

# **SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

## **Introduction by Councillor Fitzsimons**

At the time of writing, and looking back over the last municipal year 2019-2020, the world has gone through significant challenges that will fundamentally reshape Croydon, as a place, but also as a Council which calls for a fundamental rethink of how the Council will operate.

2019/20 municipal year started with the publication of new government guidance on Scrutiny, which has been fed into the Council's Governance Review, and Scrutiny's own review. This was followed by a summer dominated by Brexit debate, and in the autumn and winter by a General Election, which has led to the UK leaving the EU in January 2021. Soon afterwards the Covid-19 pandemic swept through the UK and sadly, by the end of May 2020 nearly 500 Croydon residents had died of Covid-19. As well as the personal loss experienced by many families, this pandemic has had a major impact on the local economy, including the Council's own finances, upending the Council's budget, agreed only a few months before in February 2020.

The impact of the pandemic on the Council's finances will mean that the Council will need to undergo a fundamental restructure and retrenchment, and in response Scrutiny will have to rethink its approach. The main Scrutiny and Overview Committee has already agreed that it will need to rethink its 2020/21 work programme, to concentrate on the Council's plan to rein in the current budget deficit and ensure that a balance budget is delivered in 2020/21. We will scrutinise the new Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's Renewal Plan to ensure that they are comprehensive and deliverable, and can be delivered at the pace needed. The Council will take a number of difficult decisions over the next year and Scrutiny's role is to ensure that the voice of the local community is heard, and to offer constructive criticism to ensure that the Council delivers the services that residents need and value.

## **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](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

### **Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



**Cllr Sean  
Fitzsimons**  
**(C)**



**Cllr Robert  
Ward (VC)**



**Cllr Leila  
Ben Hassel**  
**(DC)**



**Cllr Jeet  
Bains**



**Cllr Jerry  
Fitzpatrick**



**Cllr Joy  
Prince**

## **Scrutiny & Overview Committee – Work Programme 2019-20**

In May 2019 the Government published the updated ‘Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities’, which sought to re-emphasise the role Scrutiny plays in the governance process by clarifying its powers and highlighting good practice. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered the implications of the guidance at its meetings on 11 June and 16 July 2019. This led to a recommendation being made to the Cabinet asking for its endorsement of the guidance, which was accepted.

A key aspect of the guidance was the importance of work programming for the delivery of effective scrutiny and it was with this in mind that the Committee prepared the Work Programme for 2019-20. The work programme was created in consultation with both officers and partner organisations, and included a balance of both forward looking pre-decision scrutiny and backward looking scrutiny reviews. At the same time the Committee continued to schedule its annual meetings with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members and to carry out its statutory responsibilities regarding crime and disorder.

What follows below is a short summary of the highlights from the year, but for those who are interested to find out more, full sets of agendas and minutes for each meeting can be found on the Council’s website at the following link [Scrutiny & Overview Committee – Agendas & Minutes](#)

## **Libraries Plan**

At its meeting on 16 July 2019 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee had the opportunity to discuss with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport, Councillor Oliver Lewis, the implementation of the recently agreed Libraries Plan. The Committee was particularly interested to find out how the Plan would future

proof the service, with it acknowledged that usage had evolved from being primarily a book borrowing service to becoming a more flexible space that could be used by local communities for a variety of different uses such as a meeting place for local groups and a quiet study space for students.

The Committee did have a concern about how the success of the Libraries Plan would be judged and recommended the creation of a robust evaluation framework to accompany the Plan as soon as possible. This could then be used to monitor the implementation of the Plan to ensure it remained on track and whether it was delivering its intended outcomes.

### **Annual Report from the Head of Paid Service**

At its meeting on 10 September 2019 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee received its annual report from the Chief Executive, which included an update on workforce issues at the Council. The Committee was particularly pleased to note that in addition to monitoring the gender pay gap, the Council also monitored the pay gap for BAME and disabled staff unlike many other authorities.

Although the Committee welcomed the creation of the Digital Strategy and the move toward new digital ways of working, there was concern based upon past initiatives that any long term success may be hampered by resistance to cultural change which needed to be addressed as a priority during the process.

### **Review of the Growth Zone**

The Committee had the opportunity to review the work to date on delivering the Growth Zone Project at its meeting on 29 October 2019. The Committee welcomed the ambitious aims of the project that, if realised, would deliver significant benefits for the town centre of Croydon. However, it was recognised that a substantial proportion of the project relied upon external partners for its delivery and was therefore outside the control of the Council, which presented a significant risk needing careful management. In light of this the Committee recommended the creation a risk register specifically for the project to better enable these risks to be managed going forward.

Given the scale of the Growth Zone Project, which would take a number of years to deliver, the Committee agreed that it would continue to review the project on a biennial basis to ensure that it remained on track.

### **Fairfield Halls**

The Scrutiny & Overview Committee received its annual report from the Fairfield Halls at its meeting held on 10 February. For this meeting the report included both a review of the redevelopment of the Halls and also an update on the ongoing operation of the venue.

From the discussion of the redevelopment of the Fairfield Halls the Committee recognised that the project had been extremely complex, with a number of interdependent schemes involved. This may have led to increased public concern about the project as it was difficult for those not involved to understand how it was being delivered. As such it concluded that one of the most important things the Council needed to learn from the project was the importance of communication to ensure the public buy understood what was being delivered.

Regarding the operation of the venue, the Committee concluded that as it had only reopened six month ago it was difficult to make a firm judgement as to whether it

was currently on the right track, especially as items from the redevelopment such as car parking provision had not yet been delivered. It was agreed that judgment would be withheld until the venue was next reviewed by the Committee in 2021.

### **General Fund Revenue Budget 2020-21**

The Committee also had the opportunity to review the General Fund Revenue Budget 2020-21 at its meeting on 10 February, prior to consideration by the Cabinet and Council. From the discussion of this item, the Committee concluded that the Council was facing significant pressure on its budget in the forthcoming year and agreed it would be essential for the Committee to receive a further update in September 2020. This update would focus on the implementation of the new budget monitoring and control processes to ensure that the intended outcomes were being achieved and that the identified budget savings were on track for delivery.

### **Review of the Safer Croydon Partnership & Violence Reduction Network**

The Scrutiny & Overview Committee set aside its meeting on 25 February to fulfil its statutory crime and disorder responsibilities, reviewing the work of the Safer Croydon Partnership and the Violence Reduction Network. The Committee found much to commend in the work of the Partnership and the Network, particularly the integrated approach to working and data sharing by the partners which was helping to deliver successful outcomes.

The data informed approach being used by the Violence Reduction Network was welcomed by the Committee, who felt that opportunities to expand the capacity for data analysis should be explored to better inform the approach and allow more targeted work to be undertaken. When crime and disorder is next reviewed by the Committee in 2021, a request was made for specific examples to be provided which demonstrated how the use of data had informed the work of the Network.

Although the Committee agreed that purpose of both the Partnership and the Network was laudable and recognised that a lot of activity was being delivered, there remained a concern that there was not a robust evaluation framework in place to objectively demonstrate the value of what was being delivered. It was therefore recommended that a framework be put in place as soon as possible to not undermine what was being achieved

### **Call-In Requests**

In 2019-20 the Scrutiny & Overview Committee considered two call-in requests, both in September 2019. The first, considered at a meeting held on 2 September 2019, was the Emissions Based Parking Charges and Diesel Surcharges for Permits decision and the second, considered at a meeting held on 17 September 2019, was the decision on the proposed closure of St Andrew's Church of England High School.

Having the opportunity to review both of these decisions allowed the Committee to publicly question the decision makers about the reasons why they had been made, which resulted in both cases the Committee concluding that no further action was required and the decision could be implemented as originally intended. Although in both instances a number of recommendations were made to the Cabinet based on concerns highlighted during the discussion of the reports.

## 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 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](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

### Membership



**Cllr Robert  
Ward (C)**



**Cllr Sean  
Fitzsimons  
(VC)**



**Cllr Sue  
Bennett**



**Cllr  
Mary  
Croos**



**Cllr Jerry  
Fitzpatrick**



**Cllr  
Bernadette  
Khan**



**Cllr Gareth  
Streeter**



**Cllr  
Callton  
Young  
(OBE)**

### Children & Young People Sub-Committee Work Programme 2019-20

In 2019-20 the main focus for the Sub-Committee was the continued trajectory of the Children's Improvement Plan, which was being implemented following the publication of the Ofsted inspection report of Children's Services in September 2017.

The Sub-Committee was tasked with the continued scrutiny of the strategies and policies affecting the welfare and education of children and young people of Croydon.

At the start of the year the Sub-Committee introduce an Action List which was updated after each meeting to keep track of actions created and which also served as a useful tool to hold officers to account.

What follows below is a short summary of the highlights from the year, but for those who are interested to find out more, full sets of agendas and minutes for each meeting can be found on the Council's website at the following link [Children & Young People Sub-Committee – Agendas & Minutes](#)

### Children's Improvement Plan

Given the importance of the delivery of the Children's Improvement Plan in improving services provided to young people and their families in the borough, the Plan formed a key part of the work of the Sub-Committee. Updates on the progress made with implementing the Plan were received at each meeting in preparation for the next Ofsted inspection in 2020.

By having regular updates it allowed the Sub-Committee to maintain line of sight over the improvement journey and provided timely opportunities to flag concerns. These included highlighting inconsistencies in practice such as the low completion rate of assessments within the expected timescales and the high number of incidences of missing children. Another area of concern the ongoing challenge of recruiting and retaining good quality social workers, although reassurance was given that significant work in this area was delivering improvement.

Overall the Sub-Committee was reassured that while there remained areas of development to be addressed, the trajectory of the Children Service was good with significant changes already made achieving the intended impact on the lives of children and their families.

### **Localities Work across Children, Families & Education**

At its meeting on 18 June 2019 an update provided on the progress made on the delivery of the localities model approach which included the alignment of services over the next two to three years. The Sub-Committee took note of the potential benefits that may be delivered by this approach including improved partnership working and efficiencies from the pooling of resources. The localities model would also welcome the involvement of local community groups and the voluntary sector, and have a family centred approach.

The Sub-Committee was supportive of the localities based approach, but concern was raised about whether it would meet the needs and expectations of residents. As a result it was agreed that the progress made with the delivery of this project would be regularly monitored by the Sub-Committee going forward to provide reassurance that the identified outcomes were being delivered.

### **Croydon Safeguarding Children Board – Annual Report**

At its meeting on 17 September, the Sub-Committee had the opportunity to review the Annual Report of the Croydon Safeguarding Children's Annual Board. This was the final report before the implementation of the new safeguarding arrangements, which were detailed in the report.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the report and was encouraged to note that the Chair of the Safeguarding Board would be supporting agencies with the new arrangements. It was also reassuring to note that the Vulnerable Adolescence Review would be used to inform ongoing work in Children's Services.

### **Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT)**

At its meeting on 5 November, the Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to review Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT). From the discussion, the Sub-Committee was reassured on the accessibility and inclusivity of the service provided. CALAT's work with partner organisations to reach different groups in the borough, which included exploring ways to tackle deprivation and work poverty, was very particularly encouraging. Overall the Sub-Committee reached the conclusion that the

service provided by CALAT was both innovative and exemplary, and there was a wide range of courses available.

Following the meeting, the Sub-Committee took the opportunity to conduct a site visit to the Stand House centre of CALAT where they met with students, had the opportunity to ask them about their experience of the service. Members were also served lunch prepared by students.

### **Education Budget – 21 Jan**

On 21 January the Sub-Committee received its annual report on the Education Budget for the forthcoming year. Although the announcement of the Government's commitment to a £7.1 billion increase in funding for schools by 2022/23 was welcomed, the Sub-Committee maintained reservations about whether this would be sufficient to decrease the financial deficit schools. There remained a significant per pupil funding gap for Croydon in comparisons with neighbouring boroughs which the Sub-Committee agreed required continued lobbying if it was to be addressed.

The Sub-Committee also welcomed confirmation that the delayed National Funding Formula would be in place by 2021/22 and as a result Croydon's Designated Schools Grant funding was due to increase by £21.3 million in comparison to the previous year.

## Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report

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 respond 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](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

### Members of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee



**Cllr Sean  
Fitzsimons(C)**



**Cllr Andy  
Stranack  
(VC)**



**Cllr Patsy  
Cummings**



**Cllr Clive  
Frazer**



**Cllr  
Andrew  
Pelling**



**Cllr Scott  
Roche**

### Health & Social Care Sub-Committee Work Programme

The agenda for the first meeting of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee in 2019-20, held on 25 June 2019, included updates from the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) and the Croydon Health Service NHS Trust (CHS). These updates provided an overview of the current activities of both organisations and their priorities for the year ahead. These items had been included on the agenda to help inform the work programme of the Sub-Committee over the remainder of the year.

From a healthcare perspective, the Sub-Committee agreed that the ongoing integration work, which included the merger of the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) with others to form a larger South West London CCG and the integration between the CCG and CHS, would be a priority for scrutiny during the year. The Sub-Committee also prioritised for scrutiny the ability of the urgent and emergency care services at the Croydon University Hospital to cope during periods of peak demand.

Given the budgetary pressure being experienced by the Council, the Sub-Committee agreed that it would be important to review the budget for Adult Social Care services early in the year. In March 2020 the Sub-Committee also reviewed the Council's own emergency preparedness in light of the (at the time) emerging risk arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

A review of whole life mental health services delivered in conjunction with the Children & Young People Sub-Committee had been planned for April 2020, but had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was agreed that this review would be rescheduled as soon as possible.

What follows below is a short summary of the highlights from the year, but for those who are interested to find out more, full sets of agendas and minutes for each

meeting can be found on the Council's website at the following link [Health & Social Care Sub-Committee – Agendas and Minutes](#)

### **Croydon Integration Journey**

Given the importance of the integration journey to the provision of healthcare in Croydon, the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee received a number of updates during the year on the progress made. By following the integration journey throughout the year, it enabled the Sub-Committee to gain a degree of reassurance that most of the decision making on healthcare provision in Croydon would still be retained in the borough after the Croydon CCG had become part of the wider South West London CCG.

The Sub-Committee recognised that the integration of healthcare in the borough had the opportunity to deliver positive improvement for residents and could also help to address long term issues such as health inequalities and the recruitment challenges facing both health and social care. Given the significance of the integration work it was agreed that this would continue to be scrutinised throughout 2020-21 as well.

### **Adult Social Care Budget**

At the meeting held on 24 September 2020 the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee was provided with a detailed overview of the budget for Adult Social Care. From the discussion of the report the Sub-Committee recognised that the Council was facing a significant challenge in being able to deliver a balance budget for Adult Social Care.

The Sub-Committee recognised that the One Croydon Alliance was making a positive difference to health and social care provision in the borough by encouraging closer working relationships between partners. However, there was concern that the savings being achieved by the Alliance were not filtering through to Social Care. It was noted that discussions were ongoing about a re-share agreement with healthcare partners, which the Sub-Committee agreed it would be keen to keep updated upon.

### **Urgent and Emergency Care**

At their meeting on 12 November the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee had the opportunity to review the provision of urgent and emergency care at Croydon University Hospital ahead of the winter, which was normally the period of peak demand. Although as the Sub-Committee learnt during the meeting, the service now tended to operate at peak demand throughout much of the year.

The Sub-Committee felt that there was much to commend in the work of CHS and its partners to manage the level of demand in urgent and emergency care and agreed that a further update would be needed in early 2020 to find out whether this work had been successful.

At its meeting on 10 March 2020 the Sub-Committee received an update on the provision of urgent and emergency care over the winter period. The Sub-Committee recognised that it would be a considerable challenge for the service to achieve its 92% capacity target, particularly as it had been operating at nearer to 98% capacity for a significant period of time. However, the Sub-Committee did conclude the outcomes from the Improvement Programme were making a difference to the level of care provided to patients at the Croydon University Hospital and agreed that it would continue to monitor the performance of urgent and emergency care in 2020-21 to ensure that ongoing improvement could be sustained.

## **Croydon Council Emergency Care.**

In light of the emerging covid-19 pandemic, the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee included an item on the agenda for its meeting on 20 March 2020 to review the preparedness of Council service to cope with the possible rising demand as a result of the pandemic. Overall the Sub-Committee was reassured by the coordination of effort between the Council and its partners, and felt that there were robust Business Continuity Plans in place.

The Sub-Committee recognised that the Council had an important responsibility to many residents in high risk groups, such as the very elderly, those with health issues, those living in care homes and others who received domiciliary care or were reliant on carers for support. As such further reassurance was sought to confirm that all opportunities were being taken to reinforce the need to maintain standards of care and cleanliness to prevent an outbreak of infection amongst vulnerable residents, particularly those living in care homes or receiving domiciliary care.

The Sub-Committee highlighted that an important role for the Council would be to provide reassurance to residents as the pandemic progressed and recommended that the use of social media and other communication methods be expanded as a result. A request was also made for regular updates for all Members to cover any changes to service provision and useful information during the pandemic.

## **Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report 2019/20**

The Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee has a broad remit. It investigates services and issues relating to housing, 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.

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

### **Membership**



**Cllr Leila  
Ben  
Hassel (C)**



**Cllr  
Richard  
Chatterjee  
(VC)**



**Cllr Robert  
Canning**



**Cllr Luke  
Clancy**



**Cllr  
Felicity  
Flynn**



**Cllr Vidhi  
Mohan**



**Cllr Callton  
Young  
OBE**

### **Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee Work Programme 2019-20**

The Sub-Committee identified at the beginning of the year that the main strand of its work programme would be focussed upon housing in Croydon, in particular the Housing Strategy. Other priorities identified included reviewing the Sustainable Croydon project and waste and recycling collections.

Following significant disruption to the rail timetable a discussion with the rails service providers was also arranged to discuss the issues involved and to try gain reassurance for rail users that the promised service improvements would be delivered.

What follows below is a short summary of the highlights from the year, but for those who are interested to find out more, full sets of agendas and minutes for each meeting can be found on the Council's website at the following link [Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee – Agendas & Minutes](#)

### **The Waste and Recycling Service**

At its meeting on 29 September, the Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon attended the meeting of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee to provide an update on the both the Waste and Grounds Maintenance Services.

The Sub-Committee welcomed confirmation that the recycling rate for the borough had recently increased from 38% to 48% and was pleased to note that further new recycling initiatives were being developed in addition to encouraging businesses, schools and the community to play their part. The Sub-Committee also recognised that it may need the Government to use legislation to deliver cultural change and increase public participation in recycling initiatives.

Following issues with waste and recycling collections when the new bins were rolled out the Sub-Committee was pleased to note that improvement continued to be delivered with significant reduction in the number of missed collections. The Sub-Committee was also reassured to note that no changes were planned to frequency of waste collections.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the collation of qualitative contextual and comparative data was essential for providing a clear understanding of the performance of a contractors and would be required if the Council wanted to hold the contractor to account should the level of performance fall below the agreed standard.

### **Rail Service Providers**

At the meeting of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee held on 9 July 2019, representatives from Network Rail, Transport for London and Govia Thameslink Railway were in attendance to answer questions on the recent public transport disruption and also future plans for services in the borough.

The Sub-Committee raised a number of concerns about the lack of communication with passengers, which it was agreed needed to be improved. It was suggested that the providers could make better use of data to strengthen their communication with both their passengers and staff. The Sub-Committee also highlighted public concern about the culture of staff working for the network provider, which needed to be addressed to ensure inclusivity for all users of services. It was recommended that consideration be given to the pooling of funds for Croydon's allocation of the Passenger Benefit Fund

The acknowledgment that the initial implementation of changes to the rail timetable in May had not gone as planned, resulting in significant disruption and delays across the network, was welcomed by the Sub-Committee. It was also recognised that since the initial disruption, action had been taken to rectify these issues, with performance across the network improved and over 90% train arriving on time. A recent National Rail Satisfaction Survey showed that trust was slowly being rebuilt with passengers satisfaction levels at 81% for Southern and 83% for Thameslink

### **Sustainable Croydon**

At its meeting on 17 December 2019, the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee had the opportunity to review the Sustainable Croydon Agenda, which included a key aim of the Council's becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The Sub-Committee welcomed confirmation that achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 was still felt to be a deliverable ambition for Croydon.

As part of the review an update was provided on the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission, which was due to be launched in March 2020 and would work to

identify goals and set actions to reduced Croydon's carbon emissions in order to become sustainable by 2030. The Commission would engage with residents and businesses, and work alongside the Citizen's Assembly to develop the Climate Action Plan for Croydon. The Sub-Committee stressed the importance of both the Citizen's Assembly and the Commission being representative of the diversity in the borough.

The need to involve Extinction Rebellion in any processes adopted by Croydon was highlighted by the Sub-Committee. Particularly as their work as activists in raising awareness of the issues involved had helped to ensure the declaration of the Climate Emergency.

Although reassurance was given that work including research, learning and sharing of information with other boroughs on the delivery of the sustainable agenda was ongoing, the Sub-Committee did raise concern about the lack of either an action plan or recommendations since the declaration had been made, which may affect public confidence in the process. As a result it was recommended that progress be expedited in production of an action plan in light of the considerable delay since the declaration was made.

### **Housing in Croydon**

A key theme for the work programme was housing in Croydon and throughout the cycle of meetings, reports were presented to the Sub-Committee which focussed on a variety of different housing issues in the borough.

A draft of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy was presented to the Sub-Committee for comment. The report detailed the drivers behind the Strategy and highlighted the priorities. These priorities included providing early interventions to prevent homelessness and providing holistic support through partnership working. As a result, several initiatives had been launched with partners and community services.

There was several work streams in the process of being implemented which aimed to tackle homelessness and other housing issues for different groups including single homeless people, key workers street homeless as well as families experiencing in work poverty which impacted upon their ability to maintain tenancies. The hidden homeless continued to remain an area of concern, due to the knock-on effect for families which impacted on other areas such as health, education and welfare.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the ambitious Strategy and commended the Gateway service on its trailblazing work on early intervention and preventative work which had been acknowledged at a national level.

At its meeting on 2 February 2020 the Sub-Committee considered the Annual Report from Brick by Brick which outlined the focus for 2020/21 which was sustainability. The highlights and achievements for 2019/20 included the completion of 90 homes across five different sites in the borough, with a further 290 homes expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

The Sub-Committee suggested that there should be a greater focus on building family homes as there was significant need in the borough. It was questioned whether the targeted number of homes in 2020-21 Plan would be delivered, given the target of 414 home included in the 2019/20 Business Plan had not been delivered.

The Sub-Committee challenged the level of community based consultation and engagement undertaken prior to site development which may have contributed to the negative perception of Brick by Brick in some areas of the borough. The Sub-Committee also agreed that there needed to be improved communication to increase public understanding of the relationship between Brick by Brick and the Council, including the financial model being used to deliver new housing.

Also at the meeting on 2 February 2020, the Sub-Committee had the opportunity to the responsive repairs contract which was delivered by Axis. Overall the Sub-Committee was reassured and encouraged by the contract management of Axis and agreed that the benchmarking of performance data with other local authorities was well informed. The reduction in complaints over the past year was encouraging and it was hoped that a similar level of service improvement could be continued and high standards maintained, leading to increased levels of satisfaction from residents.

The Sub-Committee was also provided with an overview of the Housing Revenue Account, with it noted that from 1<sup>st</sup> April, the four year cap implemented by the Government on rent level reduction was being lifted and local authorities would be able to increase rent levels. The Sub-Committee agreed that a greater level of transparency was needed over the acquisition of housing stock funded by the Housing Revenue Account and recommended that consideration should be given to how this could be achieved. It was also recognised that the provision of temporary housing accommodation remained a significant challenge and it was agreed a review of temporary accommodation would be scheduled for the Sub-Committee in 2020-21.