

# Croydon Council

For General Release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b> <b>22 April 2013</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM NO:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Director of Democratic &amp; Legal Services</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Steve Hollands Chair of Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:</b> The constitutional requirement that Council receive and consider the Scrutiny Annual Report .	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT:</b> None	
<b>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO: N/A</b>	

## 1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 Council is asked to receive and consider the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee Annual Report 2012/13.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The draft Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee Annual Report 2012/13 is attached as an **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 This Annual report is due to be considered by the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013. Any amendments to the Annual report will be reported orally to Full Council.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council Procedure Rules state that the order of business of ordinary meetings shall include "Receiving the Annual Report of the Scrutiny and Overview...when a report is due for consideration" (Part 4, section 3.05).

3.2 The following further sections in the Constitution (Part 4) provide details on the practical arrangements:

3.23 The overall time, which may be devoted to questioning the Annual Report of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee, shall be not more than 30 minutes. The Chair of the Committee (or in the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair) and the Chairs of each Sub-Committee shall introduce and answer questions on the Report. The Chair of the Committee shall have not more than 5 minutes' speaking time and the Chairs of each Sub-Committee shall each have not more than 3 minutes' speaking time to introduce the report.

3.24 For the remaining time available, the report will be open to questions. In the event that any recommendation in the report has not been reached when the overall time limit has expired, it shall be put immediately to the vote.

3.25 Any Councillor, except the Seconder of the Report, may ask the Chair, Deputy or Vice Chair, as appropriate, not more than two questions on each paragraph of the Report.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

#### **6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

#### **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT/ EQUALITIES IMPACT/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/ CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

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#### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

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#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

None

**Croydon**

**Scrutiny and  
Strategic Overview  
Committee**

**Annual Report**

**2012 - 2013**

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## Introduction from the Scrutiny Chairman



2012-2013 has been a year of challenge for local services and for Scrutiny. Cuts to council funding have had a impact on levels of staffing supporting the Scrutiny function and on officers responding to Member requests for information. The Scrutiny function has had to adapt to this climate and to prioritise its work programme far more rigorously than in previous years, reducing the number of its meetings and focusing on the needs of vulnerable individuals in the borough. In the light of staff reductions, a decision was also taken not to carry out task and finish working groups, but members continued to monitor the implementation of reviews carried out in the previous municipal year.

Members kept a close eye on financial issues: the Leader attended the 15 January 2013 Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee to answer members' questions on the budget. Funding for a number of services from children's services to council tax benefits and recycling were at the heart of members' services, and a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee examined a misstatement of accounts at NHS Croydon in the 2010/11 financial year.

It has been heartening to note the wide range of people who have contributed their views to Scrutiny discussions this year, ranging from local residents interested in the refurbishment of Purley War Memorial Hospital, to young people concerned about school standards and leisure activities to individuals interested in their local library services.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the many officers in the public and voluntary sectors who have made time to meet with Scrutiny Members to help ensure that Scrutiny of local services is conducted in a meaningful way.

I hope you find this year's annual report thought-provoking and hope it encourages you to participate in the Scrutiny process. The various ways you can get involved are set out in section 11 on page 24 ..

Cllr Steve Hollands  
Chairman of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee

## 1 - Council Tax Benefits

The impact of this government initiative was scrutinised at the 18 September 2012 meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee.

The report to the committee on the localisation of council tax benefits stated that the Government was proposing to reduce the funding for Council Tax Benefit by an average of 10% across the country while giving local authorities the opportunity to set their own eligibility criteria.

Members enquired whether the Council had the option to alter the proposed council benefit scheme and absorbing any additional costs incurred. They were advised that only three London boroughs were known to have taken this course, all with significantly lower levels of liability and larger cash reserves. After examining figures provided in the report, it was acknowledged that the required increases in Council Tax in Croydon would exceed levels permitted by the Government and that cuts to other services would be required if the scheme were to be altered.

Members expressed concern at the proposal that customers in a higher Council Tax band than band D would not be eligible for full CTB support with incremental reductions for claimants with properties in bands E and above. It was felt that the bar had been set too low: band D properties in some parts of the borough were in fact relatively small and the council itself had placed housing applicants in properties rated above band D, thus putting them at risk of receiving reduced benefits. In answer to concerns regarding the impact on vulnerable individuals, the Cabinet member explained that the elderly, single parents with young children and those in receipt of Income Support would not be affected by these proposals. In answer to the committee's request, officers undertook to provide members a breakdown of properties affected.

Members asked why the Council was assuming a liability of £4.84million, as this was significantly higher than the government's 10% reduction in funding. Officers explained that the GLA contribution to CTB equated to 78.95% of current CTB levels. The Committee was also informed that the 10% figure of Government reductions was based on a national average with some councils losing out more than others. The Committee consequently agreed that the Council should make it clear that the borough was losing funding in excess of the average 10% and should highlight the inequality of the reductions.

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Readers are invited to suggest similar topics which they feel ought to be brought to the notice of Scrutiny Members.

## 2 - Proposed Changes To Recycling In Croydon

Proposals to introduce compulsory recycling for residents in the borough and enforcement for those who consistently fail to recycle were examined at the 18 September 2012 meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee. The proposals had been the subject of public consultation with early results included in the report to the Committee.

Members discussed the possibility of recycling mixed materials. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment explained that a Material Recycling Facility (MRF) would be required to sort mixed recyclables, resulting in significant capital expenditure and lower quality recycled products which would be more difficult to sell - hence the council's decision to sort waste at the point of disposal to maximise income.

The Committee sought assurances that customers who chose to recycle in other ways (eg composting in their gardens) would not incur enforcement action. The Cabinet Member indicated that the intention was to identify and target households which did not recycle at all, engage with them to encourage recycling and only resort to enforcement action as a last resort. In addition, members were given assurances that officers would be available to provide assistance to elderly or vulnerable residents to establish assisted collections where required.

The Committee received assurances that fines would not constitute a revenue generator but would only be issued to households which had failed to take action after engagement and written warnings. The Cabinet Member reminded members that landfill tax was currently £64 per tonne of waste, rising by £8 per tonne every year. If processing and transport costs were taken into account, the total cost of landfill waste rose to a total of £106 per tonne. These costs and environmental considerations made it incumbent on the Council to keep waste tonnage to landfill as low as possible.

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Readers are invited to suggest topics relating to waste management which they feel ought to be brought to the notice of Scrutiny Members.

### 3 - Safety and policing In Croydon

Cllr Simon Hoar, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection, Tony Brooks, Director of Public Realm and Safety, Andy Opie (Head of Community Safety) and Superintendent Rob Atkin (Deputy Borough Commander) were in attendance at the 6 November 2012 meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee to answer Members' questions on safety and policing issues in the borough.

Members questioned Supt Rob Atkin on the new Policing Model for London, which included proposed closures of a number of local police stations. They highlighted the sense of neglect felt by communities at the news of these closures. Supt Atkin explained that the proposals related to police stations which currently received a very low footfall and were intended to free up officers to spend more time policing in the community. Officers informed the Committee that the public consultation would seek to capture the best methods, locations and timings for future public access points. .

The Committee noted the proposals for the Safer Neighbourhood Teams to assume a more investigatory role. Members asked whether the teams would have sufficient office space in which to handle their casework and prepare court proceedings, and whether the new responsibilities would reduce the amount of time they spent in the community. Supt Rob Atkin acknowledged that suitable premises would need to be identified. He explained that additional officers would be allocated to the Safer Neighbourhood Teams to accommodate the additional workload and that wards would be clustered together to increase flexibility and ensure coverage until approximately 4am every morning. Supt Atkin added that measures would be taken to ensure that officers spent as much time on the street as possible and that a Borough Support Team would be set up to handle any peaks in activity.

The Committee asked the police to describe the elements of the new approach to Stop and Search being implemented in the borough. They were advised that a new target of 20% had been set for searches leading to enforcement action following a low outcome rate of 7% in the previous year. Croydon was close to reaching this target with an outcome rate of 18%. In addition, the police was seeking to educate the public about their rights regarding the Stop and Search progress and to ensure that officers carried out the searches in a police and respectful manner.

Members examined recent statistics relating to domestic violence in the borough and asked what targeted work was being carried out to address such offences among black residents, as 39% of victims were black whereas this ethnic group made up 14% of the population. Officers explained that early intervention work was key to addressing this disproportionality, through the council's family intervention teams and the troubled families unit. The Committee were also informed that a Multi-Agency Service Hub had been established to help agencies such as the Council, the Police and the voluntary sector to co-ordinate their work. Supt Atkin added that the Police sought to ensure that victims felt confident enough to report offences and that offenders were arrested promptly.

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Readers are invited to suggest topics relating to public safety which they feel ought to be brought to the notice of Scrutiny Members.



## 4 - Council budget 2013 - 2014

The proposed Council budget for 2013-2014 and questions to the Leader on the performance of the council were the key elements of the 15 January 2013 meeting, which brought together the Scrutiny and Strategic Scrutiny Committee and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee, whose remit is to scrutinise the work of the council as a local education authority.

Members heard that financial pressures on the Council were set to remain for several years to come and that the authority would be examining all its services closely to ensure the maximum value for money. The Leader added that 2015/2016 was of particular concern to local authorities as they anticipated further reductions to grant funding at that stage. Members questioned the Leader, the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on budget cuts to a range of services, including the traded services for schools, the Preventing Homelessness grant and services to children in care.

Members challenged the Leader on the effects of inward migration on local services. They asked how the council was tackling increases in population, especially in terms of school places and housing. The Leader explained that the Council monitored this closely to understand fluctuating pressures on services, although population projections were not always very accurate. The Chief Executive added that the UK Border Agency was to award the Council a fixed element of funding to tackle the impact of international migration as well as an additional funding element based on the number of migrants into the borough.

Members questioned the Leader on the funding of projects through capital expenditure. They were advised that this was a more efficient way of funding major works as borrowing rates were considerably lower. Officers added that these projects sought to address a severe backlog in infrastructure investment in the borough in recent years.

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Readers are invited to suggest what aspects of the budget and Council performance should be included in the Scrutiny work programme.

## **5 - Children's and young people's services**

This year, members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee were delighted to see that a number of topic suggestions were put forward for the 2012-2013 work programme by young people from Croydon's Youth Forum. In addition, this year's meetings were attended by a wide range of young people, included a young carer, representatives of the UK Parliament, the Children in Care Council and St Andrew's C of E School in Croydon.

### **Provision of activities for young people**

The 17 July 2012 sub-committee meeting focused on the provision of activities for young people in Croydon. It was attended by young witnesses from the Youth Parliament, the Croydon Youth Council and the Children in Care Council. Encouraged by the Chairman to voice their views regarding the provision of activities, the young witnesses highlighted their need to prepare for the world of work, to be clear about how to equip themselves effectively for future employment in order to avoid making the wrong choices and study for inappropriate qualifications. They also advocated involving young people more meaningfully in the planning of activities for different age ranges. Members also heard about the significant problems young people in care experienced with their education and the need for additional help and support with their studies.

The sub-committee questioned officers and young people on the effectiveness of various different forms of publicity aimed at young people. The young witnesses felt that Facebook and Twitter were good advertising media, but that advertising in schools was most effective. Members were also advised that a weekly e-mail was sent out to all schools regarding current issues, and might also be used to publicise activities for young people.

Throughout these discussions, officers stressed that the role of the local authority had changed and that it had become a broker, not a provider of services, and that it had to focus its limited funding on those young people in the borough who were most in need.

### **Call-In: Grant-Funding To Voluntary Organisations For The Education Community Grants Programme**

The Cabinet's decision to discontinue grant-funding to voluntary organisations for the education community grants programme was called in \* at the 25 July 2012 meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

At the meeting, members highlighted their concerns regarding the impact of cuts on the deprived north of the borough, the level of consultation on the proposals and concerns regarding the performance statistics provided

Evidence was obtained from the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning, officers and the following witnesses:

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\* **Call-In:** This is a procedure which allows councillors to suspend the implementation of a Cabinet decision until after it has been formally discussed at a Scrutiny "Call-In" meeting.

- Nero Ughwujabo, Chief Executive of the BME Forum
- Sasha Rhoden, Project Director for the Croydon Supplementary Education Project
- Alderwoman Gee Bernard from the Croydon African Caribbean Family Organisation (CACFO).

The following conclusions were agreed:

- Central government would be cutting educational funding to councils
- Overall, the council would have to make 27% cuts over three years
- Funding would be directed to schools
- The local education authority had lost a lot of its powers
- There has been a significant improvement in BME educational attainment
- The role of supplementary schools was valued

In the light of these conclusions, Members felt that the key challenge to address was how best to establish links between schools and community organisations providing supplementary education. They came to the following resolutions:

- The sub-committee agree to uphold the Cabinet's decision
- The sub-committee value the work done by community groups to improve the educational attainment of BME groups and their command of English, and would like to see this provision continuing
- The council should use its brokering role to help support effective community groups
- The council should clarify its transitional funding arrangements as soon as possible and work with groups to identify alternative sources of funding
- The Sub-Committee receive information on transitional funding arrangements at its October meeting
- The council should facilitate a meeting between head teachers and community groups to explore the possibility of these groups providing services to schools

### **Safeguarding and looked after children**

At their 9 October 2012 meeting, Members examined the Council's work following the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children, and prevention and early intervention services for families.

The Executive Director was pleased to announce that schools had been using the Common Assessment Framework\* (CAF) in many more cases than a year ago. He added that new opportunities for schools to arrange support for their pupils were emerging with the pupil premium programme, which had been introduced by central government to address underlying inequalities between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their wealthier peers by ensuring that funding to tackle disadvantage reaches the pupils who need it most.

Members expressed concerns that families in greatest need did not contact the appropriate agencies to access help, and asked how proactive local GPs were in detecting

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\* The CAF is a generic assessment for children with additional needs, which can be used by practitioners across all children's services in all local areas in England

need and establishing contact with the relevant services. They were advised that GPs were keen to refer families to Children's Centres and that it was important for as wide a range of agencies as possible to be alert to their needs and able to refer families to the appropriate services.

Members examined the eligibility criteria for the Troubled Families Programme. The officers' presentation listed the following four criteria:

- Education: households affected by truancy or exclusion from school
- Crime / anti-social behaviour in the family
- Worklessness: at least one adult in the household on out of work benefits
- High cost families including those with a history of domestic violence

Members suggested that mental health issues should be added to the above list as an eligibility criterion for the programme. They were advised that three family support officers provided support to households with mental health issues. Members were also advised that such an eligibility criterion could present problems as service providers were paid by results within six months and mental health issues took a long time to tackle effectively.

Members commented that long waits for young people to access the services of Children's and Adolescents' Mental Health Services (CAHMS) was a recurring complaint. Officers stated that considerable efforts were being made to tackle this issue and added that, at the previous week's LSCB meeting, CAHMS had reported on arrangements for improved access to services in some detail.

Members questioned officers on the care of transient families and questioned officers on the challenges Croydon faced in sharing data with other boroughs regarding their case histories. Officers acknowledged that serious case reviews undertaken in the past demonstrated how serious a challenge such families presented. In addition, they remarked that many such families were very reluctant to work with council officers to tackle their issues. However, despite these difficulties, the council was working hard to ensure timely information sharing with other councils.

## **Educational Standards**

A number of pupils from St Andrew's C of E High School in Croydon attended the 5 February 2013 meeting and were invited to contribute to discussions on educational standards in the borough.

Officers were asked whether schools were doing enough to enable and encourage young people to aim for challenging qualifications. The Executive Director explained that many schools in the borough were at a very early stages of introducing A levels. They were having to develop a good track record in providing good examination results in order to attract more young people to their courses.

Members sought further information regarding the attainment of different ethnic groups and expressed particular concern about the poor



*Pupils of St Andrew's School at the 5 February meeting of the Children and Young People Sub-Committee*

performance of white boys. Officers stated that schools had sophisticated data systems for monitoring the performance of different groups of pupils and that Ofsted could fail a school inspection if one particular ethnic group was not given the support it needed. Officers also commented that pupils who spoke English as a second language often outperformed other ethnic groups, particularly when these pupils constituted a large group within a given school.

Members questioned officers on school attendance levels. They were advised that unlike other boroughs, Croydon's secondary schools were outperforming primary schools in this respect. This was due to effective early intervention, preventing young people from becoming persistent truants. Members went on to examine exclusion statistics and observed that there had been a significant reduction in permanent exclusions whereas fixed term exclusions were still worryingly high. Officers stated that more effective schools tended to have lower fixed term exclusions while less effective schools which had high levels of exclusions lacked a wide range of systematic interventions to tackle poor behaviour and the imagination to establish such interventions.

Asked about the effectiveness of approaches to dealing with persistent harmful behaviour, officers explained that the Common Assessment Framework was used to identify the individuals' specific needs and the agencies to involve in addressing these issues. They added that a strong focus was placed on their families in order to address underlying problems which might be the cause of persistent harmful behaviour. They stressed that parental aspirations were known to be a chief driver of children's educational success and that the lack of it could be the cause of poor educational outcomes in white boys.

### **Academisation**

The impact of the "academisation" of schools was discussed at a number of meetings during this municipal year. At their 5 February 2013 meeting, members questioned officers on the outcome of inspections in Croydon schools during the autumn term 2012, following the implementation of a new Ofsted framework in September 2012, which set higher expectations of schools and included an expectation that schools now rated as underperforming should become sponsored academies in order to achieve the progress required by Ofsted.

### **Looking to the future**

Members acknowledged that the role of the Local Authority in relation to education was evolving in the light of new legislation and the academisation of schools. They noted that most schools were now self-governing, managed their own budgets and decided when to make use of local authority services. However, while academies were accountable to the Department for Education, the council retained the responsibility for ensuring minimum levels of academic success in the borough.

Members have recognised that the changing role of the local authority would impact on the scrutiny of educational matters. Possible models for the future included scrutinising focusing scrutiny on partnerships and principle-based leadership, with a view to adding value to educational services in the borough. These considerations will have an impact on members' decisions relating to the following year's Scrutiny work programme.

Readers are invited to suggest topics affecting children and young people in the borough. They are also very welcome to suggest if a school or youth club wishes to take part in a future Scrutiny meeting.

## **6 - Health and Social Care**

This year, the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee has tackled the challenges of engaging with new health structures, such as Croydon's Clinical Commissioning Group, a consortium of 61 GP practices across the borough which will take over commissioning from NHS Croydon in April 2013, and Croydon's Health and Wellbeing Board, which is also to be launched in April 2013. It has also worked to apply the lessons of nationwide issues for healthcare providers, such as the report on Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry, published in February 2013. The Sub-Committee has also endeavoured to prioritise its work programme to keep a watch on services to the most vulnerable residents in the borough.

### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**

Members commissioned a report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health services in order to examine the quality of access to these services and eligibility thresholds, and sought to obtain information on these matters from the providers, commissioners and service users. The report was presented at the 10 July 2012 meeting of the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee. Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning, placed a heavy emphasis on early intervention, both in family and school settings, to improve well-being and avoid the need for significantly more costly services at a later date. .

Members questioned officers on commissioning arrangements. Officers reported that staffing vacancies had resulted in an inconsistent level of access to services, which led Members to challenge the levels of funding available for these services. Officers stated that commissioning elements were not as strong in Croydon as in other boroughs working with the South London and Maudsley (SLaM) Group of mental health service providers. Funding had been reduced after ring-fencing for various services had been removed and the CFL budget had fallen by £16m. As a result, the CAMHS within Croydon had a longer waiting list than other authorities commissioning services from the SLaM group. Members were assured that the CAMHS Borough Team had been working in partnership with the borough to seek ways of addressing the funding shortfall.

Members discussed the involvement of the voluntary sector in providing services to individuals with mental health issues. They were informed that in many cases young people preferred to use the voluntary sector. Members noted the efforts made to improve joint working and undertook to follow up this work in following months..

### **Croydon Health Services NHS Trust (of which Croydon University Hospital forms part)**

At the 14 May 2012 meeting of the Health, Social Care and Housing, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) presented a report setting out an action plan arising from an inspection of maternity and dementia services at Croydon University Hospital. The Committee requested that an update be provided at a later date, which would include evidence of staff engagement in the action plan. This was presented at the 25 September 2012 meeting of the Committee. Members challenged officers on the pace of change, which they considered to be slow. They also pressed them for clear evidence of staff engagement, improvement in service and assurances of positive patient experiences as a result of the new management model. The Committee suggest carrying out a visit to see

these results for themselves and representatives of the Trust stated that the hospital would welcome a visit, which could be helpful to both parties.

### **Developing a new primary care service for patients with stable, low risk severe mental illness**

Officers brought a report to the 25 September 2012 meeting of the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee to obtain Members' views on the development of a new primary care service for patients with stable, low risk severe mental illness. Members requested that this report provide information on the impact of these changes on patients, their carers and on staff.

The report outlined present and future services to a group of 200 patients who were currently receiving a secondary care community service from the Low Intensity Treatment Team (LITT), which forms part of the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM). Members were informed that after a period of treatment, this patient group had become very stable and no longer met the threshold for this level of intervention. However, their complex needs could not be met within primary care.

The proposal was to vary the contract with SLaM and to make GPs responsible for the care of these patients through a contract variation known as the locally enhanced service (LES). The new service would aim to improve care by joining up the approach to physical and mental health and providing services through GP practices' own dedicated Severe Mental Illness (SMI) service.

The first six months phase would involve the transfer to primary care of an estimated 90 of the current 200 patients on the LITT caseload to the 32 practices they are registered with, with a view to addressing the barriers that are perceived to be blocking effective and efficient transfer to primary care of this patient group.

The Trust was formally consulting the Scrutiny Sub-Committee as this change was deemed to be a significant variation in service.

The Committee challenged officers about the capacity of GPs to take on this additional work. It was admitted that there were wide variations in GP services, and that a number of patients and GPs did not feel ready for this change in provision. In recognition of these anxieties, members were informed that an intermediate team had been formed to assist with the transition to the new service. In addition, lessons had been learnt from obtaining information on a similar project in Lambeth. Each of the participating 32 GP practices would provide services to 2-3 patients, which was a manageable workload, and capacity building would take place during the pilot phase with other GPs. Members also sought assurances on the quality of monitoring arrangements, and were advised that a steering group would be formed to evaluate the pilot after six months.

The Committee heard the views of a representative from "Hear Us", a SLaM supported consultative forum, who had had a positive experience of the change in service provision, and stated that the GP surroundings and atmosphere were more appealing compared to the setting of the LITT service, which he felt could hold patients back in their recovery.

## **Refurbishment Of Purley War Memorial Hospital**

At the 8 January 2013 meeting, members were given a presentation by the management team of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust on a business case presented to the Department of Health which had resulted in the Trust being awarded £1.15m to fund a comprehensive refurbishment of the Purley War Memorial Hospital.

The meeting was held at the Brighton Road Baptist Church, South Croydon, to give the public an opportunity to voice their views regarding the proposed refurbishment and was well attended.

Residents raised concerns about potential confusion between the services offered by an urgent care centre and those provided by an accident and emergency department. Representatives of the Trust acknowledged this risk and undertook to ensure that services would be clearly signposted. Representing Croydon's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Dr Fernandes added that a call to NHS111 could also assist people in deciding which facility they required.

Residents sought clarification regarding the catchment area of Purley War Memorial Hospital. Trust managers confirmed that all patients in the south of the borough would be referred to this hospital for 80% of the conditions treated by the Trust and that footfall was likely to increase to 90,000. The hospital would have the advantage of a GP practice on site, which would have the support of the establishment's diagnostic facilities and consultants.

Residents observed that this significantly higher footfall would have an impact on local traffic and parking facilities. Officers replied that the majority of patients and visitors would be expected to travel to the hospital either on foot or by public transport as 40% of current patients and visitors do so. Officers admitted that the funding did not include provision for parking, but stated that discussions would be held with local bus companies to improve access to the hospital.

Members also questioned representatives of the Trust on the maintenance of the building and its equipment, the deliverability of the initiative within budget, and the management of public and staff expectations of the new hospital.

## **Personalisation and re-ablement**

This initiative was considered by the Health Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee at their 8 January meeting. Members questioned the reasons for the reduction in the national requirement to have assessed 100% of client groups' suitability for this initiative down to 70%. They were advised that the original target had been recognised to be unachievable. Some patients, particularly elderly ones, were very reluctant to make use of their personal budgets and required continuous assistance with this scheme. Officers reported that a number of other clients would never learn to manage their social budget and would have to continue to be supported in more traditional ways.

Representing the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Dr Fernandes was asked if GPs were fully informed about this initiative and its procedures. He answered that two GPs were currently testing the programme with a small client group.



Members questioned officers on Care UK, the provider of this service. They sought and obtained assurances that initial concerns about their performance had been resolved. Officers were able to confirm that the company was recruiting the appropriate level of nursing staff to provide an adequate service.

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Readers are invited to suggest topics relating to health and social care in the borough, which they feel ought to be brought to the notice of Scrutiny Members.

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## **7 - Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

### **1 - South West London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on NHS Croydon finances**

**The JHOSC's conclusions are to be agreed at its final meeting on 25 April 2013.**

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## **Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on “Better Services Better Value”**

The objective of this joint committee has been to respond to the statutory consultation Launched by NHS South West London, known as Better Services, Better Value (BSBV), a programme run by the NHS to review health services in South West London. All Meetings have been attended by representatives of Croydon Council .

The 3 October 2012 meeting of the JHOSC was also attended by representatives of Surrey County Council. It became clear in the course of the meeting that the full impact of the proposals on health services in Surrey had not been considered when options were initially drawn up. It was therefore agreed to amend the BSBV programme to allow Surrey County Council to be fully consulted with.

The public consultation timetable is to resume after Easter 2013 due to the consideration of Epsom Hospital's decision to stay with St Helier hospital as a combined Trust, which will lead to a second round of option appraisals and scoring.

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## **8 - Housing**

The Health Social Care and Housing Sub-Committee agreed to carry out pre-decision scrutiny at their 23 October meeting on two forthcoming housing initiatives, the borough's housing allocation scheme and tenancy strategy, in order to contribute their feedback on the initiatives without delaying their implementation.

### **Housing Allocation Scheme**

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to have "regard to" their homelessness strategy and allocations scheme when preparing their new tenancy strategy. By implication, this required local authorities to ensure their allocations scheme, tenancy and homelessness strategies were aligned and did not cut across the exercise of the new powers and flexibilities provided. Members scrutinised the work carried out by the Council to review the allocations scheme while developing a new tenancy strategy to ensure the two policies were consistent with each other.

Members discussed current levels of access to private sector housing in the borough. Officers confirmed that there was a shortfall of private sector landlords who were prepared to provide properties for applicants on the Housing register. To resolve this shortfall, a Homelessness Task Force chaired by the council's Chief Executive had sought to develop an action plan and market strategy to encourage more local landlords to make their property available to housing applicants.

Members voiced their concerns over the standards of accommodation offered to applicants. Officers gave assurances that inspections were carried out by environmental health officers to ensure statutory standards set by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) were maintained.

Members questioned officers on the possible impacts of the "one offer only" element of the proposed housing allocation scheme, such as the mix of households on any one estate. Officers stated that they were mindful of these issues and endeavoured wherever possible not to house very elderly tenants and families with children next to each other, and to offer houses with gardens to households with children.

### **Tenancy Strategy**

The Localism Act 2011 placed a duty on the local authority to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy within one year of the relevant provisions coming into force. Section 150-153 of the Localism Act 2011 came into force on 15 January 2012, and the tenancy strategy for Croydon had to be agreed by the Council before 14 January 2013.

At their 23 October meeting, the Health, Social Care and Housing examined the proposed tenancy strategy, which included the following elements:

- how registered providers are advised to use fixed term tenancies and the length of fixed term they are expected to offer
- the circumstances in which registered providers are encouraged to offer lifetime tenancies
- how a tenant may appeal or complain against decisions made
- how registered providers are advised to take into account the needs of vulnerable people

Members examined proposals for flexible tenancies, the driver for which was the very limited availability of housing stock in the borough. They questioned officers on offers of flexible tenancies to those with learning disabilities and were informed that these would continue to be reviewed every five years under the new tenancy strategy.

Members challenged officers regarding the tenant perception that the proposed strategy could appear inflexible. Officers explained that their proposed regulations were comparable with those of other authorities and that the borough's strategy would be customer-focused while remaining realistic as to the housing provision they could offer to applicants.

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Readers are invited to suggest topics relating to local housing needs which they feel ought to be brought to the notice of Scrutiny Members.

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## **9 - Library Services Call-Ins**

### **Call-in on the future of Upper Norwood library**

At their 5 October 2012 meeting, the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview committee called in the Cabinet's decision regarding the future of the Upper Norwood Joint library.

Following what the Council had considered to be a fundamental breach by the London Borough of Lambeth, Croydon had in 2011 terminated the joint agreement with that borough on how it was to be run and funded. Following this termination, the Council had held a public consultation and developed proposals for the future of the library. These proposals to retain the library through the establishment of a community management arrangement and budget were now subject to a Scrutiny Call-In.

Concerns expressed by the signatories to the Call-In included the following:

- The consultation results showed no support for the cutting of funds
- It was felt that front-line services should be prioritised over the back-office
- The establishment of a community trust was welcomed but there were serious concerns that the £2,500 allocated towards it would be insufficient to cover the costs involved
- The library needed sufficient funding to give it long-term certainty beyond the two years' of funding proposed

Members received representations from the following:

- The London Assembly Member for Lambeth and Southwark
- The Leader of Lambeth Council
- Cllr John Wentworth, local Member for Upper Norwood
- Representatives of the Upper Norwood Library Campaign
- The Gipsy Hill Residents' Association
- The Crystal Palace Community Association

Members asked for clarification on the running costs of Upper Norwood Library when compared to the Council's other libraries and for information on the potential for staff redundancies and their ensuing costs. They also challenged the Cabinet Member on how the Council had arrived at the figures for the funding allocation and asked how the proposals would affect the ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the building.

As discussions drew to a close, there was some support for recommending that the funds allocated for building community potential be safeguarded to ensure they were not used for costs such as redundancies or legal costs. However, while the outcome desired by the members who called in the decision was discussed at length, no agreement was reached on recommendations to the Cabinet.

### **Call-In of the procurement of library services**

At its 5 December 2012 meeting, the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee called in the Cabinet decisions relating to the procurement of its library services. The decision had led to two separate call-ins, one by Conservative members and the other by Labour members. The former, while not opposed to the decisions, sought assurances that the specification for the proposed library was available in the public domain. The latter related to issues which were likely to include exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of

Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 and was therefore discussed in Part B of the meeting, from which the public was excluded.

In Part A of the meeting, members questioned officers on various aspects of the proposed library contract, including the following::

- The evaluation process for the consideration of the tenders submitted
- The proposed ownership of the library buildings
- The process for reviewing library charges
- Proposed library opening hours under the new contract
- The number of professional librarians to be employed under the new contract
- Proposed performance management mechanisms

At the end of the meeting, members agreed the following resolutions, which were shared with members of the public as the meeting was reconvened in a public session::

- 1) That scrutiny should receive monitoring reports on the delivery of the contract as they became available and that monitoring of the contract should be considered when agreeing each year's scrutiny work programme.
- 2) That all library service telephone numbers used by the public should remain the same after the commencement of the contract
- 3) That future commissioning reports should contain as much information in Part A of the agenda as possible in order to allow Members and the public to know whether the commissioning exercise meets the terms of the Council's commissioning strategy.

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## **10 - Follow-up of Scrutiny recommendations**

Scrutiny members have set aside time to follow up the implementation of all Scrutiny recommendations approved by Cabinet in previous years.

Readers wishing to obtain further details on these recommendations are invited to refer to the agendas, reports and minutes of the meetings where they were discussed on [www.croydon.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/scrutiny).

### **Arts in Croydon and Voluntary Sector Commissioning**

Follow-up on the implementation of these recommendations was discussed at 12 June 2012 and 6 November 2012 meetings of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee.

The Committee was heartened to hear of:

- plans to dramatically simplify the bidding process for small grants to enable smaller voluntary organisations to bid more easily
- work being carried out to develop approaches to socially responsible procurement, to ensure social benefit is captured in every stage of the commissioning process.

The Committee welcomed the observation from Cabinet that even recommendations which had been rejected had led to the implementation of improved processes.

### **Public Access to information**

Follow-up on the implementation of these recommendations was discussed at the 12 June 2012 meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee.

Members heard that a micro-website had been developed to publish Freedom of Information requests on the Council's website in a format that allowed customers to search previous enquiries and their responses in a designated transparency section that was easily found from the homepage.

Members agreed that the recommendations had had a positive impact on the work of the Council and welcomed the organisation's move towards greater transparency.

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

Follow-up on the implementation of recommendations was discussed at the 18 September 2012 meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee. Implementation has continued since, and a members' learning and development on this voluntary work is scheduled to take place in May 2013.

### **Neighbourhoods and Big Society**

Follow-up on the implementation of these recommendations was discussed at the 18 September 2012 meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee.

Members were advised that the Council's new Community and Voluntary Sector Commissioning Plan included a programme of training for commissioners and



organisations, which linked in with the Scrutiny recommendation regarding the provision of free training courses on key capacity-building skills.

The working group had recommended that the Council's proposed communication hub should include up to date links to the networks which are regularly used by various sectors of the community, such as school websites for young people. At the 18 September committee meeting, they were informed that Croydon Online is being refreshed and would primarily provide links to information on areas such as youth and volunteering opportunities, local and national voluntary and community groups.

### **The Impact of Academy Schools and Free Schools on schooling in Croydon**

Officers provided detailed information on the implementation of these recommendations was discussed at the 5 February 2013 meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Members were informed that the Council was encouraging a consensual, partnership approach with academy providers to ensure that performance data was shared to enable the Council to monitor the quality of education in the Borough and meet its statutory obligations. In addition, the Council was continuing to develop school to school partnerships for all schools irrespective of designation, maximising the sharing of expertise and good practice.

Members were advised that the offer and take-up of the Council's traded services to local schools, which had been an important element of the Scrutiny review, was regularly reviewed and that work was being undertaken with neighbouring boroughs to identify any gaps in services to schools. A successful service offered by the council's traded services was the "*more able learners' project*" which had been launched to a group of schools, 11 Primary and 6 Secondary. In its mid-term reviews of this programme, there had been clear evidence that some adopted strategies had led to an improvement in the performance of their target pupils' writing, reading and/or numeracy skills.

### **Scrutiny recommendations on Speech and Language Therapy Service**

Follow-up on the implementation of these recommendations was discussed at the 25 September 2012 and 16 April 2013 meeting of the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

The Committee enquired about progress on pooling budgets, on making appropriate use of trained therapists and on securing better provision for maternity cover (recommendations 2&3). Officers satisfied members that there was now appropriate use of trained therapists. However, members expressed dissatisfaction about the fact that commissioning agencies (the PCT and the Council) did not make funding provision for maternity leave, which was going to have a significant impact as 10% of the staff were due to go on maternity leave this year. The Committee consequently requested a follow-up report on this matter.

## 11 - What is Scrutiny?

Local authority scrutiny originated from the Local Government Act 2000.

Scrutiny committees can ask for written information, ask questions of decision-makers, make comments and make formal recommendations to key decision-makers including the Council's Cabinet Members and statutory bodies such as the Police and NHS Trusts.

In this way, scrutiny committees keep a watch on the quality of local services, hold decision-makers to account and put forward ideas for developing and improving services.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny ([www.cfps.org.uk](http://www.cfps.org.uk)) has produced a guide to effective public scrutiny, which states that good scrutiny:

- Provides “critical friend” challenge to executive police-makers and decision-makers
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities is heard by “independent-minded governors” who lead and own the scrutiny process
- Drives improvement in public services

### How can you get involved?

Croydon Council welcomes public interest and involvement in the work of its scrutiny committees and working groups.

#### Suggesting a topic for Scrutiny

Are there any services, run by the Council or other local statutory bodies, that you think could be delivered more efficiently or effectively? Are there services that could be improved by better partnership working? Are there ways in which you think local decision-making could be improved?

If you have some ideas, then maybe you would like to suggest a topic for consideration by one of Croydon Council's scrutiny committees. The best time to do this is in March or April before the initial scrutiny work programme for the year is developed in May or June .

Scrutiny cannot consider complaints but may consider any policies, practices or procedures that are giving cause for concern. Scrutiny does not consider matters within the remit of the Planning and Licensing Committees or issues that affect a limited locality within the borough

#### Attending a Scrutiny meeting

All Scrutiny committee meetings are open to the public, except for the rare occasions when confidential information is due to be discussed. The agendas, reports and minutes of all of Scrutiny meetings can be viewed and downloaded from the Croydon Council website ([www.croydon.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/scrutiny)). Meeting papers are also available from Croydon's central library.

## **Speaking at a Scrutiny committee meeting**

Committee meetings take place in public; public participation is at the discretion of the Chairman. If you would like to speak, it is best if you let the Committee Clerk know before the meeting; the name of the Committee Clerk is on the front page of the agenda, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 0208 7266000 ext. 62683.

If you are invited to speak at a committee meeting, you should declare any current or prospective financial or personal interest you may have in the topic under discussion.

## **Offering to contribute as a "witness"**

Effective scrutiny is based on receiving good evidence, which may come from a range of sources, such as research, Scrutiny surveys conducted in connection with a review, or witness statements.

If you can provide evidence on one or more of the topics due to be considered by a Scrutiny committee, we would be pleased to hear from you. Evidence can be provided in writing or orally at Scrutiny meetings. To register your interest in providing information, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 0208 7266000 ext. 62683.

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## You are invited to suggest topics for the Scrutiny work programme 2013/14

***Are there any services, run by the Council or other local statutory bodies, that you think could be delivered more efficiently or effectively? Are there services that could be improved by better partnership working? Are there ways in which you think local decision-making could be improved?***

If you have some ideas, then maybe you would like to suggest a topic for consideration by one of Croydon Council's scrutiny bodies in 2013/14.

Scrutiny Members can ask for written information from, and require the attendance of, relevant council officers, Cabinet Members and also - where appropriate - officers from other statutory bodies such as the NHS and Police. Scrutiny committees have no decision-making powers but can make formal recommendations which decision-makers must consider.

Scrutiny cannot consider complaints but may consider any policies, practices or procedures that are giving cause for concern. Scrutiny does not consider matters within the remit of the Planning and Licensing Committees. And Scrutiny rarely considers issues that affect just one locality of the borough.

A suggested topic is more likely to be prioritised for consideration if it is:

- ◆ clearly defined
- ◆ an issue of public interest or concern
- ◆ likely to lead to improvements for local people
- ◆ and can help the council achieve its corporate priorities

Please complete the boxes below and send your suggestions by post to the Scrutiny Team, Democratic and Legal Services, LB Croydon, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon, CR9 3JS. or by e-mail to [scrutiny@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@croydon.gov.uk)

For information about **current** Scrutiny work see [www.croydon.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/scrutiny).

Topic suggested:
Why do you think Scrutiny should investigate this topic?
Your contact details (optional)  If you provide your contact details, you will be given feedback in June 2013 on whether your suggestion has been included in the work programme and, if so, when it is expected to be considered.