

Croydon Council

For General Release

REPORT TO:	FULL COUNCIL 24 March 2014
AGENDA ITEM NO:	11
SUBJECT:	SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14
LEAD OFFICER:	Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Director of Democratic & Legal Services
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Steve Hollands Chair of Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: The constitutional requirement that Council receive and consider the Scrutiny Annual Report .	
FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO: N/A	

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 Council is asked to receive and consider the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee Annual Report 2013/14.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee Annual Report 2013/14 is attached as an **Appendix 1**.

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:

3.21 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.

3.22 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.

3.23 Any Councillor, except the Secunder 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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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



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**Croydon Scrutiny Committees
welcome suggestions from
members of the public,
businesses or any other
organisations who wish to put
forward issues for possible
review.**

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION



*Councillor Steve Hollands,
Chairman Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee*



I was delighted to be appointed as Chairman of the Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee in May 2010 and I have held this position for the last four years. In this capacity, I have worked with a number of vice-chairmen and Scrutiny Members, both elected and co-opted. Each has brought something unique to Scrutiny and this report gives me an opportunity to thank them all.

Why are we producing this report?

Many people will be surprised to learn that the Cabinet is not a Committee of the Council but a statutory (Executive) body which we are obliged to have by law and the current constitution. Many people will also be surprised to learn that Scrutiny is charged with looking at the work of Executives of other public bodies operating in Croydon as well as the effectiveness of statutory joint partnerships operating in Croydon.

Scrutiny is a Committee of the full Council charged with scrutinising public bodies including the Council's Cabinet and reporting back. The establishment of Scrutiny Committees by Parliament was in order to address what was widely considered to be the absence of democratic accountability of public services operating in an area. The scrutiny of the management of NHS Croydon Finances, the proposal to reconfigure health services in south-west London and the scrutinising of the Mayor of London's new

policing plan bears testimony to how in Croydon public sector bodies are being brought to account by elected Councillors.

This then is our annual reporting back to full Council of what we have been doing this year. This document also covers a very brief review of the last four years as this is our final report before the May 2014 elections.

Scrutiny exists so that the voters who voted for the Councillors who represent them can have confidence that public services structures are responsive to public concerns. By reporting what we have done, we hope the public will see that there is a way in which they can get their concerns to the attention of elected members about all the public services in Croydon.

The annual report shows the varying sources of information which inform scrutiny reviews. Scrutiny ensures that reports by monitoring and regulatory bodies are taken seriously by the organisations to which they are addressed. This annual report demonstrates how scrutiny has followed up reports by OFSTED, Healthwatch, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel, and, in the case of the review of NHS finances, internal and external auditors.

We hope that fellow Councillors will also be inspired and will see Scrutiny as the primary tool given to them to exercise their community leadership role. Our work in relation to the NHS Croydon finances, CQC reports on Croydon University Hospital, the scrutiny of flood management and the work on reducing youth unemployment bears testimony to this. Whether it was looking at the recorded low immunisation rates in Croydon or the number of young people not in education, employment or training we have not flinched from bringing decision makers to account.

Scrutiny has to work within the context of diminishing resources available to the public sector and we have had to scrutinise decisions which have involved the public sector response to the financial crisis. The "call-ins" referred to in this report were a direct result of these innovative ways of adapting to limited resources.

My work as Scrutiny Chairman

In July 2013 new statutory rules suddenly came into force relating to access to information. These abolished the statutory forward plan of key decisions and replaced it with ad hoc 28 day notices for individual key decisions. These rules require me as Chairman to be informed of key decisions where the 28 day notice could not reasonably be given or for urgent decisions for which no referral (call-in) was allowed. I am pleased to report that there have been very few such requests. Members are aware of them as there is a requirement for urgent decisions to be reported to full Council.

As Chair, I am also consulted on the dates of call-ins where it is considered that the decision is urgent and cannot be delayed to the next scheduled meeting of the Strategic Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

I hold monthly meetings with my Sub-Committee chairs. Here we have followed up progress regarding on-going work and agreed suggestions for changes to the scrutiny work programme in response to emerging issues.

I also hold quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive of the Council which I find very useful.

Finally, five times a year, I welcome the opportunity to present a report to Council about the work of Scrutiny, to answer questions on the activities of its Committees and to raise awareness of its valuable role in local democracy.

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SCRUTINY AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE



*Councillor Steve Hollands,
Chairman Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee*



This report provides the opportunity to review activity within scrutiny and overview during 2013/14. The last year has seen continued challenges for local public sector organisations in dealing with budget pressures, new legislation and the changing shape of partner organisations such as the health service and the police. Scrutiny Councillors have monitored these developments closely and have continued to carry out effective local public sector scrutiny against this changing landscape.

At its heart, scrutiny is about accountability. Scrutiny Committees make a significant contribution the community by reviewing decisions and the services provided by public sector organisations in the Borough, by listening to local people and making recommendations on future policies.

Over the next few pages I want to highlight some of the key activities the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee has undertaken during the year. If you would like to know anything more or have suggestions for topics which could be looked at next year, we would be delighted to talk to you. Contact details for the Scrutiny Team can be found at the back of the report and you can find out more about our work by visiting our website at: www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/scrutiny

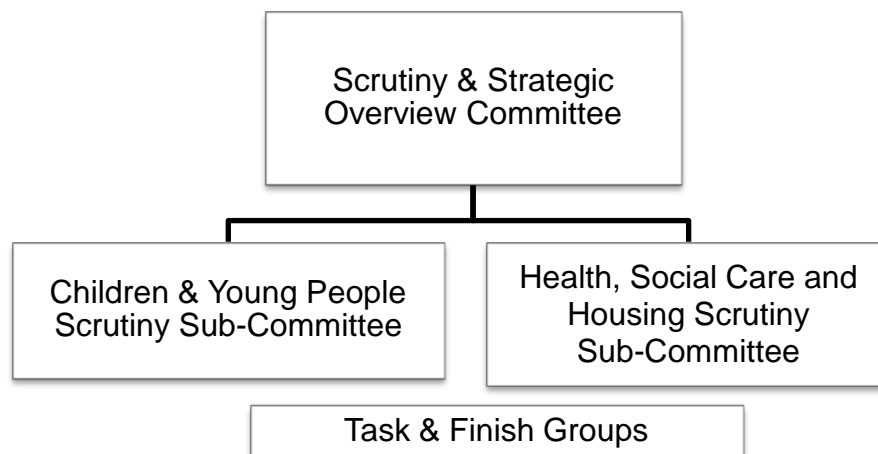


In 2013-14, the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee comprised:

Councillor Steve Hollands (Chairman)
Councillors Carole Bonner, Jason Cummings (Deputy Chairman),
Sean Fitzsimons (Vice Chairman), Karen Jewitt, Terry Lenton and Michael Neal.

The reserve members were Councillors Jeet Bains, Clare George-Hilley, Donna Gray, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Ian Parker and Tony Pearson.

The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee has overarching responsibility for all aspects of scrutiny in Croydon. The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee delegates elements of its annual work programme to its Sub-Committees to ensure the most effective use of Members' time, interests and expertise.



CALL-INS

A call-in is a statutory and constitutional power given to scrutiny Committees to review a key decision which has been taken but not implemented. In the 2013/14 municipal year, the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee exercised the power on three occasions.

The three call-ins related to:

- The procurement of Croydon's library services (11 June 2013)
- The provision of shared regulatory services with the London Boroughs of Merton and Richmond (11 June 2013)
- The proposed change of use of Tonbridge House Retirement housing Scheme to general needs housing for homeless families with children (7 January 2014)

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Call-In: The procurement of Croydon's library services

At the 11 June 2013 meeting, Scrutiny members called in the Cabinet decision to accept a refined final tender for library services submitted by John Laing Integrated Services, to award the contract to this firm and to appoint them as the preferred bidder for the provision of these services.

Members focused discussions on the way in which the procurement decision was taken and publicised, the decision itself and the terms of the outsourcing and level of information provided.



Community involvement included members of the public requesting an opportunity to address the Committee. In doing so, the speakers included the following concerns:

- It was not clear how the revised bid from John Laing Integrated Services (JLIS), differed from its original submission, and what the reasons were for the changes
- The public should be informed of the number of staff that would be transferring to the new provider, as this would give an indication of staff levels and service quality

Councillor Pollard, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning, explained that he recognised the public's desire to know the price and details of the contract, but this information was commercially sensitive and he was therefore prevented by law from disclosing such information in a public meeting.

The Committee questioned officers and the Cabinet Member regarding the implications of *not* outsourcing the library service. They were advised that the outsourcing enabled a number of significant efficiency savings to be made that would not be possible if the service was kept in-house. The proposed provider would be making a significant investment into the service, including an increased book fund for new books, a full refresh of all ICT equipment and the provision of wi-fi in all libraries. The Committee was also informed that the contract was designed to ensure that all branch libraries would remain open for the same total number of hours, but that the Council could alter this if the Borough's needs changed. It was therefore not possible to give definitive guarantees that all libraries would remain open for the duration of the contract, but the provider would not be able to alter any opening arrangements without full consultation with the Council. Similarly, any changes in charges or fees for library services could only be made in conjunction with the Council. The Cabinet Member reported that all the assets, including the buildings and equipment, would remain in the Council's ownership.

It was argued that a recommendation should be made to Cabinet requiring all decision reports for delegated decisions to be published at least five clear working days before the decision, in line with decisions made by Committees. However the Committee was wary of the wider implications of such a recommendation in view of the number of delegated decisions made and the potential for delays. It was therefore agreed that the Committee, should consider the issue further, either as a Task & Finish Group or as an agenda item, in order to make more informed recommendations to decision makers.

The Committee agreed that the decision should not be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration and that no formal comments be made.

Call-in: The provision of shared regulatory services with the London Boroughs of Merton and Richmond

At its 22 April 2013 meeting, the Cabinet agreed to proceed with the establishment of a shared service delivery model to include Regulatory Services (Pollution, Environmental Health/Food Safety, Licensing and Trading Standards) and to appoint a Head of Shared Regulatory Services (Head of Shared Service) for the Boroughs of Croydon, Merton and Richmond.

The reasons for calling-in the decision included Member concerns at the policy to outsource or share services, and the potential negative impact on the staff and the services provided to the public. Also cited were past difficulties in holding joint bodies to account and doubts about how savings would be achieved through the shared service provision.

The Committee was informed that overhead costs would be reduced with shared management, but that the number of frontline staff delivering the service would not be reduced. The precise terms of how the service would be held to account would be laid out in the inter-authority agreement, which had not yet been agreed. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection suggested that the Committee might wish to consider and comment on the terms of the agreement once it was available.

The Committee discussed the length of the contract and the possible options for the Council, should other opportunities for sharing services arise. The Cabinet Member explained that the agreement with Richmond and Merton did not prevent the sharing of services with other authorities, or for other authorities to join this agreement, with Sutton, as Kingston and Bromley had also expressed an interest in sharing their regulatory services with another Borough. Each service and authority would be considered on its own merits in order to secure the greatest savings and efficiencies.

The Committee agreed that the decision should not be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration and that no formal comments be made. It was agreed however that the details of the inter-authority agreement should be considered by Scrutiny as soon as they became available but before they were agreed and finalised.

Follow-up report

A follow-up report was therefore presented to the 4 February 2014 Committee meeting. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection stated good progress had been made to establish a shared Regulatory Service for the Boroughs of Croydon, Merton and Richmond and that it was intended to appoint the new joint Head of Service shortly. This will be followed by the appointment of a shared management

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team. The main aims of the establishment of the shared service were to save money and to improve service delivery.

The services currently in scope for this project are as follows:

- Trading standards;
- Licensing (excluding Licensing functions under the Licensing Act 2003);
- Environmental Health (Food Safety; Pollution Control, Health & Safety at Work).



Whilst it is envisaged that the shared service will be hosted in a single Borough, namely Merton, the expectation is that each Borough will still need to have their own teams embedded within their Borough with the host Borough providing accommodation for the management team. This arrangement will mean that all affected staff, including those based in Croydon, will be Merton employees delivering the relevant service as part of the Shared Service. It is envisaged that the host Borough will also be the lead for any HR and finance related issues.

Underpinning the policy and delivery arrangements for the shared service will be an inter authority agreement, which is hereafter referred to as the Shared Service Collaboration Agreement (SSCA). This agreement will form the legal document which will embrace the concept of collaboration across the three Boroughs while a Service Level Agreement (SLA) would determine annual performance and adjustments to finance and resources as priorities change.

Members of the Committee asked officers to ensure that the actions agreed in relation to decision making and review mechanisms in the course of the meeting be implemented.

Further monitoring in 2014-15

A further review of the shared regulatory services Service Level Agreement (SLA) and final Shared Services Collaboration Agreement (SSCA) will take place before implementation and at a meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee in the next municipal year.

Call-in: The proposed change of use of Tonbridge House retirement housing scheme to general needs housing for homeless families with children

On 7 January 2014, the Committee called in the Cabinet's decision to convert the Tonbridge House retirement housing scheme to general needs housing for use as temporary accommodation for homeless households, and to give existing tenants the choice of remaining in the scheme or moving to alternative suitable accommodation.

The reasons for the call-in were explained as follows:

- The residents of Tonbridge House had been very upset about the consultation process as they perceived that the Council had made the decision before consulting with them, that the option for Tonbridge House to remain as sheltered housing was not realistic and that they had not been treated fairly
- The decision-making behind the proposal was based on assumptions which were not necessarily accurate and would not necessarily deliver the savings projected
- The residents had moved into the sheltered housing at Tonbridge House with the expectation that they would be able to remain there and were unhappy with the proposal to change the use of the block to mixed housing.



A resident of Tonbridge House explained that the residents were elderly and infirm and some had developed inter-dependent relationships.

He added that the changes to the regulations and the lowering of the age limit (to 55 years of age) at Tonbridge House had already had a detrimental effect on the lives of the residents.

The following information was provided in answer to questions from Members of the Committee and ward Councillors:

- Selection of families – the Cabinet Member for Housing stated that families will be carefully selected and will have no more than 1-2 young children. The Cabinet Member said that officers had assured him that families allocated to Tonbridge House would be subject to careful screening, would be there on licence and that they would be moved on if necessary
- Mitigating actions to help residents who wish to move – the Head of Housing Solutions stated that residents would be helped if they chose to move and that this assistance would include tasks such as mail redirection. He also said that adaptations to meet assessed needs would be made to the new accommodation if they moved
- Temporary housing allocations to families – the Head of Housing Solutions stated that the proposal was to offer the flats to families who would otherwise be in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation where they could only stay for a maximum of 6 weeks, that they would be likely to stay for between 6-12 months and would be charged standard rent. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the proposal was due to tremendous pressure on land in the Borough.
- Level of response to the consultation process – the Head of Housing Solutions confirmed that the response rate was relatively low (58%) and that officers had attempted to reach all the residents

Commenting on the proposal, Members said that:

- The residents of Tonbridge House had opted for sheltered accommodation and did not necessarily wish to live alongside families with children

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- Some residents were frail and not necessarily in good health and that these decisions were life-changing
- There was considerable pressure on B&B accommodation and that Councils around the country were being fined £6,000-10,000 for keeping families in B&Bs beyond the statutory 6-week limit
- There would not only be a considerable impact on the current residents of Tonbridge House, but families with young school-age children could face multiple moves as they move from a B&B, to Tonbridge House for a few months and then on to more permanent accommodation elsewhere with a resulting and detrimental impact on the education of children

After a vote, the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee resolved not to make recommendations to Cabinet in relation to the decision made on 16th December 2013 regarding the proposed change of use of Tonbridge House retirement housing scheme to general needs housing for homeless families with children.

The Committee did however note that the Deputy Leader (Capital Budget and Asset Management) and Cabinet Member for Housing gave an undertaking to extend the period during which residents could claim disturbance payments to 31 March 2016 and that this should be reflected in the procedure and policy (Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet, 16th December 2013).

Further monitoring 2014-15

The Committee asked officers to ensure that a sensitive approach to managing the relocation of tenants be adopted to ensure that their health and wellbeing was safeguarded and that wherever possible interdependent relationships between tenants be taken into account. The Committee also asked officers to use great sensitivity when selecting and placing families at Tonbridge House to ensure that any problems to existing tenants are minimised and will seek updates on this in a follow-up item in 2014-15.

In addition, the Scrutiny Chairs have asked that their successors seek a further report on the undertaking to extend the period during which residents could claim disturbance payments as part of the scrutiny work programme 2014-15.

SCRUTINY TOPICS 2013-14

In addition to reviewing decisions through the call-in process, the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee undertook a planned work programme of topics throughout the year. These topics had been identified through a wide reaching consultation process involving public sector organisations, the third sector, members of the public as well as Council officers and Members. This process resulted in a 'long list' of topics. These were considered and prioritised by Members at a Scrutiny Workshop in May 2013, resulting in the work programme for the ensuing municipal year.

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The agreed work programme included the following topics:

- The mentoring scheme and other anti-gangs works (17 September 2013)
- Community Safety (17 September 2013)
- Flood risk prevention (5 November 2013)
- Croydon's district centres (5 November 2013)
- The Council Budget (17 December 2013)
- The Safer Croydon Partnership's Strategic Assessment (4 February 2014)
- Town Centre Redevelopment (postponed to a later date)
- Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT) (added in January 2014 and considered at the meeting on 4 March 2014)

The mentoring scheme and other anti-gangs work

Members received a report and additional information from the Youth Offending Service, gang's workers, the police, Lives Not Lives and two former gang members.



Members of the Committee heard that gangs in the Borough had distinct characteristics, that 180 gang members were registered on Croydon's Police Gang Matrix and that in general terms the make-up of gangs comprised socio-economic groups affected by high levels of deprivation rather than any particular ethnic group.

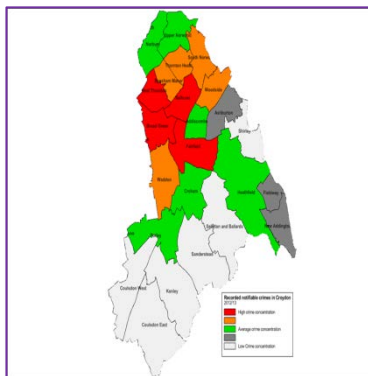
Two young former gang members informed the Committee that they had not considered themselves to be in a gang but more part of a family, that financial need was a major motivator and that these factors made it difficult to leave a gang lifestyle. They also said that support from mentors in addition to great personal determination was essential to make a successful transition into a new way of life.

Members were informed that Lives Not Knives has developed a mentoring programme which involves some ex-gang members, and that it also delivers the Mayor's Mentoring Programme. To date, 70 mentors have been trained and matched to 30 young people with the aim of matching the remaining 40 by December 2014. The role of Lives Not Knives in schools was also discussed and it was noted that some preventative work was under way.

The police provided an overview of gang-related offending and their work with council colleagues in the Turnaround centre and confirmed that the earlier a young person received support and intervention the lower the risk of escalation to serious offences. Information sharing was cited as being important and the recently established Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub enabled a better alignment of services and shared IT systems.

Community safety and crime levels in the Borough

The Committee received a report from the Director of Environment on community safety and crime levels which highlighted information about the new policing model and the strategic approach to these issues being taken by the Safer Croydon Partnership.



Improvements in performance in relation to anti-social behaviour were reported and examples of effective partnership working (including recent initiatives in London Road and the town centre and the 'Beds in Sheds' work by the Fire Brigade) were provided. Members were informed that the Drug and Alcohol service was to be re-commissioned that that this process would take into account recent underperformance in relation to treatment, changing patterns of drug addiction and the role of drug and alcohol abuse in domestic violence, other violent acts and crime. The cumulative impact of the proliferation of outlets selling cheap alcohol for extended periods of the day was cited as being difficult to police.

The Borough Commander informed the Committee that the last two years had been turbulent in policing terms and that the redevelopment of the town centre would present further policing challenges. He confirmed that 70 additional police officers had joined the force to date and that a further 47 (117 total) would join by December 2015.

Follow-up 2014-15

At its meeting on 4 February 2014, the Committee received information on the new Strategic Assessment for the Safer Croydon Partnership and endorsed its proposed priorities for 2014-17. The Committee will review the Safer Croydon Partnership Strategy, which will be informed by the Strategic Assessment following its adoption early in the new municipal year.

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Request for a report on key decisions

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons asked the Committee to request a report following the decision not to categorise the sale of part of the Riesco Collection as a Key Decision, referring to The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, PART 3 Regulation 8(1) in his statement.

In discussion, members noted that the Borough Solicitor had been consulted about the initial decision and was content with the basis of the decision made at the time and that the decision had been made in line with the Constitution.

Members agreed that greater transparency was in the public interest and resolved that the process relating to Key Decisions be added to the openness and transparency review (agreed at the 11 June 2013 meeting) to be undertaken at a later date.

Flood Risk Prevention

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Scrutiny Committees have powers to scrutinise flood management arrangements of the Council, Water Authority and Environment Agency (EA) for their area. At the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee meeting which considered flood risk prevention, representatives from the lead local flood authority, the EA and community leaders provided information to members. Officers highlighted the new role and statutory responsibilities of the Council in its role as lead local flood authority under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010.



In response to questions, Members were advised that:

- Officers were working on an initiative which would commence in early 2014 and see a road closed and gully cleaning undertaken alongside work on the road (such as filling potholes), repainting of parking bays etc.
- Costs to repair gullies damaged in the course of other work were recovered from utility companies
- Tree roots cause damage to pipes.
- The Council continues to work with the EA in Kenley ward following flooding with a view to setting up a maintenance regime on Caterham Bourne.

Members received assurances that the EA worked in close partnership with the local authority and other agencies such as Thames Water to manage flood risk. The EA representative announced that the organisation would be publishing surface water flood risk maps on its website from December 2013. It was acknowledged that the publication of flood risk maps could present issues relating to blighting or insurance. It was pointed

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out, however, that insurance companies already had the information and that individual householders would be better prepared once the maps are available.

Members were given an outline of the Community Flood Plan for Purley, in the south of the Borough. This was launched in March 2012 as one of three pilot studies to be carried out in London with the assistance of the EA, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the London Borough of Croydon. They were also given a description of a possible solution to the problem of flooding in Purley, which involved pumping flood water up the hill to 3 balancing ponds. Officers stated that this proposal was being analysed and that this work was due to be completed by the end of 2013, after which a bid for funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) would be made if the results warranted it.

The Committee resolved to endorse the works being undertaken by the Development & Environment Department in managing flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses in the Borough and support any future bids for additional funding to carry out flood prevention works.

Follow-up in 2014-15



Following the flooding in early 2014, the Committee agreed that a follow-up item on Flood Risk Prevention and the management of future flooding events should be put forward as a possible item for review in 2014-15. Members also suggested that this review should consider the issue of traffic management in affected areas and the need to resolve the challenge of ensuring that residents are provided with relevant information in a timely fashion.

The vitality of Croydon's district centres

This item was included in the work programme as Members were keen to evaluate how well businesses in Croydon's district centres were fairing in the current economic climate, and to identify the factors underpinning their viability as well as areas for improvement.

The Committee heard that a number of positive developments were underway. These included the contribution of Business Improvement Districts, the importance of the 5-year housing plan for fostering business activity, and work to nurture business start-ups and develop an entrepreneurial culture in Croydon through initiatives such as the Meanwhile toolkit, employment schemes and Business Month (November 2013).



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Members heard that there was a direct correlation between the proximity of housing to a District Centre and business vitality and that the walk time from front door to shop front was important. Members and officers agreed that parking was crucial to increasing footfall and that the cost of parking could be a real deterrent to visiting local shops.

Members were advised that in South End (south Croydon) modelling was being carried out to analyse parking patterns and the potential impact of changes to parking charges on the usage of shops and businesses in the area. It was recognised, however, that there was a cost attached to, for example, offering half an hour of free parking and that the scope to do more was limited.

Members were concerned that District Centres should offer a wide variety of shops. While recognising that there was a benefit for a number of businesses offering the same or similar services to co-locate in some circumstances, they felt that saturation of businesses such as hairdressers or fast food outlets was not wanted by residents. Members also commented that there could be a public health benefit to controlling the number of fast food outlets. The Council's regeneration officer informed members that the Council was looking to introduce a policy to manage the possible saturation of uses that can have a negative impact, such as fast food outlets and pay day local companies

District	% Vacancy		
	2008	2011	2013
Addiscombe	10	11	6
Coulsdon	11	13	16
New Addington	10	10	7
Norbury	10	11	9
Purley	8	21	17
Selsdon	9	8	9
South Norwood	17	23	18
Thornton Heath	7	4	8
Upper Norwood	19	16	14

Members suggested that information about the number of commercial property vacancies in an area could be included in reports to the Planning Committee so that Members could take this data into consideration when looking at new development proposals. It was agreed that this suggestion would be taken back to the planning team for consideration.

Members resolved to support the project to analyse parking use and charges in South End and to ask officers to extend this process to other areas in the future if it proved to have a beneficial effect on local business vitality.

The Council Budget 2014/15

The Council Budget was scrutinised at the 17 December 2013 joint meeting of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee and Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The Director of Finance was invited to outline to the Committees the budget-setting process, present the context for the 2014-15 budget and the challenges faced for 2015-16 and beyond. For the first time the Cabinet referred the proposed budget to Scrutiny before making a decision. This was a welcome pre-decision scrutiny of the budget which previous Committees have requested.



The Director of Finance stated that the Council's budget-setting focus would result in £18.4m savings in year and referred to a number of issues which would affect the 2014/18 Budget planning process and the impact of the Autumn Statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 5th December 2013. The following factors were highlighted:

- The potential impact of demographic changes in the Borough;
- The impact of the introduction of the Social Care Bill;
- The transfer of New Homes Bonus funding to Croydon's LEPs;
- The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy;
- The reduction to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as a result of recoupment for academy funding.

Scrutiny of the Budget 2014/15 included discussion on the following areas:

- Whole-place Community Budget pilot –The Chief Executive explained that a multi-agency approach to the identification of joint priorities had led to the formation of the Integrated Commissioning Unit with the Croydon CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and that this allowed resources to be pooled.
- Proposal for a new trading company to deliver delegable school services – The Leader stated that Cabinet had considered a paper on this proposal in September 2013 and that the development of the trading company would allow schools to purchase the services they need and the Council to generate financial savings. He also confirmed that it was intended to provide these services to other Boroughs.
- Capital funding for schools (Partnership for Schools) – the Leader stated that there had been considerable pressure on pupil places caused by demographic changes over the past few years The Chief Executive added that the Council was lobbying ministers about the need for longer term planning to give parents the certainty and choice they need about pupil places. The Director of Finance confirmed that the funding received from the DfE was for future developments rather than compensation for past expenditure.
- Schools Resource Centre – the Leader accepted that this was a valuable service to schools and undertook to reconsider the current level of savings proposed.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children - the Leader said that the numbers had gone down recently but it was expected that the number of unaccompanied children seeking asylum would increase again in the future. He added that in the past Croydon, as it is a Gateway Borough, had received up to 700 children and that it receives some funding in recognition of this but that it does not cover the full cost. Many other Boroughs around the country receive a handful of children each year. He explained that adult asylum-seekers were dispersed around the country but children tended to stay in the Borough with the attendant costs that this brings.
- Reductions to the direct cost of adults social care packages – the Leader stated that the financial pressures on the Council would continue and that the authority was negotiating with care providers to ensure maximum value for money for tax payers.
- Adult Safeguarding– the Leader confirmed that there would be no cuts to the budget for safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Projected reserve – the Leader confirmed that the projected reserve was £11.7m that the district auditor restricted reserve levels to 5% of total capital expenditure and that Croydon's reserve level was 3.7% currently.

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- Local authority borrowing – the Leader stated that there had been a lack of investment in infrastructure in the Borough over the past 40-50 years and that while interest charges are low it was a good time to borrow to make improvements. The Director of Finance added that the Council could only borrow for long term investment and that it needs to set aside the funds required to repay loans.

The Safer Croydon Partnership's Strategic Assessment

Scrutiny Committees have the power to scrutinise the work of the local Community Safety Partnership (Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006). In Croydon this is the Croydon Safer Croydon Partnership. The Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998 (as amended by Section 22 of the Police and Justice Act 2006) requires local authorities to formulate and implement a 3-year strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in their area.

The last 3-year strategy was published in 2011 so is due to expire in March 2014. The Safer Croydon Partnership is therefore in the process of developing its next 3 year strategy for 2014-2017. In order to develop the new 3 year strategy, the Safer Croydon Partnership is required to produce a strategic assessment involving analysis of a variety of partnership performance information, consultation feedback and recommendations for future priorities. Such an assessment was completed in December 2013, with a total of 581 people participating in a public consultation. A summary of the responses received so far has revealed that:

The top concerns of respondents were as follows:

- Criminal damage
- Violent crime
- Robbery
- Drugs
- Youth

The top 6 issues described as a problem in local areas were as follows:

- Graffiti
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Noise
- Vehicle related nuisance
- Drunk and rowdy behaviour
- Animal related nuisance



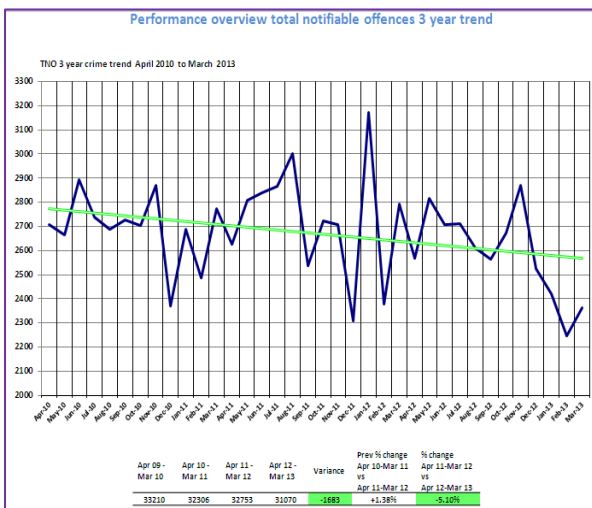
This report came to Scrutiny when proposals for the strategy were still in their formative stage. It was a welcome departure with the past as it provided Scrutiny a real opportunity to influence the strategy. Members were informed that the Safer Croydon Partnership would be consulting with stakeholders and partners to ensure that the final strategy incorporates the right set of priorities.

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Following the local elections in May, the Strategy is scheduled to go through the formal Council ratification process for formal adoption in June or July 2014.

The Cabinet Member cited the impact of Operation Bumblebee as an effective way of addressing residential burglary and reductions in the crime rate through effective partnership working. He added that some local spikes might be caused by a small number of individuals and that when these were caught the crime rate in that area dropped. He added that it was therefore important to work with local services and the prisons to ensure that as people are released, the spike in local crime does not return. The Head of Community Safety added that Offender Management was the focus of considerable effort and that through joint working; a number of agencies were trying to tackle the root causes of crime.

The Cabinet Member said that there was a vicious circle of under-reporting with regard to domestic violence (DV), which was very difficult to break. He added that the incidence of DV was on the rise and that GPs were being encouraged to report incidents. Members also heard that there were other projects, for example in schools, to help make children understand and address issues relating to DV, bullying etc.



In response to a question about how to communicate the message that ‘Croydon is Safe’, the Director of Environment said that he would welcome the views of Members on this. He added that the SCP had access to specialist communications advice to shape information and deliver it through social media, programmes in schools and so but that it remained a significant challenge to address the concerns of “worried safe” residents. The Executive Director added that work to improve the environment was key to this issue and that public realm improvements combined with programmes to, for example, reduce fly-tipping played a very significant role in helping residents feel safer.

At the end of this item, the Committee resolved to support the draft list of priorities for the Safer Croydon Partnership to focus on in the next three years. It is proposed that the Safer Croydon Partnership Strategy 2014-17 will be brought to the Committee for further discussion early in the new municipal year 2014-15.

Croydon Adult Learning and Training Service (CALAT): testing the 2012/13 Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

Adult Learning Services are required to produce an annual self- assessment report (SAR) based on an OFSTED framework. The report is submitted to the Skills Funding Agency in and is a mandatory part of the funding regime of the service. The report submitted to the

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Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee for consideration on 4th March 2014 outlined the process involved in the self-assessment, its key findings including strengths and the areas for improvement that the process have identified.

CALAT was last inspected by OFSTED three years ago and it is likely that an inspection will occur in 2014. The SAR will be a key reference document used in any inspection and is also used to drive service development.

A four-point grading scale based on the Ofsted inspection process is used in the assessment:

- Grade 1: outstanding
- Grade 2: good
- Grade 3: requires improvement
- Grade 4: inadequate.

The 2012/13 self-assessment for CALAT graded the service provision overall as 2.



CALAT is a vibrant local authority adult learning service provider. It is one of the largest adult learning services in the country delivering a wide range of part time learning provision across the Borough. Its mission is to provide high quality learning and training which meets the needs of individuals, businesses and local communities in Croydon.

The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee reviewed the report and questioned the conclusions reached in the assessment. The Committee had been invited to focus on the Quality Improvement Plan and to make recommendations for amendments or additions as appropriate in order to contribute to the robustness of the process and support the development and improvement of the service.

Members received information relating to the significant changes CALAT had experienced over the past 12 months including to senior management, moves to new premises in the Clock Tower and Strand House and changes in provision across the Borough. They also heard with interest about the complex funding arrangements for CALAT, the numbers and diversity of learners, the quality of the teaching provided and the need to ensure courses lead to further training or employment for learners. Officers also described some of the challenges facing CALAT including threats to funding (e.g. the Community Learning Grant), the availability of good quality teaching staff, the need to build on its work with employers and the pressure on teaching space. The Committee agreed that an update on CALAT and review of the 2013-14 Self-Assessment Report before its submission to the Skills Funding Agency in December 2014 should be added to the list of possible items on the 2014-15 work programme.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE



Councillor Sean Fitzsimons
Chairman Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee



Prioritisation of scrutiny topics has been critical as this Sub-Committee has only had three meetings dedicated to children’s and young people’s services and issues faced by this age group. Two areas stood out in particular.

As Members met to draw up the work programme for 2013/2014, one theme stood out from others and was supported by Members, officers as well as young people from the Youth Council, who had put forward a number of suggestions for the Scrutiny work programme. This was youth employability. As a result, a whole meeting was dedicated to this theme, and a great deal of research and consultation with young people and businesses took place before the Sub-Committee meeting in order to make effective use of the limited timeframe.

One call-in this year was taken by this Sub-Committee as it appertained to the duties and functions of the Council as a Local Education Authority. This related to the Cabinet’s decisions regarding the borough’s Education Estates Strategy. This highlighted the acute need for school places in the borough in the light of significant demographic changes.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Members and Co-optees of my Sub-Committee, to officers and stakeholders who contributed to this year's meetings as well as to the many young people who contributed agenda items as well as their thoughts and ideas to this Sub-Committee. I would like to extend my particular thanks to my two vice-chairs, Councillor Steve Hollands and Parent Governor representative James Collins, for their valuable contribution to the planning of the work programme and to the meetings of this Sub-Committee.



In 2013-14, the Children and Young People Sub-Committee and comprised:

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chairman)
Councillors Eddy Arram, Graham Bass, Richard Chatterjee, Justin Cromie, Jason Cummings, Clare George-Hilley, Donna Gray, Steve Hollands, Bernadette Khan, Terry Lenton, Michael Neal and Manju Shahul-Hameed

In addition to elected members, the Children and Young People Sub-Committee also has a number of co-opted members:

Parent Governor Representatives:	Mr James Collins and Mrs Vinoo John
Diocesan Representative:	Mrs Elaine Jones
Non-voting teacher representative:	Mr Mike Dawson

The reserve members for the Sub-Committee were:

Councillors Carole Bonner, Jan Buttinger, Sherwan Chowdhury, Pat Clouder, David Fitze, Maria Gatland, Adam Kellest, David Osland, Tony Pearson, Donald Speakman, Sue Winborn and Chris Wright

The Sub-Committee held three meetings on issues relating to children and young people and joined the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee for a meeting on 17 December 2013 to examine the Council's budget.

Call-in: Educational Estates Strategy

In 2013-14, the Sub-Committee considered a call-in relating to the Council's strategic and operational approach to pupil place forecasting. Discussions on the Council's strategic and operational approach to pupil place forecasting were followed by the call-in of Cabinet decisions made at its 17 June 2013 meeting, including proposals to establish by September 2014, a new secondary school in South Norwood at the Arena and CALAT sites and agree to proceed to the feasibility stage, application for planning permission and development of detailed design plans to establish those schools.

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Arguments put forward against the decision included residents' unhappiness at proposals to close down Ryelands Primary school and their concerns about the increase in traffic congestion which a large secondary school would bring, particularly as they felt public transport provision was not good. Officers stated that a full transport impact assessment would be commissioned to address future need in the area. It was also observed that the building of a new school on the Arena site would encroach on Metropolitan Open Land, and that it would be preferable and cheaper to expand an existing school.



Members were advised that the idea of moving Ryelands Primary School had been put forward by stakeholders responding to consultation on future school provision, and had therefore been incorporated into evolving plans, pending a full evaluation of the educational value of the proposal.

The Sub-Committee summed up the key issues discussed as follows:

- The acute need for more school places in Croydon
- The paucity of sites in the Borough
- The need to improve public transport provision to the Arena site

The Sub-Committee expressed its gratitude to officers for the comprehensive information provided prior to the meeting and the full responses given at the meeting. After detailed discussions, the Sub-Committee decided not to refer the matter back to Cabinet for consideration.

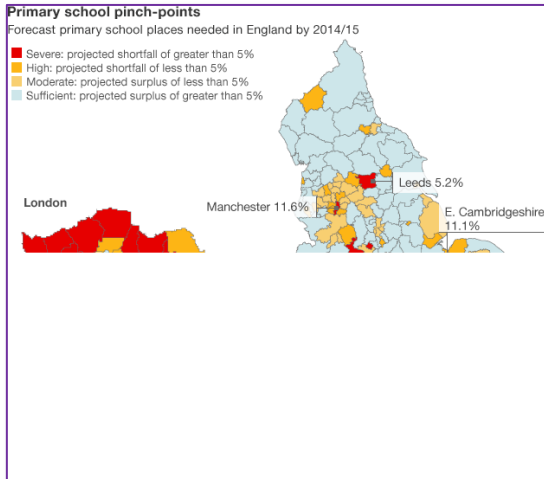
2013-14 SCRUTINY TOPICS

The Children and Young People Sub-Committee also developed an annual work programme through a consultation exercise and discussions at the annual Scrutiny Conference held in May 2013. These topics included:

- The availability of school places and the robustness of planning (7 July 2013)
- Youth Employability (15 October 2013)
- Safeguarding (11 February 2014)

The availability of school places and the robustness of planning

This topic on the Council's strategic and operational approach to pupil place forecasting was selected in view of Members' awareness of the significant growth in demand for school places in the Borough.



In Croydon this is particularly acute due to the size of the authority, the greater impact of migration due the relative cheapness of house prices (rental and purchase), and the lack of migration outwards by socially aspirant families during the recession. Members were informed that the overall birth rate had increased in Croydon by approximately 32% over the last ten years and that there has been a significant increase in families with very young children moving in to the Borough in recent years, as shown in GP registration data.

At the 9 July meeting where this topic was scrutinised, officers stressed that the strength of the information available on demand for school places was reflected in the authority's success at securing £63million from the Department for Education (DfE) towards the schools expansion programme – the highest of any authority in the country – which had been secured after rigorous challenge of the data by the DfE.

In terms of trends, officers explained that demand in and around the town centre was increasing, and that demand for place in Croydon's secondary schools was increasing as their attainment was improving, reducing the outflow of pupils to other Boroughs. It was also noted that there was a particularly high demand in the north-west of the Borough and a consistency of demand in the north.

Members discussed the potential for opening small schools, which were preferred by parents as pupils and staff knew each other better, making for a friendlier atmosphere. Officers commented that from a planning, budgetary, staffing and curriculum point of view, smaller schools tended to offer less flexibility and resilience.

Members asked what measures were available to reduce children's average travel distance to school and to attain a maximum two mile or 45 minute journey from home to school. They were informed that this target was critical for primary school placements as a Council decision could not be enforced if a child's school journey was longer.

It was acknowledged that the search for suitable sites for new schools represented a significant challenge in the densely populated north of the Borough.

Youth Employability

This topic had been put forward by young people from the Youth Council, Members as well as officers from the Children, Families and Learning department. At their yearly Scrutiny Conference, Members agreed that the topic should cover the following areas:

- The educational qualifications young people choose and the advice given to them
- Careers advisory services in schools

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- Apprenticeships and work experience opportunities available in the Borough
- Employment opportunities for school leavers
- Partnership working between schools, colleges and businesses in the Borough to give school leavers a good start in the labour market

A number of stakeholders were consulted in the run-up to the meeting to obtain as wide a range of views as possible on the above matters. 52 young people shared their views on their career prospects, three head teachers and a governor responded to a survey on support provided by schools to prepare pupils for employment, and 42 business representatives were consulted regarding the advantages and disadvantages of employing school and college leavers, and regarding their take-up of apprenticeships.

Young people attending the meeting highlighted their struggle to find a job that matched their interests and the complexity of the processes involved in applying for jobs. They felt strongly that application processes needed to be simplified and that support should be provided for young people to navigate the complex pathways involved in applying for jobs.

The role of parents in supporting young people to choose and pursue a career path was acknowledged. However, the young people in attendance stressed that not all pupils could count on their parents' support, and that the role of the school in providing such support become particularly important for such young people. Unfortunately, not all schools were equipped to provide such support.

Members discussed the readiness of young people for employment. It was acknowledged that a number of school leavers did not have the "soft skills" needed to make a good start, which included turning up to work on time, looking tidy and appropriately dressed and contributing appropriately to the team of which they are a member. It was added that many colleges had started to offer pre-employment training to ensure that school leavers had acquired the skills and approach needed to succeed in their first job, although it was acknowledged that few stakeholders knew of the availability of this pre-employment training.

Members considered the quality of careers advice, the provision of which had become the responsibility of schools since 2012. Officers highlighted the findings of the Ofsted survey report, "Going in the right direction?" which stated that the provision of careers guidance by secondary schools was all too often of insufficient quality. Members also noted that governors in Croydon felt that they had no role in developing careers guidance in their schools. To this observation, officers replied that future Ofsted inspections would include discussions with governors on the quality of careers advice at their schools.

Members questioned officers on the availability and success of apprenticeships in the Borough. They were advised that the take-up of apprenticeships in the Borough was very high and that approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of apprenticeships ended in a successful completion or "achievement".



Discussions regarding career choices revealed that many young people and adults did not have a good understanding of career pathways and the numerous opportunities available through fields such as retail. Members were alerted to the multiplicity of employment opportunities which were likely to appear when the Westfield and Hammerson shopping centre development got under way. The apprenticeships manager from John Ruskin College highlighted the courses and apprenticeships which the college was offering to equip young people to apply for such jobs.

The meeting ended with an emphasis on the need for close co-operation between the Borough's 14+ Schools and Colleges partnership and the Skills and Employment Strategy Group to maximise information sharing between schools, colleges and local businesses and publicity on training and employment opportunities for school and college leavers.

Members agreed to suggest a follow-up agenda item for the 2014-2015 Scrutiny work programme to give local businesses an opportunity to share their views regarding the employment readiness of school leavers.

Educational quality and standards

Members expressed their pleasure at improving school attainment in the borough. However, they still felt that insufficient attention was given to developing and stretching more gifted children to their maximum ability.

Members discussed the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFS), a teacher assessment of children's development at the end of the EYFS (the end of the academic year in which the child turns five). Following an independent review of the EYFS, a new profile was first implemented in the 2012/2013 school year, with a stronger emphasis on the three prime areas which are most essential for children's healthy development:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development



Members asked officers why the percentage of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of reception year 2013 was somewhat lower than the national figure. They were advised that it was likely teachers in Croydon had been overcautious in their assessment and that every school in the borough would receive support and moderation visits to ensure assessments were as accurate as possible. Officers stated that they would be looking closely at the following year's results to identify any emerging issues.

Officers were questioned about work carried out with six schools which were below the nationally specified 'floor standard' (or minimum expectation set by the government) for combined reading, writing and mathematics. Members heard that the number of primary schools in receipt of targeted support from the local authority had increased from 12 in 2012/2013 to 17 in 2013/2014, reflecting a robust response to Ofsted's more rigorous inspection and testing regime.

Members discussed attendance and exclusions statistics for 2012/2013 and welcomed the positive impact the "Fair Access" panels set up by Croydon's was having, by involving teaching staff and parents in finding effective alternatives to excluding children from school. However, it was highlighted that the population profile of Croydon was changing and that schools had to deal with a growing number of children with very complex needs affecting their educational progress and attainment.

Children's social care services

At the 11 February 2014 meeting, Members scrutinised the quality of children's social care services provided by the Council and challenges faced by the service.

Members sought assurances that the recruitment and retention of staff in this service had improved. They were advised that the number of permanent managerial staff had grown, particularly at a senior level. Officers added that the service was undergoing a major recruitment drive with an emphasis on quality. A good recruitment package which included training had been drawn up to attract high ability staff to take up and stay in permanent posts in the long term.

Members questioned officers regarding the educational achievement of looked after children. They were informed that the attainment of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, who displayed very high levels of resilience and motivation to learn, was significantly better than that of British looked after children, whose challenging emotional development presents a greater hurdle to effective learning. Officers explained that a "virtual school", consisting of a team of officers and a senior manager, had been set up to support the educational achievement of looked after children, with very positive results, including significant success in further education.

Officers were questioned on the number of children currently taken into care in the borough. Officers explained that while social services nationwide had responded to the "Baby P" events by becoming more cautious and taking more children into care, Croydon had taken the view that making every effort to keep families together with targeted support was a better long-term approach, and had set up a "rapid response service" to address crises as they occurred and help families improve their resilience.

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE



Councillor Jason Cummings
Chairman Health, Social Care and Housing Sub-Committee



The emerging pattern of the national and local health economy has influenced the Sub-Committee’s work programme this year. In addition another main driver has been the publication of the Francis Inquiry (Mid-staffs) and the Winterbourne report. Both highlighted the dangers of non-curious and lack lustre scrutiny. As a Sub-Committee we were determined to learn from these lessons ensuring that the approach to the work programme reflected these anxieties. In particular we have sought the views of other voices; multidisciplinary teams and where possible service users joined in the debate moving away from the stand alone voices of the organisations being scrutinised.

Changes within the benefits systems were presented to the Sub-Committee early in the programme giving Members to opportunity to comment and influence change in future delivery of the service.

Working closely with partners, the Sub-Committee continues to build on its rapport with the changing face of Croydon University Hospital whilst remaining its critical friend. The Sub-Committee has often been invited to comment on strategy and policy prior to implementation Trust wide. The Chairman and Vice Chair continue to build good working relationships with the CCG.

Members also questioned officers on the support offered to individuals with mental health issues. They were advised that joint work was taking place with MIND on data-sharing, particularly in the cases of people who did not engage with the Council.

Members enquired whether any work had been carried out to simplify the written advice and information provided on the implications of recent benefit reform. Officers acknowledged that the documentation provided by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) was complex and that the Council had decided not to make use of its full suite of letters. They added that face to face advice was offered to claimants when the need arose.

Members went on to scrutinise levels of homelessness and the availability of social housing in the Borough. They enquired how many private properties had been leased by the Council and were advised that 290 properties had been acquired from the private sector in the last 12 months, which constituted a significant improvement on the 30 or so units leased in the previous year. However, it was observed that this figure should be improved further in the light of the housing need in the Borough. Officers reported that the building of over 100 Council properties was due to come to completion before 2015 and that the Council was looking at potential sites to build additional social housing. Members also examined empty properties in the Borough and were informed that their numbers had fallen from thousands to about 850. They heard that one incentive used was the 150% Council tax charge for properties left empty for more than two years, and that compulsory purchase orders were also used although they involved a protracted legal process.

The work of Croydon Health Services NHS Trust

On 3 September 2013, Members held their Sub-Committee meeting in the south of the Borough as the main substantive item was the governance arrangements at Croydon Health Services NHS Trust. This meeting should have coincided with a tour of the £11m refurbishment of Purley Hospital which did not happen due to slippage of the delivery of the site back to the Trust. Senior managers from Croydon Health Services NHS Trust were in attendance to answer Members' questions on the Trust's key priorities, the patient experience and staff engagement. Trust managers provide the Sub-Committee with an overview of the Trust's seven priority areas to support and demonstrate improvement. Members heard that the Trust's performance had moved from red to red/amber. Improvements in patient experience included investigating ways of managing specific patient groups differently: for instance, elderly patients benefited from a rapid access service within A&E which concentrated on finding the best for patient well-being rather than treating a condition in isolation.

Members examined staff engagement at the Trust. This was being delivered through the "Listening in Action" (LIA) programme which is an outcome-oriented approach to engage all the "right" people behind quality outcomes. Members commented that the enthusiasm such programme could elicit in their early days was likely to wane and fail to deliver improvements in the long run. They asked how the momentum would be kept in the long term and were advised that the programme had been led by Trust managers, had enjoyed

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the support of the Trust and the participation of the Chief Executive in the programme's "big conversations".

Members sought assurances on the Trust's commitment to diversity and to reflecting this in the make-up of its board. Officers reported that the Board was made up of three BME members and 2 non-BME members.

Officers were asked how the Trust could improve public perception of its services. They responded that, in addition to driving continuous improvement, they would engage with the press to publicise the successes of the Trust more effectively.

Maternity Services at Croydon University Hospital

The Trust was able to report at the HSCH Scrutiny Sub Committee meeting on 28 January 2014 that vacancy rates within the Midwifery Department had been reduced to 10% and that CHS maternity unit beats the national average for Friends and Family Test.

The work of Croydon's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

At the 21 October 2013 meeting, Members received an overview of the first six months of the CCG. They heard that its objectives included managing the funding gap of up to £50 million whilst continuing to improve and maintain the quality of primary and secondary care and enhance patient experience.



To this end, the financial plan for the next three years with "QUIPP" initiatives (Quality, Innovation, Prevention and Productivity) had been extended to a five year financial plan to move towards financial balance.

Members were updated regarding the transformation of Adult Community Services, which a single point of assessment and a rapid response team for the frail elderly (including residential & nursing homes) due to go live imminently, working collaboratively with South London and Maudsley & the Council to improve services reduce avoidable emergency admissions for frail elderly and those with Long Term Conditions.

The Sub-Committee discussed equality of access to GP services and compared those of single GP surgeries to those of larger surgeries. Officers explained that NHS England monitored equality of access and would be ensuring that it was consistent across different sizes of GP surgery. The Sub-Committee sought assurances regarding the quality of maternity services in the Borough. They were advised that the NHS England's Trust Board Development Agency had invested in additional staff and were liaising with the London Ambulance Service to identify alternative hospital beds if Croydon's maternity services were unable to accommodate additional patients.

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Childhood Immunisation



The abolition of the PCT and the transfer of Public Health function to the Council and the creation of two national bodies (Public Health England and the National Commissioning Board now known as “NHS England”) and the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group on 1 April 2013 gave the Sub-Committee one of its first opportunities to see how the new health economy operates in Croydon. The review of childhood immunisation illustrated these demarcation issues perfectly.

At its meeting on 19 November 2013 the Sub-Committee considered information from representatives from NHS England, Public Health England and Public Health Croydon on the current role and responsibilities of these organisations in improving coverage of childhood immunisations in Croydon.

Members felt that the current reporting system did not provide reliable data and were concerned at the low reported rates of immunisation for Croydon. It was reported that the data was not reliable and was in danger of proving a false negative. Detailed questioning produced a confusing tangle of contractual and statutory accountabilities. The data was collected by GPs under a contract with NHS England. The data should then be passed on to Croydon Community Health Services (part of Croydon University Hospital Trust), but was not always passed on as the CHS has no authority to make the GPs pass it on. GPs were paid on the basis of work done although the data was not always passed on to CHS for recording. The CHS on the other hand was operating under a contract from the CCG. That contract did not require the CHS or GPs to use the software widely used in the rest of London for data collection. That other software negated the problem of GPs not passing on the data. The question was how we could rely on data that was incomplete. Where was the confidence that immunisation rates in Croydon were better than the statistics recorded?

The NHS Bodies did not share this view and observed that the absence of an epidemic in Croydon shows that “herd” immunity has not been compromised. However there was acceptance that reporting systems and the consistent lack of reporting by 19 GP practices meant that the data available was incomplete. The CCG which commissioned CHS to collect the data had no contractual relationship with GPs and so could not make them comply with data submission requirements.

Members received assurances that the annual birthday card that acted as a reminder to parents that their child was due to be immunised would be continue to be funded beyond 2014. Members also received assurances in regard to the level of training identified within the PHE action plan. It was recognised that it was too early to evaluate outcomes, therefore the Sub-Committee agreed to review progress of the action plan at their meeting scheduled to take place on 11 March 2014.

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At its meeting on 11 March, the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered an update from NHS England regarding the 6 month immunisation plan for Croydon.

NHS England was commended for the report which showed a marked improvement in Croydon's reporting figures. NHS England officers confirmed to the Sub-Committee that Scrutiny has directly influenced the changes in Croydon and that the programme of implementation had been accelerated as a response of Health Scrutiny enquiries.

Follow-up in 2014-15

The Sub-Committee agreed to receive an update in 6 months to allow officers to report back on two reporting quarters.

Emotional and mental health needs of Croydon's Looked after Children (LAC)

On 3 July 2013, the Corporate Parenting Panel considered a report about Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) which had been prepared following an OFSTED inspection in May 2012. As the Panel did not have the authority to make recommendations to health service bodies, it resolved to refer the report to Scrutiny.

The Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee was therefore asked to review and comment on progress in implementing the recommendations of the OFSTED report and did so at its 21 October meeting.

Areas for development included the following:

- The fact that approximately only half the looked-after young people that LAC CAHMS would expect to see are actually referred to them. This is understood to be generally due to social workers' understanding of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), which is a major tool for identifying at an early stage the emotional and mental health needs of a looked after child.
- A recognition by all partners that the health of looked after children is an area requiring strengthening, and that this includes physical health: for example, only 47% of Croydon's looked after children are up-to-date with their immunisations, only 71% have up-to-date dental checks and only 73% have up-to-date health assessments.



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Members heard that a multi-agency workshop was to be held in November 2013 which would discuss the current service for Croydon LAC and was expected to identify areas for improvement to prioritise and implement.

Members questioned officers on access to services and waiting times, and noted that these appeared to have decreased, with urgent cases being seen within a week of referral. They also discussed the recruitment and retention of social workers. Officers acknowledged that Croydon had a high turnover of social workers, which had affected the quality of service.

To monitor progress on implementing OFSTED recommendations, Members requested a follow-up report, to be presented at the 11 March 2014 meeting. At this meeting, Members received an update of the existing action plan. The Sub-Committee was concerned that the report did not reflect examples of how children were being empowered. The Sub-Committee agreed to report back to the Corporate Parent Panel that they had received the action plan and a subsequent update which they were confident was satisfactory and would therefore refer the service back to the Corporate Parent Panel for continued inspection.

Follow-up in 2014-15

The Sub-Committee agreed to receive an update in the 2014/15 work programme which should include examples of how children were being empowered.

Co-option of Healthwatch Croydon representative

At the 28 January meeting of the Sub-Committee, members confirmed the nomination of Kate Denham of Healthwatch Croydon as a non-voting co-optee.

The functions of Healthwatch, which had been established under the terms of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012.), include an enhanced “enter and view” role, sign-posting and information dissemination, managing an Independent Complaints Advocacy Service gateway and carrying out all the functions of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), which had been abolished in April 2013.



Kate Denham gave a presentation on the work of Healthwatch Croydon. This included discussion on the outcome of recent ‘enter and views’ carried out at Croydon University Hospital.

In answer to a Member’s question, she explained that a key priority of Healthwatch was to focus on the provision of health and social care at a strategic level at the Croydon Health

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Services NHS Trust (community and acute services) and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. She added that Healthwatch Croydon would seek to build working relationships with local GP patient groups to gain a better understanding of their issues.

The Sub-Committee agreed to include a regular item on HealthWatch reports in their agendas.

The CQC Inspection of acute services at Croydon University Hospital

At the 28 January 2014 Sub-Committee meeting, Members considered the outcome of the CQC inspection of acute services at Croydon University Hospital in September 2013.

The Sub-Committee noted the areas in which the CQC found the Trust was delivering good or improving services and the specific actions the Trust was taking in response to the four areas in which they had failed to meet essential standards of quality and safety. Members also discussed the steps the Trust was taking to improve its services in preparation for its application for Foundation Trust status, and the capacity building at Purley Hospital following the recent £11m refurbishment works.

Members questioned officers on staffing levels within the Trust, the skills mix (including interpersonal skills and patient empathy) and the Trust's ability to recruit and retain staff. They were advised that a cohort of overseas nurses had been recruited from Spain and Ireland and that maternity services vacancy rate had fallen from 34% to less than 10%. However, officers highlighted a national shortage of A&E consultants as a persistent problem.



Members enquired why the report of the "enter and view" inspection carried out by Healthwatch Croydon six months prior to the CQC inspection of the Trust had not been taken into account. Trust managers stated that they were unaware of the report and agreed to establish direct contacts with Healthwatch Croydon to ensure that they could provide a response to their reports within the required 10 day deadline in future and that the conclusions of visits could be fed into future plans.

Members questioned officers on services at Purley Hospital and were advised that footfall had dropped in recent months, requiring a reassessment of the opening hours of the Urgent Care Centre. Members asked how the existence of the centre had been publicised. Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) officers have assurances that extensive publicity had been used but were unable to specify the types of media used. Members were informed that the Trust hoped to increase out-patient department activity as well as the use of diagnostics on site. Two GP practices are to relocate to the site shortly.

At its meeting of 28 January 2014, the Chairman and Vice Chair of the Health Sub-Committee agreed to meet with CCG officers to discuss the service level agreement between Virgin Care (urgent care centre based at Croydon University Hospital) and the CCG. This meeting took place on Monday 10 March 2014.

At its meeting on 11th March, the Sub-Committee took an urgent item on this matter. It was clear from the existing plan in place to improve performance at the UCC that the CCG had had some dialogue with Virgin Care. The Sub-Committee agreed to write to the CQC requesting they revisit the urgent care facility based at CUH, this would give additional assurance to the Sub-Committee and the CCG. Healthwatch Croydon plans to visit the urgent care centre on 29 March and will provide feedback to the CQC, CCG and Health Sub who all agreed that the 3rd party assurance would be welcomed.

Follow-up in 2014-15

At its meeting on 11 March, the Sub-Committee agreed that this would again reflect examples of scrutiny's joined-up working. The item would be reviewed within the work programme for 2014/15.

Better Services Better Value Review (BSBV) – Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

Current Position: The combined CCGs of the Southwest London CCGs have informed the relevant Councils that the BSBV programme is being discontinued and that the Committee of the CCGs leading the programme has been disbanded.



Background: Healthcare professionals representing Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in (initially) South West London and (subsequently) Surrey Downs developed options for future hospital service provision in the area for which public consultation was being prepared. As a consequence a Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) of the boroughs was established and convened a number of times to work on the pre-consultation stage. Councillor Cummings was vice chairman of the Joint Committee and Councillor Fitzsimons was the other Croydon representative on the joint Committee. They provide the Scrutiny Committee with regular updates.

The BSBV review impacted the following NHS provider organisations:

- Croydon Health Services NHS Trust;
- St George's Healthcare NHS Trust;
- Epsom and St Helier University NHS Trust;
- Kingston Hospital NHS Trust;
- Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust;
- Your Healthcare Social Enterprise (community services provider for Kingston);
- The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust;

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- Sutton and Merton Community Services (delivered by the Royal Marsden).

Key objectives of the review which started in May 2011 were to:

- Achieve higher standards of patient care;
- Satisfy rising demand for healthcare resulting from population growth;
- Respond to workforce challenges including a shortage of skilled healthcare professionals;
- Deliver more and better services with less money.

The main focus of the review was reconfiguration of services delivered from the five hospital sites of Croydon University Hospital (CUH), Epsom Hospital, Kingston Hospital, St George's Hospital (Wandsworth) and St Helier Hospital (Sutton).

Critical to the success of any reconfiguration is delivery of improved out of hospital care in or close to people's home.

The hospital services subject to review were:

- Planned care;
- Urgent and emergency care;
- Maternity and new born services;
- Children's services;
- Long-term conditions;
- End of life care.

In redesigning services to achieve the key objectives outlined in paragraph 2 above healthcare professionals considered the sustainability of various options for delivering the range of services taking account of factors such as projected volumes of demand, workforce issues and existing hospital estate assets. They concluded that it is necessary for hospitals in the area to adopt greater specialisation in service provision.

Proposed service structure: In March 2013 the BSBV Programme Board proposed the three options tabled overleaf for public consultation.

Figure 1: Options proposed for consultation

Option	Croydon	Epsom	Kingston	St George's	St Helier
C4 (most preferred)	Major acute hospital	Local hospital with planned care centre	Major acute hospital	Major acute teaching hospital	Local hospital
C3 (next preferred)	Major acute hospital	Local hospital	Major acute hospital	Major acute teaching hospital	Local hospital with planned care centre
C2 (least preferred)	Local hospital	Local hospital with planned care centre	Major acute hospital	Major acute teaching hospital	Major acute hospital

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- One major acute teaching hospital at St George's providing stroke, heart attack and major trauma services. It would also have a A&E, obstetric-led maternity unit, specialist children's inpatient unit and a children's ward;
- Two acute hospitals at Kingston and either Croydon or St Helier, providing emergency and urgent care and obstetric-led maternity services with an attached midwife-led unit. These hospitals would also have children's inpatient wards;
- One local hospital, at either Epsom or St Helier with a planned care centre, diagnostics, outpatients and day surgery;
- One local hospital at St Helier, Epsom or Croydon, with diagnostics, outpatients and day surgery.

Potential impact for Croydon residents if option C2 (least preferred option) is adopted:

- Loss of A&E and maternity unit at CUH resulting in increased average journey time for Croydon residents needing to access these services;
- Potential for increased cost to Croydon CCG to commission alternative providers to deliver services removed from CUH

Potential impact for Croydon if either option C4 (preferred option) or C3 (next preferred option) is adopted will potentially result in:

- Modernisation and/or expansion of facilities at CUH to cope with additional patient flow from south west London
- Achieve higher standards of patient care at CUH

The road to delay and disbandment

The HSCH Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 18 June was informed by representatives of the BSBV review team that:

- NHS England had asked the BSBV review team to look once more at the finances in order to give absolute assurance before the programme progresses to the next stage;
- Formal public consultation which was scheduled to run for 12 weeks over summer 2013 was delayed until autumn 2013 (at the earliest) in light of concerns expressed by stakeholders including a number of MPs that people's holiday commitments will limit their chances to respond to the consultation.

In view of the further work to be undertaken in relation to finances and the delayed consultation the local Committee of CCGs were expected to meet after summer 2013 to plan the next steps.

The Health Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting on 18 June 2013 expressed concern and frustration about the delay in commencing consultation. This is now the third time that the programme has been delayed. This lack of certainty is not good for the improvements in health and social care which need to happen in South West London.

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Members were already aware of the CQC reports about the services at CUH. Members should be aware that delivery of improved patient care at CUH is dependent on the management of the hospital being able to develop sound plans for the future. The outcome of the BSBV review is a key determinant of those plans. Options C4 and C5 outlined in paragraph 5 present opportunities for additional investment in the hospital's infrastructure and workforce. However the protracted delays in concluding the review, it was felt, impeded planning for delivery of better patient care

The Keogh Report on hospital mortality rates published on 16 July 2013 emphasise the need to reduce the number of Acute Hospitals in England and the delay in concluding the BSBV Review puts even greater pressure on CUH.

Autumn 2013: Having attended many meetings at the beginning of the process very little happened during the summer 2103 and the autumn 2013 and Councillors Cummings and Fitzsimons kept the Sub-Committee informed of what they thought was happening.

January 2014: The following statement was issued on behalf of the six south-west London CCGs – Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth

“The six south west London CCGs are actively discussing the next steps for local health services following the withdrawal of Surrey Downs CCG from the BSBV programme. As we have made clear in the past, the BSBV business case is now invalid and the options put forward through the programme are no longer on the table for consultation. It follows that all six CCGs are in the process of dissolving the Committees to which they had delegated decision-making on BSBV.

“However, the challenges outlined in the BSBV case for change remain. If we do not address these challenges, we know that local services will decline in quality and that we will not be able to meet the required quality and safety standards. We are discussing with each other and with our boards how we address these challenges and we hope to make a further announcement in February.”

At the Health, Social Care and Housing Sub-Committee meeting on the 28 January 2014, Croydon CCG Chief Operating Officer informed Members that the BSBV was now effectively over but that the issues raised by BSBV were still to be addressed. The CCG would be coming back to the Sub-Committee with their proposals as to how the health reconfigurations would now be implemented.

Working with our regulators

Working across the organisation this year the HSCH Sub-Committee had received a referral from the Corporate Parenting Panel in the form of the review of the Child, Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The Sub-Committee reviewed the suggested action plan following an OFSTED inspection. The HSCH was used to test the plan and to make comments on areas of weakness or success.

FOLLOW-UP TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

Scrutiny review of Notices to Schools

On 7 September 2010, the Sub-Committee agreed to commission a Task and Finish Working Group to investigate 'policies and procedures pertaining to distribution of notices to schools in the event of child protection and welfare issues'. A report regarding the implementation of approved recommendations was presented at the 9 July 2013 meeting of the Sub-Committee.

In connection with this report, Members discussed "stranger danger" incidents which had occurred in May 2013 and related to the recommendations of the review. Officers acknowledged that the response to these incidents had not been as good as they could have been. In response to them, the Improvement Advisor for Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Liaison had been identified as the link LA officer with the Metropolitan Police and would be responsible for ensuring that schools receive prompt, accurate and agreed alerts.

Officers observed that the viability of a school relay system, which had been discontinued, could be explored again. Members asked whether such a system could include communications to youth clubs and nursery schools. Officers stated that such a suggestion would constitute a natural next step, and that they were also working on improving links with faith groups in the borough.

Members expressed their satisfaction at the fact that lessons had been learnt and improvements implemented.

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) on NHS finances



Although the JHOSC reported in April 2013 the response from the Secretary of State was not received until November 2013. In addition Sir Richard Ottaway, MP has recently secured a House of Commons debate on the issue which was responded to by Jane Ellison, MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health. These have been reported in both the Croydon Guardian (29 January 2014) and the Health Service Journal (January 2014 edition).

We asked Councillors Jason Cummings and Sean Fitzsimons for their views and experiences of being members of the joint Committee.

Q. What do you think of the Coverage of the Review by the Press?

Councillor Cummings: The review received a lot of coverage in the local Croydon press at the beginning of the process and in some editions there were double page spreads. I understand that the coverage was not as extensive in some of the other boroughs affected, partly because they saw it as a Croydon issue. However

the fact that it was reported was very good and it helped to keep pressure on the PCT to co-operate.

Councillor Fitzsimons: We should pay tribute to our local Croydon papers as they saw the significance and made an effort to explain it in easily. It was also picked up by the specialist trade press - The Health Service Journal and its sister paper the Municipal Journal.

Q. Can you comment on the work you were asked to do as a member of the JHOSC?

Councillor Fitzsimons: As we were already on the JHOSC on BSBV (Better Service Better Value), it seemed to Councillor Cummings and me that we were suited for this. What we did not expect was the level of resistance from the PCT and potential contributors. It meant that there was a lot of work in reading background papers in order to ensure that those contributors who came were asked the right searching questions.

Q. What kind of a learning curve did you have when dealing with what is a relatively new area to Councillors, namely NHS Finances?

Councillor Cummings: It was a steep but very useful learning curve. The finances of the Council are complicated. The finances of the NHS were a completely different kettle of fish as the terminology did not seem to mean the same as we are used to in local government accounts.

Councillor Fitzsimons: I agree. We were fortunate in having the assistance of an independent professional accountant to help us understand some of the NHS financial concepts. In the end, the learning proved very useful for the BSBV. We did learn that Councillors have to look at audit reports with care as they are usually so qualified with exceptions as to be virtually useless to those to whom they are addressed.

Q. What is your view of the latest statements by Ms Jane Ellison, MP?

Councillor Cummings: Jane Ellison MP made a strong statement to Parliament finding it extraordinary that neither the Trust Internal Audit nor the External Auditor that uncovered the irregularities condemned the overspend and the lack of management. Sir Richard Ottaway (who had secured the debate) was encouraged by the response and so am I. It shows that government is aware of the difficulties local authorities face in trying to bring NHS bodies to account.

Councillor Fitzsimons: I welcome the fact that the issue has not been allowed to disappear. I am however disappointed that the government has stopped short of compelling ex- employees who still work within the NHS from coming back to give evidence on matters on which they were involved and in a better position to give evidence, than their successors.

Q. What action would you like to see taken against the individuals responsible for the misstatement?

Councillor Cummings: The Committee has asked for an investigation focused on finding the individuals responsible for the misstatement. The Committee believes that the misstatement is the responsibility of key named officers. As the report states in paragraph 7.12 it is incredible that those individuals have not been held accountable in any way.

Q. Why was the Committee unable to make key officers attend questioning and what efforts were made for them to attend?

Councillor Fitzsimons: The law as it stood and the guidance from the Department of Health (DoH) did not allow the Committee to compel the attendance of the key officers. As we say in the report, our experience of Health Scrutiny is that NHS officers usually attend in large numbers. In this instance they stated that they would only field one person. This decision showed how deficient the law is in this respect. One of our recommendations is to ask the DoH/ Secretary of State to re-issue the 2003 guidance to make it clearer that all key officers should attend Health Scrutiny meetings.

Q. Do you believe this report reflects a culture endemic of the NHS as a whole or is this an isolated occurrence?

Councillor Cummings: The Committee can only proceed on the basis of the evidence it received. We sought to engage with NHS London which is the Strategic Health Authority for the whole of London. If their attitude is anything to go by, it shows that this culture is endemic across London, as NHS London set the standard for the other PCTs.

Q. Without key officers appearing before the Committee, have the meetings not been a waste of time?

Councillor Fitzsimons: On the contrary. It has given us an insight into the workings or not of the NHS. It has highlighted how little reliance should be placed on auditors, internal or external – and this is a lesson which we want all Councils and public bodies to take to heart. The Audit profession has shown that their reports are so hedged with qualifications, you are never quite sure of the value of their final product.

Q. In what ways do you believe health care could have been negatively affected by the overspend?

Councillor Fitzsimons: That is the mystery in this case. The NHS officers argued that the money was not lost through personal care and that therefore the overspend was on health. The small insight we have had on this spend is that some of it was not being spent effectively. It would have been very helpful if the NHS had explained their contention that it was spent on healthcare. For instance Dr

Brambleby told us how some GPs he had visited who were in receipt of money could not explain what they were doing with the money. This is very worrying. This is why we wanted an explanation but we did not get it.

Q. Of all the people who refused to appear, which officer(s) do you think would have been the most critical to the Committee's review and why?

Councillor Cummings: Carolyn Taylor. We'd like to ask why she failed to cover Stephen O'Brien properly; why she appointed an unqualified accountant as Chief Finance Officer twice over. Unfortunately, the JHOSC was disappointed to hear that a previous post-holder could not be recalled to explain their actions in front of the Committee.

Councillor Fitzsimons: Paul Baumann and Stephen O'Brien. The former because he could have explained to us whether the NHS London Report was by E & Y or whether it was a deeply edited version of that report and the latter. He could have explained to us how the Finance procedures could go so badly wrong in the short period of time he was off sick (a total of 10 weeks over a period of time) and why he did not delegate his Chief Finance officer duties to someone qualified.

Q. What would you like to see the Secretary of State do in response to this report?

Councillor Fitzsimons: We would like to see the Secretary of State examine the original E&Y report, the NHS London Report, our report and to take an account from Carolyn Taylor. In addition, we feel that it would be helpful for the government to issue new guidance on co-operation with Scrutiny especially in the light of the Mid-Staffs report about the weakness of Scrutiny.

Q. How would you like to see individuals held to account?

Councillor Cummings: It's quite simple, we'd like the key people at the time to explain their actions as Croydon PCT.

Q. How will scrutiny follow-up on the assurances that were received?

Councillor Cummings: We asked for a report back on the implementation of the recommendations of the NHS London recommendations. Individually the six boroughs should be keeping their CCG and any other NHS bodies based in their areas under regular Scrutiny. At a subsequent meeting, the joint committee followed up the recommendations with the CCG.

Q. Have you received a report back from Croydon CCG and if so were you satisfied with the report?

Councillor Fitzsimons: A report was received in October 2013. The Secretary of State in his response stated that the government had taken on board the suggestions made by the JHOSC and that these would be reflected in new guidance to be published in 2014.

Q. In light of this report, how can Croydon residents (and those in the other boroughs) be confident that health services are being run correctly and efficiently?

Councillor Cummings: The structure of the NHS changed on 1 April. I think that the CCG and the new public health team in Croydon need to be given time and we are optimistic for the future. Following Mid Staffs, all NHS bodies now know that they are under intense Scrutiny. The Council's Health and Wellbeing Board has also been appointed. There is now clinical leadership rather than managerial leadership of the health service.

REFERRALS TO SCRUTINY

In addition to “call-ins” there are other ways where unplanned matters may come to Scrutiny’s attention by way of referral.



Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

The Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) is a measure introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 that allows Councillors to refer matters to Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consideration. The aim of this measure is to help Councillors raise matters on behalf of their constituents when other attempts to resolve the matter have been unsuccessful.

The following matters can be referred to the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee as a CCfA:

- A local government matter, which:
 - a) Relates to the discharge of any function of the authority; and
 - b) Affects all or part of the electoral area for which the member is elected or any person who lives or works in that area, and
 - c) Is not an excluded matter.
- A local crime and disorder matter ie a matter concerning:
 - a) Crime and disorder (including in particular forms of crime and disorder that involve anti-social behaviour or other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), or
 - b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances that affects the electoral area represented by the member, or the people who live or work in that area.

The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee has not received a Councillor Call for Action since they came into being in May 2010.

It is noted that a number of difficult issues have recently been raised at full Council as part of Council questions. Members are asked to consider whether in future some of these are best dealt with as CCfA.

Referrals from Healthwatch

The Health Scrutiny Committee is empowered to scrutinise matters relating to health and social care. It is up to the Council how it carries out the role, except that in carrying out such review and Scrutiny, the local authority must:

- Invite interested parties to comment on the matter; and
- Take into account any relevant information available to it; and in particular relevant information provided by a Local Healthwatch organisation (or Local Healthwatch contractor).

If a Local Healthwatch refers a matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the local authority's area, the Scrutiny Committee must:

- Acknowledge receipt within 20 working days; and
- Keep the referrer informed of any action taken in relation to the matter.

There have been no referrals from Healthwatch or LINK since May 2010. However Healthwatch, and before that LINK, have been co-opted on the health scrutiny Committee and have had, and used, the opportunity to provide relevant information to Scrutiny Committees. Healthwatch will continue to be given a dedicated slot on the agenda of each meeting of the Health, Social Care & Housing Sub-Committee to report back on any issues.

Referrals from other Committees

On 3 July 2013 the Corporate Parenting Panel received a joint report from the main stakeholders of CAMHS. This report responded to comments made by OFSTED following an inspection in May 2012. The Corporate Parenting Panel recommended that the item be referred to Health Scrutiny as the statutory body with powers to make recommendations to our Health Service partners; they were confident in the powers of scrutiny to investigate emerging issues and give a balanced response. The Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee reviewed the report at specially convened meeting and reported back to the Corporate Parenting Panel that it was satisfied with the outcome of the review and that all concerns raised by OFSTED had been or were in the process of being addressed.

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Referrals under the e-Petition Scheme

Under the Councils e-petition scheme, where an e-petition garners a threshold number of signatures, the matter is referred to Scrutiny for consideration.

No referrals have been made to Scrutiny under the e-petition scheme.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS YEARS AND LESSONS LEARNT

The Chairs of Scrutiny agreed to review the work carried out by scrutiny Committees in the last few years and identify any useful lessons to build on in future years.

Managing the Scrutiny work programme

Throughout the last few years, Members have been mindful of the challenge of scrutinising wide-ranging topics within a limited timeframe and with reducing resources in both the Scrutiny Team and departmental teams responsible for preparing Scrutiny reports. To deal with this challenge, Scrutiny chairs meet regularly to prioritise topics for the evolving work programme to ensure that the work of Committees can lead to the most productive outcomes possible.

It has been particularly demanding for Committees to dedicate adequate time to evaluating the many services provided by local health trusts and working with partner organisations and bodies such as Croydon's Clinical Commissioning Group and Health and Wellbeing board. A possible way forward may be to reduce the number of topics examined in order to carry out more in-depth assessments of these services. Members have also acknowledged the need to call occasional additional meetings - particularly for health scrutiny – to demonstrate Scrutiny's ability to react to events as they develop.

Task and Finish working groups

No task and finish working groups have been established in 2013-2014. This type of in-depth investigative work has been missed as the work of previous working groups has produced some of the most useful Scrutiny outcomes in the borough.

In summer and autumn 2013, Scrutiny work on employability, which sought to identify the underlying causes of young people's difficulties in gaining employment, led to some useful research and consultation with young people, businesses and other stakeholders. However, Members did not have enough time to question all relevant witnesses in depth as only one meeting was held to examine the various issues involved.

One possible way forward in future years may be to use task and finish working groups to examine a very specific part of a topic. This, however, may necessitate a preliminary examination of the topic (by chairs and officers) to ascertain what areas may present issues requiring further scrutiny.

Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Scrutiny chairs have commented on the large membership of this Sub-Committee, making it difficult to question officers in depth. An examination of the membership of other children's and young people's Scrutiny Committees in other London Boroughs has

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revealed that Croydon's membership of thirteen members exceeds that of many other similar Committees by about a third. Research into the number of co-optees in other boroughs in London shows that:

- On average in London Boroughs, equivalent Committees have five co-optees
- The Borough with the fewest co-optees on the equivalent Committee has 2 and largest has 10 co-optees.

However there is a recognition that the numbers are to do with Croydon's very balanced political composition and until this changes, the rules of political proportionality will continue to produce a large number of members for this Sub-Committee.

Meetings involving young witnesses

Croydon's Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee has held a number of meetings with young people, leading to some very useful insights which could not be obtained through reports or desk-top research. One example is young people's admission that they found it very difficult to find their way around the wide variety of sources of information on job vacancies and the complexity of selection procedures.

However, Members have been mindful of the daunting nature of contributing to formal meetings in an intimidating environment and have explored ways of mitigating this. A simple starting point of ensuring that young people's agenda item is taken first can reduce the anxiety that comes from waiting for one's turn and growing anxious observing the fluent discourse of experienced Members and officers. Members have suggested that in future meetings involving young people, the chair and vice-chair should meet young people before the meeting and have an informal chat about their proposed contribution. If young people are found to feel nervous at the prospect of speaking in a formal setting, chairs might suggest presenting their views and experiences to spare them the anxiety of addressing a formal Committee.

Working with other regulators

The Committees recognise the importance of the monitoring and evaluation role that is provided by other regulators such as the Care Quality Commission and OFSTED Scrutiny does not seek to duplicate this work; indeed it cannot. However their reports are often a helpful context to the work that Scrutiny does.

Scrutiny is looking forward to working with the statutory tenant scrutiny process and also with local Healthwatch.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE SCRUTINY TEAM

Scrutiny is supported by the officers below, each of whom give approximately one third of their time to this function and also support a wide range of other committees.

Please contact one of the officers below if you require further information about this Scrutiny Annual Report or the overview and scrutiny function at London Borough of Croydon:

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This report is also available on the scrutiny web pages at
www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/scrutiny

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Croydon Council

For General Release

DRAFT REPORT TO:	Full Council 24 March 2014
AGENDA ITEM NO:	11
SUBJECT:	BUSINESS REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
LEAD OFFICER:	Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Director of Democratic & Legal Services
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Steve Hollands Chairman of Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	The constitutional requirement that Council receive a Scrutiny Business Report.

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 Council is asked to note the scrutiny activity since the last report to Council at its meeting on 27 January 2014.
- 1.2 All Members are asked to consider what contribution they or their constituents can make to Scrutiny by suggesting topics for the 2014-15 work programme.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This is the report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee, covering the period 27 January to 23 March 2014 as required by the Constitution. The Constitution allows 10 minutes for this item, which includes up to 2 minutes for announcements

3. DETAILS

- 3.1 This report provides an account of Scrutiny activity carried out by the following committees between 27 January and 23 March 2014:
 - The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee
 - The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee
 - The Health, Social and Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- 3.2 It is not anticipated that the Scrutiny Committees will meet again in the current municipal year.

4. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

5. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

The Council’s Constitution (Part 4a Council Procedure Rules 3.05) states that the purpose of the Scrutiny Business Report is “To update the Council on Scrutiny activity since the previous Council meeting. Also to advise on any major issues that needs to be considered by Scrutiny. Incorporating (1) written questions and (2) oral questions on the items contained in the Business Report”.

The Constitution allows 10 minutes for this item, which includes up to 2 minutes for announcements.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

ATTACHMENT:

- Report from the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
SCRUTINY AND STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

27th JANUARY TO 23rd MARCH 2014



*Councillor Steve Hollands
Chairman, Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee*

1. Recent Scrutiny Committee Meetings

- 1.1 This report provides an account of Scrutiny activity carried out by the following committees between 27th January and 23rd March 2014:
- The Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee (4th February and 4th March)
 - The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee (11th February)
 - The Health, Social and Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee (28th January and 11th March)

2 Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee

- 2.1 At its meeting on 4th February, the Committee considered the outcomes of the Strategic Assessment produced by the **Safer Croydon Partnership** and early proposals for the new 3-year strategy which is scheduled to go through the Council's formal ratification process for formal adoption in June/ July 2014. The Committee resolved to support the draft list of priorities for the Safer Croydon Partnership to focus on in the next three years. It is proposed that the Strategy 2013-17 will be brought to the Committee for further discussion early in the new municipal year.
- 2.2 The Committee, at its meeting on 4th March, reviewed the 2012-13 Self-Assessment Report for **Croydon Adult Learning and Training Service (CALAT)** in advance of an anticipated inspection by OFSTED in 2014. The Committee questioned the conclusions reached in the assessment report and Quality Improvement Plan in order to contribute to the robustness of the process and to support the development and improvement of the service. Members received information relating to the significant changes CALAT had experienced over the past 12 months including to senior management, moves to new premises in the Clock Tower and Strand House and changes in provision across the Borough.

They also heard with interest about the complex funding arrangements for CALAT, the numbers and diversity of learners, the quality of the teaching provided and the need to ensure courses lead to further training or employment for learners. Officers also described some of the challenges facing CALAT including threats to funding (e.g. the Community Learning Grant), the availability of good quality teaching staff, the need to build on its work with employers and the pressure on teaching space. The Committee agreed that an update on CALAT and its 2013-14 Self-Assessment Report should be added to the list of possible items on the 2014-15 scrutiny work programme.

- 2.3 The **Annual Report** of the Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee was also considered by members at the meeting held on 4th March. The report described a busy year for all three Scrutiny Committees and provided a review of previous years and lessons learned.
- 2.4 The Committee considered some proposed topics for inclusion in the **2014-15 Work Programme** at its recent meeting. These include statutory duties, such as the need to monitor the Safer Croydon Partnership and the follow-up of previous topics including Flood Risk Prevention, Shared Regulatory Services, CALAT's Self-Assessment Report, the Responsive Repairs contract and the impact of Town Centre Regeneration particularly with regard to infrastructure implications.

3 Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 3.1 At its meeting on 11th February, the Sub-Committee considered **Education Quality and Standards**. Members were appreciative of the improvement in education attainment and exam results in the academic year 2012-13 and questioned the level of support given to six schools struggling to achieve the minimum 'floor' standard for attainment. Members heard that the introduction of 'fair access' panels had had a significant downward impact on exclusion numbers. The Sub-Committee received information on the Pupil Premium and felt that the impact of this could provide a useful topic for review in 2014-15.
- 3.2 The Sub-Committee also considered an item on Council **social care services for children and young people** at the 11th February meeting and heard that there was an on-going recruitment drive underpinned by a good package which aimed to recruit and retain good quality staff. Members noted that the service had been inspected in May 2012 when it was found to be 'adequate' and that while it might take years to reach an assessment of 'good', they felt the service was safe, improving and demonstrated some aspects of good practice.
- 3.3 As part of the item on social care services for children and young people, members heard that the attainment of unaccompanied asylum seeking children was significantly better than British looked after children. Officers explained that a "virtual school" had been set up to support the educational achievement of looked after children, with very positive results.
- 3.4 Officers explained that while social services nationwide had responded to "Baby P" by becoming more cautious and taking more children into care, Croydon had taken the view that keeping families together with targeted support was a better long-term

approach. This item ended with a discussion regarding member involvement in scrutinising the **safeguarding function**. Members suggested that an item on safeguarding in the following municipal year might be preceded by a visit to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), discussion with a small number of families and relevant staff, in order to provide context for discussions at the subsequent Sub-Committee meeting.

4. Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 4.1 At the meeting held on 28th January and after careful consideration, the Sub-Committee agreed to appoint Ms Kate Denham of **Healthwatch** as non-voting co-optee for the remainder of the municipal year.
- 4.2 Members also received a presentation detailing the work of Healthwatch Croydon, including the findings and recommendations of the recent 'enter and view' inspection carried out at Croydon University Hospital. Members heard that the functions of Healthwatch included an enhanced 'enter and view' role, sign-posting, information dissemination, managing an Independent Complaints Advocacy Service gateway and carrying out all the functions as delivered by the former Local Involvement Networks (LINks), which had been abolished in April 2013. The Sub-Committee agreed to reinstate a regular slot at each meeting to receive a report from HealthWatch Croydon.
- 4.3 Members considered the outcome of the **CQC inspection of acute services** at Croydon University Hospital in September 2013. The Committee noted the 'good' and 'improving' areas of service delivery and the actions being taken to address areas where the Trust was failing to meet essential standards of quality and safety. The Committee was disappointed about concerns raised following inspection of the Urgent Care Centre (UCC) (at Croydon University Hospital and commissioned by the CCG) and managed by Virgin Care and asked why the Trust hadn't taken into account the outcome of an inspection by Healthwatch which had taken place 6-months previously and had highlighted similar concerns. The Trust management team reported that they were unaware of the report and agreed to be in direct contact with Healthwatch in future.
- 4.4 The Sub-Committee had requested a copy of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) prior to the meeting on 28th January but it had not been received and CCG officers said they could not see how it could have informed Members. Members reiterated that the SLA would have given background and context to the CCG's level of expectation of service delivery and outcomes and if Virgin Care were meeting these agreed standards. CCG officers agreed to share aspects of the SLA and a meeting between the Sub-Committee Chairman, Vice Chair and CCG officers subsequently took place on 10th March 2014.
- 4.5 At its meeting on 11th March, the Sub-Committee took an urgent item on this matter. It was clear from the existing plan in place to improve performance at the UCC that the CCG had had some dialogue with Virgin Care. The Sub-Committee agreed to write to the CQC requesting they revisit the urgent care facility based at CUH, this would give additional assurance to the Sub-Committee and the CCG. Healthwatch Croydon plans to visit the urgent care centre on 29 March and will provide feedback

to the CQC, CCG and Health Sub who all agreed that the 3rd party assurance would be welcomed. At its meeting on 11 March, the Sub-Committee agreed that this would again reflect examples of scrutiny's joined-up working. The item would be reviewed within the work programme for 2014/15.

- 4.6 Members enquired about plans to build capacity at **Purley Hospital** following the recent investment of £11m and refurbishment of the site. The CCG confirmed that the footfall had reduced at Purley Hospital and members questioned the CCG about levels of public engagement and advertising. The Trust hoped to increase outpatient activity, levels of diagnostics performed on site and two GP practices would relocate to the site shortly.
- 4.7 The Chairman reported that the South West London JHOSC reviewing the **Better Services Better Value (BSBV)** programme would be reassessed and presented to members of the JHOSC or its successor once the details had been finalised.
- 4.8 At its meeting on 11th March, the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered an update from NHS England regarding the 6 month **immunisation plan** for Croydon. NHS England was commended for the report which showed a marked improvement in Croydon's reporting figures. NHS England officers confirmed to the Sub-Committee that Scrutiny has directly influenced the changes in Croydon and that the programme of implementation had been accelerated as a response of Health Scrutiny enquiries. The Sub-Committee agreed to receive an update in 6 months to allow officers to report back on two reporting quarters.
- 4.9 Also at its meeting on 11th March, Members received an update of the existing **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)** action plan. The Sub-Committee was concerned that the report did not reflect examples of how children were being empowered. The Sub-Committee agreed to report back to the Corporate Parent Panel that they had received the action plan and a subsequent update which they were confident was satisfactory and would therefore refer the service back to the Corporate Parent Panel for continued inspection. The Sub-Committee agreed to receive an update in the 2014/15 work programme which should include examples of how children were being empowered.