST) is comprised of 35 roles. The teams are currently deployed across the borough on an area basis covering all the wards in the borough. The NST have now recruited two new Abandoned Vehicle Officers, and a Tasking Co-ordinator who joined in Summer/Autumn 2019.
- 4.2 The NST has started to use the Uniform case management system from 2020, to record work flows, improve delegation of tasks and keep a record of statistics. The system is being reviewed as part of a procurement process, and the NST are awaiting the outcome of the review, to assess whether a new case management system is needed.
- 4.3 The NST has changed the way it delivers its service. Officers used to be area deployed and would only attend service requests in the ring-fenced areas. Officers are now tasked according to needs as part of the briefing and via service requests on the Uniform case management system, but revert back to an area patrol after service requests and other tasks have been carried out. At morning and afternoon briefings, area officers are now matched to service requests where area boundaries do not apply, and so work is more fairly divided between officers. The new focus still allows officers to retain local area knowledge and presence.

- 4.4 As part of an ongoing service review, further re-organisation and recruitment is planned for early 2020 including recruitment to vacant NST posts. The NST are currently researching opportunities to collect and use data to facilitate more intelligent and proactive tasking. This will increase capacity for ASB hi-vis reassurance patrols.
- 4.5 The Housing Revenue Account contributes a significant amount of money to the NST and as a result Neighbourhood Safety Officers have spent many hours of their patrols on housing estates. Up to 40% of their patrol time is spent on Housing land, and this contribution replaces the former Housing Wardens arrangement which was merged into the Neighbourhood Safety Service four years ago.
- 4.6 All NST patrols are hi-vis reassurance patrols. However, residents are often unaware of NST patrols, and the NST is looking for ways to ensure better engagement with the public through both social media and face-to-face interactions. Housing estate patrols by Neighbourhood Safety Officers are supplemented by the Abandoned Vehicles Team who have also removed a number of vehicles from Housing Land in the last year, reducing ASB fears. This data is collected but not housed by the Council.
- 4.7 The NST has provided reassurance to residents, and has supplied intelligence to Housing which has facilitated notable ASB/Environmental outcomes:
- Wisbeach Road: vehicle and hoarding nuisance addressed through ASB Crime and Policing Act powers. Neighbourhood Safety Officers are supporting the removal of waste and abandoned vehicles from Wisbeach Gardens, and are assisting in identifying the perpetrator.
 - Tamworth Road: Neighbourhood Safety Officers have provided vital information regarding ASB and drug dealing, allowing supported tenancy officers to take action.
 - Canterbury Road: a number of dumped vehicles and grime spots have been identified and removed, improving the estate's appearance.
- 4.8 The NST have assisted the Food Team with uniformed presence, and other visits to support their staff during the year. This has included providing body worn video capability to gather evidence at shops, with one shop later taken to prosecution.
- 4.9 Whilst on patrol in areas with high commercial footfall, the NST has carried out over 2000 visits to ensure shops have commercial waste agreements in place. Where shops are found not to have arrangements in place, they are urged to obtain a contract. Many shops opt to obtain a contract with Veolia therefore indirectly generating revenue towards commercial waste contracts. It is envisaged that the NST will continue to have a commercial waste focused Neighbourhood Safety team as a result.
- 4.10 The NST specialist teams (Fly-Tip Task Force and Time Banded Waste Collection Team) have supported the area teams (North/Central/South) by answering service requests, supporting the Abandoned Vehicle Team, and carrying out a dozen operation in hot spot areas during hi-vis ASB patrols. The NST is focusing on an area per month in addition to normal duties and service

requests. This will be ongoing each month and steered by data analysis for both environmental crime, ASB statistics and councillor/resident input.

The NST have completed the following actions since April 2019:

- Issued 112 CPN (warnings) under the ASB Crime and Policing Act powers for a variety of waste, dog nuisance, vehicle nuisance, and other matters
- Issued three formal CPNs
- Obtained one Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) conviction against a fly-tipper
- Carried out ASB/hi-vis patrols every day of the year, and have attended ward panel meetings

Vehicle Crime

4.11 This year, the Environment Enforcement team have carried out several joint operations with Merton officers, the Police, and other agencies including HMRC and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). Croydon's Environment Enforcement Officers have seized eight vehicles this year in relation to waste crimes, and have assisted Merton with cross-border operations, assisting with legal processes concerning the seizing and handling of vehicles. The team are working to ensure that Croydon is not attractive to organised crime gangs, which are likely to be involved in other acquisitive crimes such as artifice burglary (where distraction or trickery is used to gain entry) and fraud offences. Neighbourhood Safety Officers and Environmental Enforcement Officers are seeking to understand how the new Environment Agency 'Joint Unit for Waste Crime' can be supported.

Illegal incursions linked with ASB reports

4.12 Only 12 illegal incursions have been recorded in 2019, the lowest number since central records began in 2013 and down from 25 in 2018. This was due to the injunction obtained by EEOs in October 2018. The decrease has reduced the number of park closures, reduced large-scale fly-tipping, and reduced disruption to park events. The decrease has also led to fewer ASB complaints related to traveller encampments.

The following summarises the planned duties within Neighbourhood Safety Teams in the coming year

- Recruit to several vacancies to create a new enforcement team; specific details are yet to be known but a specific licensing enforcement team may be trialled
- Reorganise the team to ensure efficiency and build on changes made in 2019
- Use intelligence to task proactively
- Reduce or remove underused reporting channels and promote digital reporting in order to automate data and reduce manual output
- Continue Housing Estate patrols and achieve the target of 40% deployment of service
- Carry out one large-scale operation per month in addition to BAU

- Build on relations with the Police and carry out joint ASB patrols
- Improve communication channels and service footprint to reassure residents

Croydon resilience

- 4.13 The Council chairs the Croydon Resilience Forum. The Borough Resilience Forum brings together all agencies with a significant role to play in preparedness, responding to, and recovery from the effects of emergencies. The CRF is a statutory body with a reporting line to the London Resilience Forum, chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience, Dr Fiona Twycross AM.
- 4.14 The Council has a resilience team to coordinate its activities in this area. The team is highly regarded across London, due to their response to a range of incidents, including major fires, gas leaks, tram derailment as well as the team's and chief executive's contribution to the development of London local authorities' collective resilience.
- 4.15 The resilience team is substantively 4 staff (1 manager, 3 officers), however, since August one officer has been on secondment. The corporate resilience board meets bi-monthly and is chaired by the chief executive. As intended, the officer board maintains oversight of the corporate resilience programme and assists in setting the priorities for the team and organisation. The board has had oversight of the following achievements throughout 2019 and start of 2020.
- 4.16 The Chief Executive chairs the Local Authority Panel (LAP) – Implementation Group, a tactical practitioner group responsible for the delivery of the LAP business plan as part of the London resilience forum. The resilience team also contribute to major projects in the business plan such as the resilience manager being programme lead for humanitarian assistance and a guide for local authorities in the management of donations project led by a resilience officer.
- 4.17 The Resilience Standards for London (RSL) is a new set of standards to support local authorities to better deliver their resilience programme and assess capability and organisational resilience levels. RSL replaced the previous London assurance programme Minimum Standards for London. A self-assessment of the organisation's resilience was undertaken in December/January. It is a great tool for identifying the organisation's strengths as well as areas for improvement in regard to resilience. Outcomes will inform the resilience board's priorities for 2020 and 2021. Part of the LAP assurance framework in regard to the RSLs is to undergo a LGA resilience audit every 4 years. It is not known when Croydon Council will undergo their LGA audit, however, the RSL, resilience work programme and overall commitment to resilience is good preparation for when it is scheduled.
- 4.18 The resilience team were involved in the preparations for Britain's exit from the European Union. This involved attendance at the council working group, as well as liaison with local partners through the Croydon resilience forum. The situation proved helpful in focussing services in business continuity and contingency related activities. This also included the review of the Croydon Council Fuel Disruption Plan alongside partners. The resilience team continue

to be involved throughout the transition phase and ready to support any EU exit-related local or regional requests.

Exercise Safer City

- 4.19 Exercise Safer City is a pan-London local authority command post exercise which takes place annually. The 2019 exercise took place on 1st & 2nd May with its aim to test a number of elements of a Council's response functions, as well as testing the regional response capabilities. 2019's exercise was a great experience and resulted in lots of practice and learning among the over 80 staff (from ELT to frontline staff) who participated. The success of the exercise is a testament to the Council and its commitment to the resilience agenda. Exercise Safer City 2020 is being held on 4th March. It is a smaller exercise this year, which focusses on the sub-regional resilience partnership groups. This means the incident will focus on impacts of Croydon, Bromley, Bexley, Lewisham and Greenwich. Again, the resilience team are being well supported by senior leadership and the exercise will include a number of response functions including Council Gold Group, Council Silver Group and the Borough Emergency Control Centre.

Role in civil emergencies training for Members

- 4.20 A regional project between the Local Authority Panel and London Councils is to develop training packages for Leaders and elected Members to ensure a joint understanding of their role in civil emergencies. The Leader and Chief Executive attended a London Councils emergency planning training on 21 February in central London. A local version of the package for all Members will be available from April and the resilience team are currently making arrangements to ensure everyone has the opportunity to attend the training.

Business continuity planning review

- 4.21 The process includes heads of service reviewing/ completing their business impact assessment, followed by team managers reviewing/ completing their service business continuity plan. Over approximately 6 months the organisation achieved its highest ever completion rate of 96%. The review's success is considered to be due to a very supportive corporate leadership team, perseverance of the resilience team and the review taking place annually rather than biennially so there isn't a large amount to change making it more palatable for managers to complete. It also demonstrates the improvement in the embedment of business continuity planning as an everyday process which the resilience team have consistently promoted since refreshing the programme in 2013.
- 4.22 The resilience team have worked with the South London Coroner Service consortium to develop a joint response plan for a mass fatality incident. The document follows an identified need following the tram incident and a more collaborative plan for stakeholders. The document, in three parts, includes a section for the Senior Coroner, a section for the consortium borough where the incident has taken place and a section for Croydon Council as Senior Coroner host borough. The plan is due to have final sign-off by the Senior Coroner by March and is thought to be the first of its kind for a London coronial area.

4.23 The resilience team and their head of service have worked with the human resources team to produce new support documentation for the pool of emergency response officers. It is felt that by bringing clarity to the role, commitment requirement and Council support in return, that recruitment and retention will be improved. Final consultations are underway and it is hoped that the new documentation will be rolled out across summer 2020. In December and January 2019, the resilience team worked with the communications team to run a recruitment campaign for emergency response officers. The campaign has been really successful and has resulted in almost 40 members of staff expressing interest. It is anticipated to run the campaign at regular intervals to continue steady recruitment.

4.24 A Cabinet report is planned for March 2020, which will outline the work of the Council's resilience team and raise awareness of existing Council corporate emergency response and business continuity documentation. This will include much of the above, as well as a short update of regional and local Coronavirus preparedness and acknowledgement of local authority emergency planning recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Fire Inquiry Phase One Report.

4.25 Other significant achievements and deliverables from the team during 2019 and early 2020 have been:

- Review of Council and multi-agency pandemic flu plans in support of Coronavirus preparedness.
- Revised corporate training and exercising programme.
- Croydon Resilience Forum Utility Disruption Plan revised.
- Team business continuity workshop/exercise packages developed and delivered throughout 2020.
- Summer and Winter networking events for Council emergency response officers.
- All Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) documentation to be reviewed following learning from Exercise Safer City 2019.
- The command roles of 'Council Gold' and 'Council Silver' were reviewed following Exercise Safer City 2019. Documentation in support of these roles such as handbooks, meeting templates and action trackers have also been revised and aligned with identified learning.
- "Bite-size" training packages for BECC staff developed and being delivered throughout February ahead of Exercise Safer City.
- Working with insurance for a school fall-back location following a major incident.
- Plans to upgrade the Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC), including relocation from the Town Hall to Bernard Weatherill House spring 2020.
- Delivery of 3 Croydon Resilience Forum business meetings, including half-day workshops/exercises.

4.26 A Cabinet report is planned for March 2020, which will outline the work of the Council's resilience team and raise awareness of existing Council corporate emergency response and business continuity documentation. This will include much of the above, as well as a short update of regional and local Coronavirus preparedness and acknowledgement of local authority emergency planning recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Fire Inquiry Phase One Report.

Regulatory Services

Licensing

- 5.0 The licensing team process applications, and issue licenses and permits for a wide range of licensable activities. The team also respond to enquiries and complaints from licence applicants/ holders, members of the public and other stakeholders such as the police and the London Fire Brigade. In addition, compliance/enforcement officers regularly check on compliance with the terms and conditions of licenses issued.
- 5.1 In an effort to improve the service, the Council Licensing Team has absorbed the skip licensing function which was previously undertaken by Parking Services. Steps are also being taken for the Licensing Team to imminently absorb the work associated with the licensing of scaffolds, hoarding and other items placed on the public highway (such as cherry pickers). This function is currently undertaken by the Contact Centre. To ensure the Council's costs in providing these services are recovered, the Licensing Team have undertaken a fees review and updated fees for skips and scaffolding.
- 5.2 The Licensing Team is responsible for licensing premises linked to animal welfare, and has successfully implemented The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018. Introducing the requirements ensures the continued high standards of protection for animals kept in licensed premises in the borough. The Licensing Team has also updated its historic agreement with the Corporation of London Veterinary Service for the provision of animal welfare advice, and has undertaken a review of fees for licensed animal welfare premises. The new fees were approved by the Council's Licensing Committee and have been implemented to ensure the Council's costs in providing the service are recovered.
- 5.3 The Licensing Team are also responsible for licensing premises that provide special treatments- tattooing, body piercing, massages, nail treatments and a number of other beauty treatments. To ensure high standards of hygiene and operator training/competence, the Council has introduced new, updated standards conditions for special treatment premises. The new conditions and updated fee structure were approved by the Council's Licensing Committee and implemented.
- 5.4 A review of fees for the licensing of sex establishments- sex shops and sexual entertainment venues- has been undertaken by the Licensing Team and the new fees approved by the Council's Licensing Committee. There is, however, only one licensed sex establishment in the borough.
- 5.5 Figures for licensing in 2019 are as follows. The increase/decrease since 2018 has been listed in brackets.
- New premises: 73 (+14)
 - Full variation: 22 (+3)
 - Minor variation: 29 (+7)
 - Vary DPS: 207 (+50)

- Transfer: 78 (+8)
- Animal welfare new & renewals combined (01/19/19 to 31/03/2020): 55 (+7)
- Special treatment renewals (01/04/19 to 31/03/2020): 134 (-22)
- Gambling premises renewals: 49 (-12)
- Temporary event notices: 625 (+73)

Food and safety

- 5.6 The Food & Safety Team undertake inspections of a wide range of premises to ensure the health and safety of residents and visitors. This work is monitored by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The council has increased the number of inspections compared to previous years, supported by the appointment of agency EHOs as a temporary measure before increasing the number of permanent staff. Due to increased staffing levels and higher inspection numbers, a review of the business support function will be undertaken in 2020/21.
- 5.7 Ongoing improvements are taking place to ensure the database and case management system produce the accurate reports that are required. The Food Safety Team are confident that all inspections will be completed by the end of March 2020. Regular updates are being sent to the FSA regarding inspections completed and numbers outstanding or overdue.
- 5.8 Weekly food inspections made by the Food and Safety Team have identified a number of serious food offences in the borough. Under Hygiene Emergency Prohibition powers, the team has closed six food businesses which has removed imminent health risks to the public. Remedial works have taken place and the premises have been allowed to trade again. Overall, food hygiene standards are good throughout the borough.
- 5.9 Advisory and enforcement visits have taken place at the 17 shisha premises identified throughout the borough over the last couple of years. Whilst many have taken advice on board, the Food and Safety Team has initiated prosecution action against three premises. Café Havana (1363 London Road) has appeared in court in January 2020 where two defendants were found guilty of offences under the Health Act 2006. The shisha café is part of a chain of Café Havana premises, and the Food Safety Team has assisted a larger investigation regarding potential fraud against the Council and financial irregularities. The investigation is ongoing, and further work is planned for 2020.
- Project to offer additional advice and assistance to multiple shops in targeted areas, focusing particularly on butchers and fresh produce suppliers. All premises are also subject to risk based programmed inspections
 - Extend compliance checks for shisha cafes to include carbon dioxide monitoring
 - Robust food sampling programme within multiple premises throughout the borough to feed into national and local sampling projects, and to identify areas for improvement. Specific details are to be confirmed in April/May 2020

Trading Standards

Tackling knife sales

- 5.10 The Council's trading standards team have led on a nationwide online knife test purchasing initiative, using a 13 year old child who attempted, under controlled conditions, to buy knives from a website based around England and Wales. Out of 100 attempts, 41 retailers supplied a knife. Subsequently, 17 retailers were prosecuted, 12 pleaded guilty, one was found guilty and a further four have pleaded not guilty. All four trial dates are set for a two-week period at the end of February and beginning of March 2020. The Trading Standards team has been praised for their work, which will help to prevent under-18s from purchasing deadly weapons, by the chairman of National Trading Standards.
- 5.11 The pan-London Responsible retailer agreement for knife retailers launched in Croydon in October 2019. Created by London Trading Standards, the Met Police and the MOPAC, the agreement aims to ensure that retailers take a consistent and responsible approach to the storage, display and sale of knives. The Home Office are preparing a separate scheme for large national companies to sign, this agreement is aimed at small and medium-sized retailers. 58 retailers have signed so far with a further ten to be completed.

Operation Mohawk

- 5.12 In September 2019, a trial took place at Croydon Crown Court in relation to fraud and money laundering offences. Ten defendants stood trial, five entered guilty pleas on the first day of trial, and the remaining five were found guilty after a five week trial. Crimes committed related to the defrauding of elderly victims in relation to bogus building repair work carried out at their properties. Total losses for the 20 victims amounted to approximately £400,000. Sentencing of all ten is due to take place in late February or early March 2020.

Illicit tobacco

- 5.13 The Trading Standards team have carried out inspections of a number of small shops in Croydon using specialist sniffer dogs to uncover illicit, concealed tobacco. A number of seizures were made with warnings issued.

6 PEOPLE LIVE LONG, HEALTHY, HAPPY AND INDEPENDENT LIVES/OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE AND REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

- 6.0 As the title of this portfolio highlights, working with our communities is critical to identify and deliver our priorities. The voluntary and community sector (VCS) play a vital role in providing services and support to our residents, especially those that are more vulnerable or isolated.
- 6.1 Our Communities Team provide a strong link with the VCS, providing advice and guidance and managing a range of funding processes. This section outlines some of the key activities that the Communities Team have delivered and are currently supporting.

Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement

- 6.2 The VCS delivers significant services, support and advice to residents across a wide range of Council services. The sector also supports community cohesion, empowerment and resilience.
- 6.3 The Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2019-2023 outlines how the Council seeks to work in partnership with the VCS and identifies six priority outcomes which underpin this approach to support our residents and communities across Croydon.
- People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives
 - Our young people thrive and reach their full potential
 - Access to homes and prevention of homelessness
 - Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood, and home
 - Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career
 - We value arts, culture and sports
- 6.4 The Strategy has informed our consultation process when developing subsequent policies relating to the VCS. Consultation on the Premises related support for the VCS was undertaken between 9 October and 19 November 2019. It includes policies on the allocation of and/rent setting of Council-owned VCS properties, the allocation of Rent Subsidy and the allocation of Discretionary Rate Relief. The consultation process included an online survey and engagement event. The consultation was promoted on the Council's Get Involved web portal and via the VCS infrastructure organisations' regular communication channels to VCS organisations across Croydon.
- 6.5 The VCS Strategy has also informed the recent recommissioning of the Community Fund. For example, we gave more time and physical opportunities for collaborative bids to be developed, we developed processes proportionate to the level of funding applied for, and we moved away from post-application negotiations and instead gave a clear yes or no. Ahead of the application submission date, the Council held three well-attended engagement events where those interested in applying were given clear guidance and could pose questions directly to the decision makers.

Recommissioning the Community Fund

- 6.6 The Council invests in excess of £4m p.a. in financial support to the VCS through the Community Fund, Prevention Fund, the Community Small Grants, Community Ward Budgets, rent subsidies and discretionary rate relief. In addition, there are substantial further commissioned services that fund the VCS sector. The Council has confirmed its commitment to continue funding and has increased the investment over the next three years from April 2020. The Communities Team have increased their support to VCS organisations during the process, providing clearer guidance and extending the application period. Young people and VCS organisations were involved in the evaluation process.
- 6.7 Securing grants from the Community Fund 2020-2023 was extremely competitive; 110 submissions were received for the Under £15,000 fund, with 18 grants awarded, and 90 submissions were received for the Over £15,000 fund, with 34 grants awarded. A total of £233,281 was awarded from the Under

£15,000 fund and a total of £3,830,359 was awarded from the Over £15,000 fund. The table below details the number of successful submissions per outcome theme.

| Community Fund awards over £15k | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Outcome Theme | Successful Submissions |
| People Live Long, Happy and Independent Lives | 6 |
| Children & Young People Thrive and meet their Potential | 7 |
| Access to Homes and Prevention of Homelessness | 1 |
| Everybody feels safe in their street, neighbourhood and home | 5 |
| Everybody has an opportunity to work and build their career | 1 |
| Prevention Fund (Over 65+) | 14 |
| Total | 34 |
| Community Fund awards under £15k | |
| Outcome Theme | Successful Submissions |
| People Live Long, Happy and Independent Lives | 6 |
| Children & Young People Thrive and meet their Potential | 6 |
| Access to Homes and Prevention of Homelessness | 1 |
| Everybody feels safe in their street, neighbourhood and home | 2 |
| Everybody has an opportunity to work and build their career | 1 |
| Prevention Fund (Over 65+) | 2 |
| Total | 18 |

- 6.8 The successful projects cover the whole of the borough and show an understanding of locality needs and how they will deliver this to improve the lives of residents. Through the Community Fund, **52 VCS** organisations will receive **£4,084,745**. Funding ranged from **£2,200 to £219,263**.

Policy for Council community properties, rent subsidy and rate relief for the voluntary and community sector

- 6.9 The policy was created in response to calls for transparency regarding how rents are charged, subsidies are offered and council community properties are allocated. The Council supports VCS organisations in respect of premises and associated subsidies in a number of ways, in total worth more than £0.5m a year. The new policy continues to support the sector at the same level, but focuses this assistance on organisations that support the priority outcomes in the Council's VCS Strategy, have the greatest community impact and need, and spread the benefit of funding as widely as possible.

- 6.10 The budget for rent subsidy and discretionary rate relief (DRR) has not changed as a result of the policy. Any extra income raised from charging market rents instead of peppercorn rents is now used to provide rent subsidy for qualifying organisations. The policy was considered by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee in December 2019 and adopted by Cabinet on 20th January 2020. The policy for allocating council community properties will come into effect on 1st April 2020. The new rent charging framework and policies on rent subsidy and DRR will take effect from 1st April 2021.

Growth Zone and community facilities

- 6.11 The Council has recently appointed consortium partners We Made That, PRD and Migrants Bureau to engage with our VCS stakeholders and undertake an analysis of community space in central Croydon. This includes mapping and understanding the existing availability of community space for use and hire, including assets owned or managed by the Council, alongside an assessment of the pipeline of new community facilities being delivered as part of new development within the Town Centre. The Council will report back to VCS networks and infrastructure organisations with the publication of the We Made That report in summer 2020.

Community devolution and empowerment

- 6.12 The council has continued its commitment to community devolution and empowerment. Funding has been devolved to local areas in the form of ward budgets.
- 6.13 Councillors interested in community devolution in their wards were invited to training in May 2019, provided by the Local Government Information Unit and Cabinet Member. The training provided guidance on key skills required to play a full and effective role as a community leader including engagement techniques, utilising local communities and stakeholder groups, and the enhancement of community leadership through social media.
- 6.14 The community devolution project seeks to achieve the following aims:
- Enable local communities to work together with councillors to explore needs, resolve issues and set priorities
 - Enable councillors to be community leaders
 - Provide enabling support, including officer advice or feasibility funding to councillors
 - Improve transparency and openness with our residents
 - Recognise the opportunity in Croydon for true community-led initiatives
 - Encourage the production of bottom-up ideas and strategies from across the entire community
- 6.15 The Council has committed to community devolution through three early adopter areas in New Addington, South Norwood and Purley. South Norwood was a particular success and the project led to the creation of 'We Love SE25', a community action team of local community organisations, councillors, businesses and schools working to deliver change in the local area.

- 6.16 Ward budgets now stand at £8,000 per year per councillor to support local community initiatives. The decision making for the spending of ward budgets sits with the individual councillors, who are best placed to understand the needs of the communities they serve.

Equality and diversity

- 8.0 In our Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022, equality and diversity are incorporated through all priorities to ensure that it is at the heart of everything we do. This Administration has been clear from the outset that equality of opportunity should be accessible to all; and that we will work to ensure no one is left behind. This report details how the council is working towards a stronger, fairer borough with access to opportunity for all residents.

The Equality Framework for Local Government accreditation

- 8.1 It was confirmed at Cabinet on 20th January that Croydon was accredited at the 'Achieving' level as part of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The EFLG is a tool that helps organisations, in discussion with local partners including local people, review and improve their performance for people with protected characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. The process has enabled the Council to prove its commitment to equality and evidence that its policies, processes and leadership are developing better equality and inclusion outcomes. The framework will allow the Council to address a number of its Corporate Plan equalities priorities as listed below:

- Abolish inequality in Croydon and work towards a place where all have an equal opportunity to prosper
- Croydon becomes a more equal place
- Create a collaborative, inclusive and creative environment that allows talent to flourish, building capacity to meet our ambitions

- 8.2 The EFLG process is an improvement tool and has identified strengths and areas for consideration against the following EFLG criteria:

- Knowing your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your communities
- Responsive services and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce

- 8.3 The detailed Cabinet report can be found [here](#). The Council will be developing responses to each of the recommendations made in the assessment once the peer team report is received. It is proposed that this be reported to the Cabinet in March and be used to underpin the new Equality Strategy and underpinning action plan. **Scrutiny & Overview Committee input to potential new equality objectives is welcomed.**

- 8.4 Many of the areas of consideration, identified by the peer team, were already known by the Council. In many cases work is underway/planned, and confirmation from the assessment of these areas of focus is very helpful. An

Equality Strategy and an underpinning action plan will be developed which will also address feedback from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

- 8.5 The Council is a Stonewall Champion and recently took part in the Stonewall Equality Index where Croydon was placed narrowly outside the top 100 employers to work for at 101st place. The Council has also been accredited as a Flexible Working borough and is continuing to advocate and promote flexible working for our existing workforce. Since 2017, the Council has been a Disability Confident Employer and has worked with both the staff Disability Network Group internally and the community in promoting good practice and training managers.

Equalities and community cohesion civic events

LGBT+ History Month 2020

- 8.6 The Council has planned a series of events across February 2020 to celebrate the lives and achievements of the LGBT+ community in the UK. Alongside Croydon Pride and Croydon Area Gay Society, the Council launched celebrations at Fairfield Halls on February 6th. The event featured a panel discussion and Q&A on the representation of LGBT+ history in performance, followed by performances from Croydon artists. Both the portfolio holder and chief executive spoke at the event, emphasising LGBTQ+ rights as both a political and corporate priority.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2020- Stand Together

- 8.7 A service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2020 was held on Monday 27th January in the Town Hall to commemorate the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. Croydon Council has commemorated HMD since 2001; this year's theme is 'Stand Together', encouraging communities across the globe to join together. HMD 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the 25th anniversary of the Bosnian Genocide.
- 8.8 A number of different community groups, faith leaders, officers and members will meet in the Town Hall to commemorate those who lost their lives as a dark reminder that racism, prejudice and exclusion must continue to be proactively opposed. There will be a minute's silence, a candle-lighting ceremony and a chance to sign the borough's book of condolence, followed by a short reception.

Black History Month 2019

- 8.9 Each year, the Council works in collaboration with Croydon BME Forum and the BAME staff network to create a range of events and activities throughout the October to celebrate Black History Month in Croydon. The portfolio holder encouraged organisations within the borough to put on a range of events throughout the year which could be showcased in October. The theme for 2019 was 'RID the Stigma' and nearly 50 events took place across the borough to celebrate the history, heritage and culture of the BAME community.

Croydon Mela 2019

- 8.10 In July 2019, the Council commissioned the organisation, management and production of Croydon Mela from three Asian Croydon-based female programmers and artists as a celebration of the borough's South Asian communities and culture. The event was attended by approximately 12,000 people and allowed local talent to be showcased, bringing opportunities to diverse Croydon-based artists.

Croydon Pride 2019

- 8.11 Croydon Pride was hosted in July 2019 where the number of attendees was double that of the previous year. The event aimed to improve the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community in Croydon and create a safe space where the community feel represented and celebrated. The event hosted a number of influential LGBTQ+ Black Organisations, including The Batty Mama, Blackout UK and Urban World, bringing a broader range of artistic talent and access to wider audiences. The portfolio holder launched the 'Say No to Hate Crime' anti-hate crime pledge, which has since been signed by 24,000 people.

The Big Lunch

- 8.12 Communities in Croydon held the first Big Lunch event in 2009, and since then an average of 60-80 Big Lunch events are held each year. The events have enabled community cohesion, by encouraging residents to join together in hosting the event, and the Council's support of the Big Lunch aligns with its duty to foster good community relations. The Council enables communities to host the events both through community grants (community grants <£5,000, community ward budget grants, community development grants <£1,000), support from the Communities team, and absorbing road closure fees for the Big Lunch weekend. Since 2012, Croydon has been recognised as a 'Star Council' by the national Big Lunch website for its work in facilitating the events.

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