



Leader of the Council Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Tony Newman January 2018

Latest News

Westfield

We've had a fantastic start to the New Year with the Mayor of London signing off plans for Croydon's very own Westfield. With this final confirmation, demolition of the Whitgift Centre will begin at the end of this year to make way for the £1.4bn shopping centre along with over 7,000 jobs for our local people.

This is a brilliant opportunity for our borough with the increase in jobs and a further investment on our culture offer. In Sadiq's own words, this is a venture that will "unlock Croydon's potential". I believe that to be true in more ways than one.



Budget

The work on finalising the budget proposals has been continuing. In the Government's Draft Local Government Financial Settlement announcement just before Christmas, they confirmed the grant cuts previously announced. It means that, since 2010, there will have been a near three-quarter reduction in government funding to Croydon. Despite limited acknowledgement by the Secretary of State of

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the pressures that local government faces notably in adult and children's social care, no new money was provided, rather the Secretary of State increased the level that Councils can increase council tax from 1.99% to 2.99% and reconfirmed the adult social care levy. The figures released assume that every council applies the maximum permitted level of increase. This means that local residents, through council tax, will be expected to bear the cost of these national responsibilities. We remain committed to delivering for Croydon, even in the face of the unfair and inadequate funding from central government.

Meeting with Andy Burnham on Health Devolution

I had a positive meeting with Andy Burnham – the elected Mayor - on a visit made to Manchester in mid-January along with Cllrs Shahul-Hameed, Woodley and Mansell. It was a brilliant meeting where we discussed health devolution in Manchester and I felt inspired by the possibilities what we could accomplish here in Croydon.

While on this visit, we also met with GMHSC's Jon Rouse and former Conservative Secretary of State for Health, Stephen Dorrell, who is very supportive of the work both we and Manchester are doing to enhance the role of Local Government in the health agenda. Both meetings were equally informative as they detailed the devolution journey Manchester has been on. With the huge challenges the NHS are currently facing, Croydon will be playing a key role in improving health services to our local people and it is important that we learn from others mistakes and successes. I want the absolute best for our borough and I'm incredibly grateful to our counterparts in Manchester for being so willing to share their experiences with us.



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Children's Services

We received the positive news at the end of the year when the Department of Education and the Minister of State for Children and Families gave their support for Croydon's vision and work to improve its services for looked-after children, early help and children in need. Children's commissioner Eleanor Brazil recommended that Croydon continues its work to deliver the necessary improvements after reviewing the council's plans and the progress that has been made so far. I'm so pleased and proud that such high-level trust has been placed in the council's ability to turn the service around.

Most of all, I want to thank our children's services staff for their hard work and commitment to help us to tackle the issues – they continue to work in the most challenging of circumstances, making a real difference to the lives of some of our most vulnerable children and families, every day.

New sports centre in New Addington

I'm pleased to say that things are going incredibly well with the construction of the new £30m leisure centre in New Addington. Willmott Dixon Construction have been appointed to deliver the major works for this new and exciting build while the contract has been undertaken by GLL, the UK's leading leisure charitable social enterprise. They will play a big part in developing our plans for the future by ensuring the centre is fully equipped to best meet the needs of the local community.



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The centre is currently on target to be completed by Autumn 2018 and I'm expecting to see it open for our residents to enjoy within eight weeks of completion.

Croydon's Congress on Culture

The Culture Congress on 18 Jan 2018 was a really positive event that really highlighted just how important culture is to us here in Croydon. It was an opportunity for creative businesses to explore avenues of development, growth and funding as well as a chance to see the benefits between arts and businesses in our borough. I hope to see many of our local businesses flourishing this year as we work on building our growing culture offer.



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I'm proud of how much Croydon already has to offer and I firmly believe that we are more than capable of becoming London's first Borough of Culture (BoC). Leading the vision for the regenerated Fairfield Halls, developing a creative programme for the borough and using its open spaces as cultural venues are among our biggest priorities. We've also already committed to staging over twenty new events and projects with the title of BoC and the £1.1m that comes with it.

The results for BoC will be revealed in February 2018. I'm looking forward to hearing good news although I know this is going to be a big year for Croydon whatever the outcome.

Housing commission

Why we set up the Housing Commission

Croydon led the way on a Co-Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN) project. We set up the Housing Commission in September 2016 to encourage local authorities to foster co-operative, community-led solutions to the housing crisis

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Our report focusses on a practical approach to how local authorities can support Community-Led Housing.

Launching the report

The Commission has produced a report with a practical focus together with 12 detailed case studies on authorities in England, Scotland and Wales and contributed its findings to the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust's project to develop a technical toolkit for local government on community-led housing.

More details can be found on the Housing Commission website

<http://www.ccinhousing.co.uk/>



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Taking back control

I am pleased to report re the Carillion scandal that our Council had heeded the warning re Carillion's financial position. This enabled us to immediately put in place our plan to secure the future of all our libraries. We will keep you updated on our progress.



We are determined to protect and boost our libraries for residents now and for generations to come.

Councillor Tony Newman

Leader of the Council

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