

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

**Director of Housing: Homelessness
Prevention and Accommodation**

London Borough of Croydon

August 2023

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Welcome

Thank you for thinking about joining Croydon Council. This is an exciting time to join us as the Housing Directorate undergoes a massive transformation programme to deliver improved services to our residents.

As you will already know, Croydon has faced significant challenges over the past 3 years, in terms of the Council's governance and financial crisis, and some well-publicised service failures.

We are already making substantial progress, with a clear three-year transformation programme in place. The Executive Mayor Jason Perry was elected in May 2022 and his administration is focused on delivering our Business Plan, which is focused on listening to the people of Croydon and putting the pride back in our borough. Transforming the Housing Service is a fundamental part of that.

We are looking for an outstanding individual to lead the Homelessness Division in the Housing Directorate. The successful candidate will be instrumental in shaping and delivering the Council's homelessness service, driving widespread improvements and promoting our values throughout the Housing Needs division, which covers Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness.

We are looking for someone who has the right skills and experience, and most importantly someone who fully shares our values, our commitment to Croydon and its people and who wants to make this Council the best it can be.

You will join us at an exciting, yet challenging time for both the Council and the Housing Directorate. You will play a full part as Director in turning round both the Council and housing services.

This will be hard but fulfilling work; you will face challenges and Croydon will test every part of your experience and knowledge to date, but if you are the person we are looking for, this is exactly the opportunity you will relish.

You will not be on your own in this challenge. You will be joining a strong, supportive, and values driven team of senior staff, all helping to rebuild the Council and the Housing Directorate: its finances, its governance, its culture, and its services.

Croydon is a fantastic place; a vital part of London's story with a strong identity in its own right, and a future for the making. This is a rare chance to make genuine change in a place of great opportunity. This is truly one of those once-in-a-career moments, to join us at a time when your impact will be felt the most.

We are building a values-led organisation where people who care passionately about fairness, inclusion, tackling inequality, and making Croydon better for the people who live here will thrive.

Thank you again for your interest in this opportunity and we look forward to receiving your application.

Executive Mayor Jason Perry

Katherine Kerswell, Chief Executive

About us

As one of London's largest and most diverse boroughs, Croydon is a fantastic place to live, work and spend time, with all the benefits of proximity to the rest of London and the southeast.

Our borough is made up of diverse communities that stretch from Crystal Palace to Coulsdon and from New Addington to Purley; with bustling district centres and over 120 green spaces that link us together and an urban town at its centre. One of London's largest commercial districts outside the centre, Croydon is a major hub for shoppers, workers and visitors; its excellent transport links include the iconic trams. The borough has a richly diverse cultural scene and is known as the birthplace of music genres from punk to dubstep and the home of grime legend Stormzy.

Croydon's greatest strength is its people. London's most populous borough, Croydon is home to 398,800 (Census, 2021). Caring, passionate and principled, they take huge pride in coming together to improve their borough and help their communities.

Croydon is also home to more than 90,275 people aged under 18 (Census 2021) – more young people than anywhere else in London. We are incredibly proud of them and committed to them and their futures. We look after more vulnerable children and young people than any other council in London; caring for them is a privilege and a priority, and our children's services are rated 'good' by Ofsted.

Over the past decade we have seen huge investment, regeneration, and growth in our borough. Croydon remains an attractive and important part of London for ongoing growth and investment – growth from which we want to see all our communities' benefit. However, the impact of our financial challenges mean we must focus on the needs our residents are facing today, regain their trust following the financial and governance crisis at the council and make sure we are a financially sustainable council by 2026.

Croydon Council

Croydon Council is two years into one of the most significant and fast-paced transformational programmes in local government today. The 'Mayor's Business Plan' sets out how we must change as an organisation to provide the good quality core services and value for money our residents and businesses expect. We must do less and do it better.

In addition, the Housing service has had its own significant challenges with the issues reported in March 2021 at Regina Road and the subsequent regulatory notice. But transformation of the new directorate is underway and with a programme of continued improvement to create a service which delivers its promises under the Resident Charter and Customer Service Standards.

There is a huge amount of change underway and most importantly, we want to involve staff, residents and all our partners in the decisions we make and be open in everything we do. Our passionate and committed workforce is our greatest asset; our partners are our most valued colleagues. We look forward to continuing to work with them as we build the council for Croydon's future.

Advertisement

Director of Housing: Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation **Salary Director Grade 1 £101,778-£105,820**

Croydon is a council on a journey. By accepting and addressing the challenges of its past, the council is transforming itself into a modern, sustainable, and resident-focused local authority.

This is an opportunity to be part of a new chapter for Croydon and help shape the future of the council. A council with a passion for driving positive change and delivering excellence; a community with a rich heritage, a diverse population, and a distinct identity. It's an environment in which you can find fresh inspiration and inspire others in equal measure.

Welcome to Croydon Council – and a role that will challenge you and fulfil you like never before. As our Director of Homelessness, Prevention and Accommodation you'll head up our Housing Homeless division, driving widespread improvements and promoting our values across everything from leading the Housing Needs division, comprising the Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Functions and increase supply of affordable housing. You'll work collaboratively as part of the new team of directors with our Corporate Director to deliver the Mayor's Business Plan, the Housing Transformation programme, and the Housing Improvement Plan.

The impact you will have

When it comes to housing, we've already started to make some improvements. But there's much more we need to do. Which is why we need an inspirational leader who will take responsibility for shaping and managing the Council's direct services to people in housing need, including housing advice, housing and homelessness assessment, choice-based lettings, mobility schemes and the provision of temporary accommodation, all with a strong grip on finances.

You'll work collaboratively across the council as well as with our elected members and really engage with our residents to deliver the housing improvement plan that will see us working to the highest quality, compliance, and performance standards.

There will be difficult decisions to make and tough budgets to deliver. But you'll relish the chance to apply your ideas and ingenuity to find the best ways forward.

Your specific responsibilities will include:

- Manage the Council's direct services to people in housing need, including housing advice, housing and homelessness assessment, choice-based lettings, mobility schemes and the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Ensure the development of the service with new housing strategies and policies in particular on homelessness, overcrowding and allocations, ensure resident involvement and consultation and tenant and leasehold scrutiny is supported.
- Ensure the corporate parenting responsibilities for the council's looked after children and care leavers are fulfilled in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017

- To lead the Council's activities in respect of people who have No Recourse to Public Funds and support and integration for refugees and asylum seekers.
- To lead an inter-agency response to minimise rough sleeping and other street-based lifestyles that may lead to rough sleeping.
- Work closely with others on the council's approach to increase the supply of affordable homes
- Lead on the councils rough sleeping strategy working with strategic partners

The skills and experience you will bring

You'll bring a track record of leadership success in social housing or a related sector – you'll certainly have worked in another similarly large, complex organisation at a senior level alongside a wide range of stakeholders. An exceptional communicator, skilled influencer, and motivational leader, you'll be able to develop successful and cohesive teams as well as develop front-line services in line with the Council's overall vision, using digital tools to maximise accessibility and quality, while minimising cost and achieving best practice in service delivery.

Experience of delivering a Homelessness service which accounts for statutory responsibilities, prevents homelessness where possible and prevents unavoidable homelessness having a damaging impact on individuals or the wider community will be important.

We'll want to see excellent strategic skills too, especially when it comes to managing budgets, monitoring expenditure and costs against delivery and realised benefits as programmes progress, including maintaining robust risk management processes.

Who we are – and where we're going

We fully acknowledge the fact that we haven't got things right in the past and have strengthened our resolve do better. With a clear financial strategy in place together with an unwavering commitment to listening to our residents and putting them first by upholding our **Residents Charter** to:

1. To treat residents with respect
2. Respond quickly and efficiently to complaints and learn from problems that lead to complaints
3. Be clear and transparent with our residents about how we are performing
4. Provide safe homes and a clean environment which residents are proud to live in
5. Give residents a voice and encourage meaningful decision-making activities
6. Communication is clear and easy to understand

Job description

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Job title: Director of Housing: Homelessness prevention and accommodation | Service Area: Housing Options | |
| Directorate: Housing | Post Number From Oracle | Evaluation Number |
| Grade: Director 1 | Date issued: August 2023 | |

Croydon Council's priorities

The Mayor's Business Plan has five outcomes:

- The council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services.
- Croydon is a place of opportunity for business, earning and learning.
- Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential.
- Croydon is a cleaner, safer and healthier place, a borough we're proud to call home.
- People can lead healthier and independent lives for longer.

Croydon Council's new ways of working

We will practice sound financial management, being honest about what we've spent and what we can afford.

We will focus on what we, uniquely, can do as the local authority as the democratically elected leaders of our borough. This means we will focus on our core services, and a small number of evidence-based outcomes that deliver our priorities. But we will also continue to use our democratic mandate to convene our partners around a common purpose and to make a clear case for a better deal for Croydon.

We will aim to become a much more transparent, open and honest council.

We will involve residents in our decision making. But we will also need to be clear with residents about what we can do, and what we can't. When we have to say no, we will do so with compassion and take the time to explain our decisions.

Responsibility for leading the Housing Needs division, comprising the Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Functions. Budget responsibility of circa £45million.

Job Purpose:

As a member of the Housing Directorate's management team, the Director of Housing: Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation, will work collaboratively with other directors, corporate directors and the chief executive to deliver the Mayor's Business Plan, and the Housing Transformation Programme. This role will primarily focus on leading the temporary accommodation service and homelessness service for the Council. It will be accountable for the Housing Register and the allocation of homes to social housing tenants, the prevention of Homelessness in the borough, have accountability for the delivery of a Rough Sleeping service, the management of housing supply, oversight of the temporary Accommodation service and all its users.

Reports to: Corporate Director of Housing

Responsible for:

Leading a team of approximately 180 staff in the division with oversight of temporary accommodation and Homelessness services. You will have direct line management responsibility for 2 Heads of Service.

The post holder will

1. Manage the Council's direct services to people in housing need, including housing advice, housing and homelessness assessment, choice-based lettings, mobility schemes and the provision of temporary accommodation.
2. Ensure the corporate parenting responsibilities for the council's looked after children and care leavers are fulfilled in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The role includes being responsible for placement of care experienced young people and responsible for young homeless services including joint working with Children's Services to meet their statutory housing obligations.
3. Lead and direct the division's services within the Housing Directorate in order to ensure that they deliver effective and efficient services against agreed KPIs, that they set and achieve high standards of performance, that they meet the duty of best value and that the overall budgets are managed and controlled within the funding envelope agreed.
4. To lead the Council's activities in respect of people who have No Recourse to Public Funds and support and integration for refugees and asylum seekers.
5. To lead an inter-agency response to minimise rough sleeping and other street-based lifestyles that may lead to rough sleeping.
6. To work closely with others on the council's approach to increase the supply of affordable homes and be a required consultee on decisions relating to the council's housing and asset development land to ensure delivery of housing targets and to participate in the delivery of an effective, value for money HRA business plan with a focus on preventative maintenance.

7. To ensure the development of the service with new housing strategies and policies in particular on homelessness, overcrowding and allocations, ensure resident involvement and consultation and tenant and leasehold scrutiny is supported.

Corporate Accountabilities

To take a “one Council” approach to deliver more effective outcomes and at all times avoid a siloed, single division or service area approach.

To actively seek out and learn from external good practice and bring those new ideas and ways of working into service development and delivery.

To contribute and lead as required as a workstream owner and / or project lead on the delivery and implementation of specific corporate projects.

To actively role model the council's priorities and ways of working and the council's leadership framework and values.

To lead, manage and develop staff teams and ensure compliance with the council's performance management system and all HR policies and procedures

Be accountable for the divisional budget and have sustainable plans in place to deliver the annual budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

Provide assurance that the services are compliant and performance monitoring is part of the corporate rhythm, and exceptions have robust action plans.

To operate within the governance, financial and legal frameworks of the Council at all times.

Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into all aspects of your professional and managerial roles, including service delivery and at all times carry out your duties with regard to the Council policy.

Ensure by robust management that the services and staff you are responsible for adhere to the Council's Health and Safety Policy and operate within the safety management frameworks.

To ensure the effective management of data and security of information received and used within the division, to comply with the relevant legislation such as GDPR and the Freedom of Information Act, recognising that the council wishes to operate in the most open and transparent way.

Participate in cross organisational risk management and emergency planning activities as required.

Represent Croydon Council externally as appropriate to the role, to ensure strong partnership working, strong public relations, and for other reasons as appropriate.

Deputise for the Corporate Director of Housing on all matters as required.

Work with the Corporate Director of Housing and the other housing directors, take responsibility for building a whole Council approach to deliver on the ambitions of the Council's priorities on housing.

Service Accountabilities:

Oversee the transformation of the housing needs division as part of the Housing Transformation Programme and wider council transformation.

Develop front-line services in line with the Council's overall vision, using digital tools to maximise accessibility and quality, while minimising cost and achieving best practice in service delivery.

Manage budgets, monitoring expenditure and costs against delivery and realised benefits as programmes progress, including maintaining robust risk management processes.

Jointly be responsible for delivering the equality strategy, health and safety policy, corporate projects and emergency arrangements.

Provide high quality professional advice to the Corporate Director of Housing, Chief Executive, the Corporate Management Team Members, Committees, the Housing Improvement Board, DLUHC and any other external bodies on housing related functions of the directorate.

Contribute to the annual budget planning process and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

To deliver a Homelessness Strategy which accounts for statutory responsibilities, prevents homelessness where possible and prevents unavoidable homelessness having a damaging impact on individuals or the wider community.

To develop, implement and review housing allocation policy to ensure it meets the greatest needs and offers the maximum degree of choice and mobility for Croydon residents.

To lead an inter-agency response to minimise rough sleeping and other street-based lifestyles that may lead to rough sleeping.

To lead the Council's activities in respect of people who have No Recourse to Public Funds and support and integration for refugees and asylum seekers.

To deliver on the responsibility of 'office holder' under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and be engaged in regulated activity by virtue of undertaking the role which will also come within the scope of the Disclosure and Barring Service. The role includes being a Safeguarding Board member.

To work closely with others on the council's approach to increase the supply of affordable homes and be a required consultee on decisions relating to the council's housing and asset development land to ensure delivery of housing targets and to participate in the delivery of

an effective, value for money HRA business plan with a focus on preventative maintenance.

To lead for the directorate on the South West London Housing Partnership.

To ensure the development of the service with new housing strategies and policies in particular on homelessness, overcrowding and allocations, ensure resident involvement and consultation and tenant and leasehold scrutiny is supported.

Ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the homelessness prevention grant, the Household support fund and other funds that arise to support homelessness prevention and management.

Set and monitor divisional KPIs, quality measures and outcomes.

To lead on the Private Sector Housing Initiatives and partnerships for the council

The list of duties in the role profile should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. There will be other duties and requirements associated with your job and, in addition, as a term of your employment you may be required to undertake various other duties as may reasonably be required.

Your duties will be as set out in the above role profile but please note that the Council reserves the right to update your role profile, from time to time, to reflect changes in, or to, your job.

You will be consulted about any proposed changes.

Key Stakeholder Relationships:

Internal:

Mayor, Members; Chief Officers; Directors; Heads of Service; other teams and senior directorate colleagues across the whole council; trade unions.

External:

Local, regional and national government bodies, agencies and NGOs; Housing Improvement Board; Improvement and Assurance Panel; Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; professional bodies; other local authorities; partner organisations; statutory bodies; members of the public and community groups; trade unions; Private sector landlords

Political Restrictions:

This post is politically restricted and under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the post holder may not have any active political role either in or outside the work.

Statutory Responsibilities:

This role has no assigned statutory responsibilities.

Other Considerations:

You may, from time to time, be required to work outside of regular office hours including weekends and evenings to attend meetings and community events.

The postholder is required to observe and fulfill the seven principles of public life (also known as the Nolan Principles).

1.1 Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

1.2 Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

1.3 Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

1.4 Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

1.5 Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

1.6 Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

1.7 Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Person specification

Specific Minimum Qualifications and Expertise

Qualifications:

- A professional or management qualification or educated to degree level or demonstrable equivalent experience.
- Evidence of continuing professional development, leadership and personal

Experience:

- Experience of leading and managing a Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness division.
- Experience of leading a division through change effectively
- Experience of providing high quality technical advice on all matters relating to Housing Options.
- Experience of successfully implementing a prevention approach to tackling the issues of homelessness
- Experience of addressing the issues associated with limited housing supply.
- Experience of establishing and implementing business planning processes and performance management systems to ensure appropriate and cost-effective service delivery.
- A track record of successfully delivering continuous improvement in service delivery, with high levels of tenant satisfaction.
- Proven experience of working within a large complex organisation and experience of working with elected members or a Board at a senior level.
- Experience of successfully leading and managing a diverse workforce, developing successful and cohesive teams.
- Demonstrable excellence in functional management and service delivery in relation to the provision of customer orientated services that achieve successful outcomes.
- Experience of working in partnership with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders / bodies including statutory bodies and organisations
- Experience of controlling a significant, comparable budget and effective financial management

Knowledge and Skills:

- A comprehensive knowledge of relevant legislation in relation to homelessness and Temporary Accommodation
- Comprehensive knowledge of housing, safeguarding and support needs of homeless, housing applicants and tenants.
- A full understanding of the housing issues facing a high demand local Authority.

- High level of communication skills to persuade and engage audiences. and form positive relationships at all levels (internally and externally).
- Ability to work in a collaborative way to transform service delivery including the ability to manage internal departmental relationships.
- Evidence of being a strong corporate player who will lead, motivate and inspire their teams and build a high performing culture.
- Ability to work effectively across a range of service disciplines and with a range of people.
- Commitment to the Council's core value and objectives

Leadership Framework

The council's leadership framework follows the principles of a competency framework and all staff are expected to demonstrate these.

Developing Oneself – You demonstrate the values every day, you are passionate about the services you lead and deliver the vision and outcomes of Croydon Council. You are inspirational and engage others through personal leadership making the vision understandable to everyone.

Inspiring and Developing People – You identify talent and develop their capability to ensure a committed and motivated workforce, you create a culture based on the corporate values and ensure staff and partners deliver a desired outcome.

Collaborating and Influencing for Results – You are challenging and innovative in your approach to driving high standards and value for money, you trust and respect staff and partners and empower them to be courageous to try new approaches.

Enabling and Facilitating the Community – You create effective collaboration between partners, establish relationships and understand others perspectives. You are open and honest with others. You build a shared sense of purpose across Croydon, ensuring delivery and a collective use of resources

Corporate values

Our values are the base of every job role within Croydon – our values are fundamental in everything we do as a Local Authority. You are required to demonstrate a commitment to our corporate values:

One Team: To cross boundaries to work together towards shared goals with colleagues, partners and communities

- You are strategically innovative in your approach to building and maintaining partnerships and you and your teams act in a joint enterprise with them. You use your contacts and colleagues to bring teams together.

Proud to Serve: We strive to always do our best for the community, getting the most from limited resources and using taxpayers' money wisely

- You are proud to be part of the wider Croydon and the contribution you and your teams make to it. You make a difference to people's lives through engagement and you strive to get the best possible value for money for customers.

Honest and Open: We work hard to build trust by treating everyone with honesty and integrity

- You think through who needs to understand what during communication; and take care to communicate detail clearly. You take people's views into account continuously. You trust people, colleagues and staff, to do their best and deal with any issues positively.

Taking Responsibility: We encourage and support each other to take responsibility and show what we can do, learning together and recognising each others' contributions

- You are clear where formal accountability lies and where we can all take responsibility for results. You praise your colleagues for their efforts and ideas and thank them for their contributions.

Valuing Diversity: We make the most of the many perspectives that make Croydon distinctive

- You treat all staff and customers with equal value and respect. In everything you do, you make good use of the wide variety of background, skills and perspective your teams, the Council and the community demonstrate.



Recruitment Process

The following timetable sets out the key dates in the recruitment process:

| Activity | Date |
|---|--|
| Closing Date | Sunday 03 September 2023 |
| Longlist Meeting | Tuesday 05 September, candidates not required |
| 1st stage conversations with Corporate Director Housing | Friday 22 September, candidates required via 'Teams' |
| Shortlist Meeting | Friday 29 September 2023, candidates not required |
| Stakeholder panel meetings | TBC, candidates required in person |
| Final Panel Interviews | Tuesday 17 October, candidates required in person |