

Scrutiny & Overview Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair)
Councillor Jan Buttinger (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Carole Bonner (Deputy-Chair), Stephen Mann and Vidhi Mohan

A meeting of the **SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 6:30pm** in **The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

JACQUELINE HARRIS-BAKER
Director of Law and Monitoring Officer
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

James Haywood
Members' Services Manager
020 8726 6000 ext 63319
james.haywood@croydon.gov.uk
www.croydon.gov.uk/agenda
25 August 2017

PRE MEETING FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS ONLY Room F5 at 6.00pm
Committee Members are expected to attend.

AGENDA - PART A

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes (Page 1)

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 27 June 2017.

3. Disclosure of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality in excess of £50. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Business Manager at the start of the meeting. The Chairman will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

4. Urgent Business (if any)

To receive notice from the Chair of any business not on the Agenda which should, in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. Exempt Items

To confirm the allocation of business between Part A and Part B of the Agenda.

6. Question Time: Leader of the Council (Page 11)

7. Fire Safety in Croydon Homes (Page 13)

8. Cabinet responses to scrutiny recommendations (Page 23)

9. Work Programme 2017/18 (Page 27)

To consider and approve the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2017/18.

10. [The following motion is to be moved and seconded as the "camera

resolution” where it is proposed to move into part B of a meeting]

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

AGENDA - PART B

None

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Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday 27 June 2017 at 6:30pm in The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

DRAFT MINUTES - PART A

Present: Councillor K Bee, Councillor C Bonner, Councillor J Buttinger, Councillor S Fitzsimons, Councillor S Mann, Councillor A Butler(Also In attendance), Councillor S Hall (Also In attendance), Councillor J Wentworth (Also In attendance)

Also present: Richard Simpson (Executive Director Resources), Lisa Taylor (Director of Finance, Investment and Risk), Sarah Ireland (Director of Strategy Communities and Commissioning), and Stephen Tate (Director of District Centres and Regeneration).

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillor Mohan.

MINUTES - PART A

A1 Minutes

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meetings were correct records of those meetings:

- Tuesday 7th March 2017
- Wednesday 26th April 2017
- Wednesday 24th May 2017

A2 Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures made.

A3 Urgent Business (if any)

There was no urgent business to consider.

A4 Exempt Items

The allocation of business between Part A and Part B of the meeting were agreed as stated in the agenda.

Update on High Rise Housing

Councillor Butler delivered an update on what steps the Council had taken after the incident at Grenfell Tower. Letters had been sent to residents, coupled with officers going door to door, to assure residents that safety issues were being investigated and acted on. Guidance and support was also being provided to residents. Officers were acting to ensure the Council's housing estate was safe, undertaking both internal and external checks on the housing stock with priority given to high rise blocks. Whilst the principle of cladding blocks was right, to help insulate properties during the winter, it had to be done in the correct way and be made with fire retardant materials. Croydon was the first local authority to undertake independent investigations of its cladding after the Grenfell fire. As had been announced at the Council meeting the previous day, sprinklers would be installed in all the Council's tower blocks of ten stories or higher. The Secretary of State had been written to, requesting that the Government relax the borrowing restrictions on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), to help fund these initiatives. Since the 2009 Lakanal House fire in Camberwell Croydon had invested over £10million in fire safety measures in the Council's housing stocks.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following was stated:

- The fire brigade's advice to residents in tower blocks continued to be that residents should stay within their homes if a fire were to break out. If the blocks contain the correct safety measures then the fire should be contained.
- Storage of prams and scooters in hallways was an ongoing issue in relation to fire safety measures in residential blocks. New builds were including sheltered storage areas to discourage such items being left in corridors, which impeded evacuation measures, and officers were looking to introduce similar measures at other properties. The Council would continue to advise tenants not to store scooters and prams in communal corridors.
- Residents with mobility issues would not normally be housed in a tower block; sheltered accommodation in the borough already had sprinkler systems installed. The Council were looking into establishing an allocation protocol whereby available accommodation situated on lower floors would be prioritised for disabled tenants.
- Private landlords had a responsibility to work with the fire services to ensure their properties were safe. The Landlord Licensing scheme provided for internal fire safety inspections but not inspections of external matters such as cladding. Tenants could contact the Council's Landlord Licensing team with any concerns at private rented properties.
- Croydon had used a different type of cladding to that being inspected by the government, but the Council had undertaken

independent testing to be sure that it was safe. All Brick by Brick developments, including the few tower blocks proposed, were being reviewed but fire safety measures would have been integrated into the designs as a standard part of the process. Larger housing associations were working directly with central government and the fire service on ensuring that safety measures were fit for purpose.

The Director of District Centres and Regeneration in response to questions from the Committee stated the following:

- There were regular tests of the Council's fire safety equipment and the fire alarms were generally designed on a "stay put" policy in the case of a fire. The Council's website contained information for residents and a road show across the borough was planned to further advise residents. Many residents were also reached through the door knocking activity undertaken in the aftermath of the Grenfell fire.
- Caretakers at Council blocks undertook weekly fire safety checks and when contractors undertook maintenance work at Council properties they were asked to undertake safety checks as well. Feedback from residents was encouraged and was integrated into the safety checks undertaken. The idea of fire wardens hadn't been directly considered but there were a number of forms of direct engagements that the Council undertook.
- Council dwellings were the priority for inspections as they posed the highest risk, however after the review of the housing stock, schools would be inspected.

The Committee came to the following conclusions:

- Croydon's response in the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell Tower was excellent and a credit to the Council's officers.
- The Council's civil contingency plan would be considered at a future scrutiny meeting. An item on fire safety should also be added to the work programme.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their update and for attending at short notice.

A6

Question Time: Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury

The item began with a slide show presentation that can be found online here:

<https://secure.croydon.gov.uk/akscroydon/users/public/admin/kab14.pl?operation=SUBMIT&meet=26&cmte=SOC&grpId=public&arc=1>

Councillor Hall detailed the scale of reductions to its central government grant that Croydon had faced over the previous seven years. The reduction had also been disproportionate when taking

into account the levels of deprivation in Croydon compared to other boroughs. This was then placed in the context of Croydon facing an increase in demand for Council services with factors such as the freezing of the housing allowance causing a strain on stretched resources. Councillor Hall reported on the Council's three year budget which combined savings with identifying new income streams. Other measures such as stronger contract management, and the ground-breaking Gateway service, were all initiatives being used to help save resources.

The Chair then invited questions to the Cabinet Member, including taking questions related to the item on the July Finance report. In response to questions from the Committee the following was stated:

People Department Budget

- Councillor Hall stated since the austerity measures from central government began, the People department had struggled to balance its budget. The impact of national legislation, such as welfare reform, was a big factor, as was the rise in demand for services. There was also uncertainty over many of these factors, an example was the Immigration Act which had significant implications for Croydon but had not yet been fully implemented by the government. The overspend in Children's Services for the previous financial year had been down to a series of one-off costs such as legal costs for looked after children which were unusually high.
- The Executive Director of Resources added that there were significant challenges with budget setting for the People department as it was hard to forecast what pressures and changes would arise through a given financial year. A contributing factor to the Children's Services overspend had been the reliance on agency staff for social workers. There was an ongoing campaign to address this through encouraging agency staff to move over to permanent contracts with the Council.
- The Director of Finance, Investment and Risk added that the overspend in Children's Services amounted to 10% of that service's budget. The Executive Director of Resources stated that this overspend was not as bad as other London boroughs.
- The Executive Director of Resources stated that there had been significant financial modelling for the People department and a demand management scheme rolled out across the Council with a particular focus on housing and adult social services. An example of additional pressures on the People

department was the Ofsted inspection that was taking place and was a higher priority than rigidly sticking to budgets.

- Councillor Hall stated that it was not possible to objectively predict the pressures on the People department. An example was the high costs associated with young people in care on remand; normally there were no more than a few but in the previous financial year there had been twenty. It would not have been possible to predict such a sharp rise and illustrated the complexity and specialist care required for looked after young people. The drive to move agency staff onto permanent contracts had reaped some benefits and there was optimism expressed that this success would continue. It was stressed that the vast majority of local authorities were suffering from similar problems with social care services budgets. Strong measures were in place for the Outcomes Based Commissioning contract to ensure there were real financial benefits and savings being made, and a strong partnership approach had made a positive difference.
- The Director of Adult Social Care stated that the adult social care budget had been the lowest it had been for several years and a strong foundation had been laid for future savings. Benchmarking against other authorities was a challenge as the services were very different in other boroughs. New models and ways of working were coming from the Outcomes Based Commissioning.
- Councillor Hall stated that officers looked at other local authorities for best practise, however Croydon was looked at by many other Councils as a beacon of best practise in many different areas. Premiums for agency staff were so expensive that even where there were contractual “poaching” penalties in place with agency staff, the savings from bringing these workers in-house would still save significant amounts of money.
- The Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning stated that the Council had, despite a challenging market, been successful in acquiring high quality social workers whilst keeping costs down.
- The Director of Adult Social Care stated that a key factor in recruiting social workers had been to support social care staff when they undertook social work university degrees. Through this support many qualified staff had then stayed on at Croydon. Required skill sets had also been reviewed – identified work that did not require social workers was

re-allocated to allow for more efficient utilisation of staff. This was a medium term outlook but savings were expected in the near future.

Capital Budget

- The Executive Director of Resources explained that the capital underspend from capital was partially due to the better than predicted interests rates on the Council's borrowing.

Boundary Review

- Councillor Hall stated that the Boundary Commission had published draft proposals in early 2017 and was due to publish a final version on 11 July 2017. The process was then for the proposals to sit in the House of Commons – if no Members objected after the allotted time then the boundaries were formally adopted. The Boundary Review focussed on local government constituencies and would not affect the constituency boundaries for national elections. If unopposed, the changes would come into effect in May 2018, after the local council elections.
The Boundary Review proposals had to sit in the House of Commons for twenty days and there had never been a case in parliament of an objection being raised to boundary proposals.

Electoral Registration

- Councillor Hall stated that the focus on electoral registration was on areas with low accuracy data. The Brexit referendum had introduced a wave of new registrations, as had the recent general election. There had been targeted canvassing on new housing blocks and officers had worked with Operation Black Vote to target ethnic minority groups that had traditionally been underrepresented on the electoral register. Steps were also being taken to cross reference the electoral register with other records the Council held such as Council Tax data. Details of how to register were also included with all correspondence letters sent pertaining to Council Tax payment. All Council databases, such as the Landlord Licensing scheme, would be used to promote electoral registration, though data protection laws needed to be headed when undertaking this. Sixth forms and colleges were also being targeted to get new voters registered.

Staff Satisfaction

- Councillor Hall stated that the Council's staff survey would take place in the summer and autumn of 2017 and the Chief Executive was passionate about it. In particular the appraisal

process was being reviewed and anecdotal feedback suggested that there had been considerable improvements to it. Results from the staff survey were expected in the autumn of 2017.

- The Executive Director of Resources added that a mentor scheme had been introduced for staff and the link between pay and performance had changed to increase consistency across the organisation.

A7 Commissioning & Contract Management

Councillor Hall welcomed the item coming to scrutiny and stated that the Council had fundamentally changed how it delivered commissioning. The Director of Strategy Communities and Commissioning (SCC) was introduced to deliver a presentation on the new commissioning process. The slide show presentation was submitted as part of the agenda papers.

The Director of SCC informed the Committee that the new commissioning framework had been launched in 2016 and talked Members through the key principles. An important gateway in the new framework was “make or buy” which shaped the model to be used for a given service. Certain parts of the commissioning cycle were identified as areas where scrutiny could make an important contribution to the process. It was also noted that scrutiny already played a role through the call-in process of key decisions.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following responses were provided.

- The Director of SCC stated that the first stage of the commissioning process included engagement with stakeholders so that desired outcomes could be articulated at an early stage of the process. It was also important to ensure flexibility within a contract, with checkpoints along the timeline so allow for review and for changes as and when required.
- Councillor Hall stated that the emphasis had moved to shorter-length contracts, or where there were long contracts to include more break points. This was to ensure that issues that arose could be dealt with at key junctures.
- The Director of SCC stated that an example of the new flexibility focus in effect was the Turning Point contract in which initially too many outcomes had been set. The flexibility of the contract coupled with a good relationship with contractor

allowed for this to be addressed and the contract placed on a more focussed footing.

- Councillor Hall stated that in every contract a balance was struck between flexibility and the associated costs with such terms. Contracts were also broken up such as '3+3+3' which incentivised good partnership working.
- Councillor Hall stated scrutiny had influenced changes to the facilities management contract when it was considered by the Committee in 2014.
- The Director of SCC stated that there could be opportunities for scrutiny to look at contracts during break points but this would need to be considered on a case by case basis as many contracts would contain a number of confidential matters that would require the Committee to move into Part B. Councillor Hall added that the IT contract break point was due in 18 months and this could potentially be such a contract that the Committee could look at.
- The Director of SCC stated that there were hundreds of contracts made in a given year, but those of a high value were categorised and had specific processes to follow. Contract worth over £500,000 were listed and any over £5million had a requirement to be taken to Cabinet.
- Councillor Hall stated that the administration was committed to devolution and part of this included local Ward Member involvement in the strategy formulation of local services such as the Ashburton Library.

A8 Pre-Decision Scrutiny: July Finance Report

This item was considered as part of the Question Time session at item seven of the agenda.

A9 [The following motion is to be moved and seconded as the "camera resolution" where it is proposed to move into part B of a meeting]

The Committee RESOLVED to move the meeting into Part B and thus exclude the press and public.

MINUTES - PART B

B10 **Part B Minutes**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Part B minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26 April 2017 were a correct record of that meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.14pm.

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Tony Newman
Leader of the Council

Responsibilities

- Policy and Strategy Development
- Strategic Budget Overview
- LGA Environment, Housing and Economy Board
- London Council's Leaders Board
- Coast to Capital Board
- South London Partnership
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Corporate Projects

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For general release

REPORT TO:	Scrutiny and Overview Committee 05 September 2017
AGENDA ITEM:	7
SUBJECT:	FIRE SAFETY IN CROYDON
LEAD OFFICER:	<i>Shifa Mustafa</i> Executive Director of Place <i>Stephen Tate</i> Director of District Centres and Regeneration
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alison Butler Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration & Planning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	<i>Stephen Tate</i> Director of District Centres and Regeneration

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	The issue of fire safety has received widespread public, media and government attention since the events at Grenfell Tower, and is of concern to all local authorities in relation to their own buildings and to buildings within their boroughs
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To review how the council has responded since the Grenfell Tower fire and how it will continue to ensure the safety and well-being of its own tenants and leaseholders, and of those using the council's buildings.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the actions that the council has undertaken to date in relation to its own homes and buildings to reinforce a robust approach to fire prevention and safety across the borough. It also provides information on action by the government in relation to private sector and housing association properties in Croydon. The main issues which have emerged in recent weeks concern the materials and construction methods used in cladding tall buildings, the installation of sprinklers, the standard and maintenance of means of escape such as fire doors, and the advice provided to occupants. These issues have been examined by the council at length and a range of immediate and longer-term measures have been undertaken or put in train.
- 1.2 The BRE has been undertaking a series of tests on cladding panels of an aluminium composite material (ACM). The ACM panels have been graded according to their calorific values then subjected to whole-system tests in

conjunction with different forms of insulation. Panels with the highest calorific values have failed these tests meaning that they do not adequately resist the spread of fire to the standard required by current building regulations.

- 1.3 Five private and housing association residential buildings in the borough have ACM panels. The council has been involved in discussions between Communities and Local Government and landlords, and can report that, once full guidance is developed, landlords will be required to replace the relevant cladding with fully-compliant systems. In the meantime, interim measures such as overnight on-site wardens have been instigated.
- 1.4 The council does not itself have any blocks of flats with ACM cladding but does of course have a number of taller blocks of flats, the high-rise nature of which mean that fire safety is paramount. We have been working closely with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to assure ourselves that the materials and construction system are acceptable, and on the measures necessary to minimise risk. An immediate decision was taken to install sprinklers in 25 blocks of flats with 10 or more storeys with an eight-storey block used as retirement housing for older people added to this schedule.
- 1.5 It is important to stress that the council sees the safety of residents as absolutely vital and has a strong history of investment in its housing stock on different types of health and safety measures. In terms of fire safety specifically, over £10m has been invested since the introduction of the regulatory reform (fire safety) order in 2005. An ongoing programme of periodic fire risk assessments ensures that we identify and address issues as they arise.

2. CROYDON'S COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK

- 2.1 The Grenfell Tower fire affected a housing block of 24 storeys. Croydon Council does not have any blocks of this height but does have a number of tall buildings, the tallest being 12 storeys. The profile of blocks is as follows:

Number of storeys	Number of blocks
10 or more storeys	25
Six to nine storeys	14
Three to five storeys	546
One to two storeys	515
Total	1,100

- 2.2 The council has been working very closely with the London Fire Brigade to ensure that all properties meet fire safety standards. Within the first week following the Grenfell Tower fire, council officers visited every one of our 1,100 blocks of flats to double-check all safety measures and to offer advice and information to residents. The LFB and council have jointly visited all blocks with six or more storeys and the council has been following up on any

recommendations emerging from these inspections.

2.3 Existing cladding systems

The first issue to be addressed was the cladding of blocks of flats in relation to both the materials used and the construction type. Of the 39 blocks of flats with six or more storeys, 16 have cladding but no block contains material similar to that of Grenfell Tower. However, we surveyed each building to ensure that the cladding did match the specification according to our records, which it did. The cladding in our blocks consists of a 3mm powder-coated aluminium panel containing a non-combustible mineral wool insulating material (supplied by the provider Rockwool). No adhesive is used in the system. The cladding system used has very high fire-retardant properties. Because of the material used, we have not been required to submit the cladding for testing to the Communities and Local Government department although we have commissioned our own tests for completeness.

2.4 In conjunction with independent consultant Maulty Ltd, we confirmed that the method of construction, with curved and overlapping panels, is such that it provides fire barriers between floors to prevent the spread of fire. The insulation sits on the metal batten and is attached with a pin-type system to the original structure; the external aluminium cladding panels overlap the battens fixed to the original structure forming a fire barrier between the panels.

2.5 Sprinkler systems

A further issue raised by the Grenfell Tower fire has been the role of sprinkler systems in containing the spread of the fire. In Croydon, the council had already installed sprinkler systems in its six special sheltered blocks for frail older people; it also fits mobile sprinklers in individual flats occupied by vulnerable older people, largely in retirement housing schemes.

2.6 The council made an immediate decision to fit fire sprinklers within 25 blocks of flats with 10 or more storeys, with an eight-storey block used as retirement housing subsequently added to this schedule. Mulalley (the council's housing general building works partnering contractor) has been instructed to commence lead-in activities and approach sub-contractors which specialise in such systems.

2.7 The full range of contract and project management tools, supported by a dedicated project team, will be applied to the entire process from design to quotation to ensure successful delivery. An officer from the LFB, who specialises in sprinklers, is supporting the council to ensure the correct safety standards are incorporated in the specification. The council will be appointing a specialist design consultant to provide additional technical and professional support and advice.

2.8 The timeframe for sprinkler installation works is based on the need for both a quick response and a robust, achievable solution. A range of technical steps is being taken during August such as surveys, drawings and completion of the

specification, with resident engagement during August and September. Works will start in October 2017 with final completion, subject to the leaseholder consultation, estimated as spring 2018.

- 2.9 These 26 blocks have been agreed as the foremost priority. However, the council is in ongoing discussions with the LFB which will enable us, over time, to identify other measures as recommendations are developed. Depending on any further measures agreed, this would have additional financial implications.

Other fire safety measures and processes

- 2.10 Resident safety has historically and consistently been a high priority for the council in the investment in, and management of, its homes. With regard to fire safety specifically, relevant provisions are contained within the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which, when introduced, brought together a range of provisions from various pieces of legislation. The order requires the owners of buildings to undertake risk assessments to enable them to identify, then remove or reduce, risks. In blocks of flats, this responsibility relates to the non-residential parts of a building up to and including the front doors of people's flats. Enforcement (in Croydon as in the rest of London) lies with the LFB which has a range of powers and which works with individual local authorities to ensure that fire safety standards are met. The council has a long-standing and very strong, constructive relationship with the London Fire Brigade which has helped us to understand and discharge our obligations on an ongoing basis.
- 2.11 The council owns more than 700 blocks of flats for which fire risk assessments are required. Assessments are in place for all of these blocks. The council uses Frankham Consultancy Group to undertake the assessments on our behalf. There are various mechanisms for removing or reducing risk including, for example, smoke alarms, dry risers, fire doors and emergency lighting. These have all been subject to checks during the regular fire risk assessments but, as a further precaution, have been further checked during the recent programme of inspections.
- 2.12 **Historic and ongoing investment in fire safety**
In the period since the introduction of the regulatory reform order in 2005, and taking into account the lessons from the Lakanal House fire in 2009, over £10m has been invested in the council's blocks of flats on a comprehensive programme of fire safety measures. This programme, based on fire risk assessments in all relevant blocks, and prioritised in agreement with the LFB, has been fully completed. The main measures included: renewing doors and door frames to flats, cupboards and stores and in communal areas to fire safety standards (ie with a minimum of 30 minutes protection), and incorporating intumescent strips; introducing compartmentalisation of flats in lofts and fire-stopping between flats; renewing soffits, ceilings and duct panels in non-combustible materials; renewing notice boards with fire-resistant models; and putting up signage.

- 2.13 Now that this comprehensive programme is complete, the main capital investment each year will be on newly arising requirements identified through ongoing fire risk assessments or as circumstances change. For example, we are currently introducing premises information boards which will provide information for fire fighters such as test certificates and the location of valves; the location of vulnerable people will be kept securely inside blocks. Existing measures (for example automatic opening vents, dry risers and sprinklers) will of course require regular maintenance or servicing over time, and an allocation of £108,000 has been made within our cyclical works programme to address such maintenance; the level of funding will be set each year according to the need. Other expenditure, for example on repairs which arise as components break down unexpectedly or are damaged, is met through the annual responsive repairs budget. Urgent fire safety repairs and minor works are completed within seven days. Larger repairs, such as new doors which have to be manufactured to size, are completed within six weeks.
- 2.14 As well as the more formal fire risk assessments, all blocks with communal areas are subject to weekly checks by the council's caretaking staff to identify and address issues as they arise. These include, for example, checking communal areas for obstructions or combustible materials, and ensuring that fire doors are closed and fully operational. Any issues requiring follow-up actions are logged with regular monitoring to ensure they are completed. Caretakers and other staff will, as a matter of course, provide advice to residents about any behaviour which poses risks for example leaving obstacles in fire escape/exit routes.
- 2.15 Under the terms of the responsive repairs contract, repairs contractor Axis Europe is required to proactively identify maintenance issues and take appropriate repairs action when undertaking routine or requested maintenance works in flats or communal areas of blocks and estates. This ensures that problems are dealt with automatically rather than being referred through the council for a formal request, and it avoids administrative delays.
- 2.16 It is worth noting that the council makes extensive use of consultants and specialists in other organisations (as well as in the LFB), both historically and in relation to the programme currently being planned. This brings in expertise, best industry practice and independent checks of the council's own work and policies. Examples range from the undertaking of fire risk assessments, to policy and process reviews, design consultancy for specific projects, surveys, project management and testing.
- 2.17 As well as its own stock within the housing revenue account, the council has also bought a number of properties, mostly individual or low-rise dwellings, under the *extending temporary accommodation* scheme, and has also leased accommodation from private owners. All properties procured are assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to identify and address any risks and hazards prior to letting. All properties have a smoke alarm installed, and properties with solid fuel have a carbon monoxide alarm.

Three blocks of flats (none of which have cladding) acquired through leases fall within the tower block category. Fire risk assessments for these were undertaken in January 2017 and there has been a thorough safety review as a result of recent events. Responsibility for fire safety has recently transferred to the council with the extension of the leases. As with council blocks, the leased blocks are subject to more regular inspections to ensure that routes of escape are clear, and that fire doors, emergency lighting and smoke vents are fully functional.

Consultation and engagement

- 2.18 In order to avoid unnecessary anxiety and concern amongst residents and in particular those living in taller buildings or blocks with cladding, information and advice have been given a high priority throughout. There is a strong commitment to a continued engagement with tenants and leaseholders, schools, and residents in general.
- 2.19 We have written twice to tenants and leaseholders living in the council's taller blocks of flats, giving specific information to those in previously-cladded blocks, and have also visited these blocks dropping written information and knocking on doors to give people a chance to ask questions and raise concerns (this achieved a roughly 50% response rate). We have written to those in medium-rise blocks (three storeys and above) and to non-resident leaseholders (who have let out their homes). We have undertaken a programme of fire safety drop-in sessions in the 39 taller blocks, operated by staff from across the housing service. Throughout, we have briefed frontline staff to ensure that they give consistent and up-to-date advice. A special edition of Open House, the newsletter for council tenants and leaseholders, was issued in July to give a full update. Letters have also been sent to the occupants of three temporary accommodation blocks leased by the council. Regular updates have also been sent to councillors and members of parliament, and a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) placed on the council's website.
- 2.20 Residents have been engaged more formally through the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel, a board of residents which is consulted on and informed about policies and spending in relation to the stock, estates and services for residents. A detailed presentation was given to the panel at its meeting on 04 July 2017, and the chair and vice-chair of the panel have been notified about wider communications from the beginning. A range of service improvement groups covering different areas of operation (including the tenancy & caretaking, repairs, planned works and leasehold groups) have had the opportunity to discuss related fire safety measures at their latest round of meetings, with the Resident Involvement Group discussing on the best mechanisms and timing for issues of concern and interest.
- 2.21 Where we are proposing to install sprinkler systems, there will be full engagement with the affected residents. As there will be different solutions and timetables for different blocks of flats, this engagement will be specific to individual blocks. We have been taking legal advice on the position of

leaseholders in relation to access to their homes, meeting costs and so on, and will develop an approach accordingly.

- 2.22 Residents are issued with reminders to have regard for their own safety and that of others by making sure, for example, that they do not leave rubbish and obstacles in communal areas which can help the spread of fire or impede access through routes of escape. Such behaviour is currently identified and addressed by caretakers and other frontline staff, with obstacles removed and residents advised about the risks. The council will support the LFB in strict enforcement of safety rules in future and promote a safety culture intolerant of careless or irresponsible behaviour primarily through education, information and advice, but also, where necessary, through direct enforcement action against individuals. A new letter which reinforces this strict approach is being used in such instances. The council also supports the LFB in issuing advice to residents about what to do in the event of a fire. Tenancy officers have always included fire safety advice in their visits to new tenants. We are now issuing new leaflets to them, and these will also be placed on general notice-boards. The council is funding a programme of storage facilities for mobility scooters in retirement housing schemes to ensure that the scooters are not obstructing routes of escape or otherwise presenting fire risks.

The cost of fire safety measures in council homes

- 2.23 The estimated cost of the housing fire safety works is currently about £10m.
- 2.24 Although this council, along with many other authorities, has written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government seeking financial assistance from the government, he has responded that he expects that landlords themselves fund any works – if any local authority has difficulties, the government will ensure that current restrictions on the use of financial resources will not prevent any essential works advised by local fire services from going ahead.
- 2.25 Provision has been made with the council's 30 year housing revenue account (HRA) business plan. However, we are working within a challenging financial environment as a result of a number of policy changes introduced by the government. This includes the considerable loss of income from ongoing annual 1% rent cuts introduced in the welfare reform and work act 2016, and the anticipated sale of higher value homes to fund the right to buy for housing association tenants introduced in the housing and planning act 2016 which will result in a further loss of rental income. We therefore do not have the financial resources within our HRA to fund the sprinkler programme without significant reductions to other planned capital programmes or to other services over the period of the business plan. The cabinet member for homes, regeneration and planning, Councillor Alison Butler, has written again to the secretary of state putting the case that sprinkler works are necessary to ensure the fire safety of our housing and should therefore be funded by the government.

2.26 We have also requested, in correspondence to the secretary of state and through our feedback on the terms of reference for the public inquiry, that consideration be given to the following measures to ensure the continuing financial viability of the HRA:

- transfer of rent-setting powers to social landlords
- removal of the borrowing cap that limits how much councils can borrow to invest in housing
- approval for using an element of receipts from right to buy sales on council housing safety improvements
- not implementing legislation which forces councils to sell off high-value empty homes

3. OTHER HOUSING STOCK

3.1 The Communities and Local Government department has identified five private sector and housing association buildings in Croydon which have ACM panel/insulation systems falling into the categories which have failed recent BRE tests. The results of the tests together with advice notes have been sent to the landlords and CLG is in discussion with them about any immediate steps they might need to take to protect the safety of residents (including, for example, employing on-site overnight wardens), about how they will work with the council to prepare plans for communicating with residents, and about their remediation plans for the building in light of the test result. CLG advice is that the cladding is removed although landlords will first want to see full guidance on suitable systems. The role of local authorities will be to support landlords and to use any enforcement powers under the housing health and safety rating system should landlords fail to follow advice concerning the cladding.

4 COUNCIL NON-HOUSING BUILDINGS

4.1 The council owns a number of non-residential buildings for which the same fire safety obligations apply. These buildings include depots, crematoria, children's homes, pupil referral units, youth, leisure and community centres, and other premises for public use or in public areas, as well as office buildings. Fire risk assessments have been undertaken for 49 corporate buildings (excluding schools) that fall under the terms of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. A detailed review has been carried out of these assessments to ensure all actions are being progressed and ensure outstanding items are addressed. The identified outstanding items will be completed within the next two months. Where the actions are the responsibility of a "local responsible person (LRP)", the facilities management team is scheduling meetings to ensure that the LRP understands what is required, is progressing the actions and will provide evidence of compliance; a further set of meetings will be set up to check that agreed measures are completed within the required timescale. Training has also been undertaken for all youth community groups and organisations, working with the youth service, to help raise fire safety awareness, roles and responsibilities. A full review of the entire corporate estate has also been

completed including all leasehold properties and the council has identified a further 51 sites for which a fire risk assessments will be required and these will be procured accordingly. The council will also be sending out formal letters to all occupants, leaseholders and tenants of the corporate estate in order to seek evidence of fire safety arrangements and risk assessments, which will then be reviewed and monitored to ensure compliance.

- 4.2 The Director of Capital at the Education, Skills and Funding Agency has written to all bodies responsible for schools, requesting the completion of a fire risk assessment survey. Croydon Council is the responsible body for community schools in the borough but other responsible bodies include diocesan bodies, academies and education trusts which will have the same responsibility for providing information about their fire risk assessment processes. The focus of the survey is on buildings which have four or more storeys or which have residential accommodation. We do not have any community school buildings of this nature.
- 4.3 Alongside the completion of this survey, the council is undertaking further due diligence checks across the school estate. A desktop study of all cladding used on our buildings will be completed alongside a physical assessment of buildings, if required. This proactive step will support school leaders and provide information for parents, carers, staff and governors.
- 4.4 As a result of the desk top analysis, the decision has been made to replace external cladding at Chestnut Park Primary School. The external rain screen cladding complies with fire regulations but it has been removed as a precaution because the materials include an aluminium composite material (ACM) and a sealed polyethylene core. The remedial works will be finalised before children return to school in September.
- 4.5 The checks on the building materials across the community school estate will complement the fire risk assessments that are undertaken regularly in every school. These assessments ensure that robust fire prevention measures and assurances that quick and safe evacuation processes are in place.

5. GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 A fire safety board has been established by the council in conjunction with the LFB to take a council-wide view of fire safety arrangements. The board's remit has included, firstly, co-ordinating the work across the housing stock detailed above, followed by: a review of our approach to the wider council estate; a review of the building control service's processes; and a bringing together of information from other sectors including in relation to private buildings in the borough. The board is chaired by the executive director of place and reports to the chief executive.
- 5.2 The directors of district centres and regeneration, and of housing need, have been co-opted onto a similar fire safety board set up by London Councils which

will give Croydon an influence in decision-making and campaigning, provide the opportunity for learning about good practice across the capital, and ensure a consistency of approach across local authorities.

6. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGING REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 The context within which we operate is changing and this is likely to require further measures, or reviews of existing systems and processes, as new advice and requirements emerge. The government now has in place a building safety programme. This involves: the testing and checking buildings as mentioned above, and advice to landlords; an independent expert advisory panel to develop recommendations for improving public safety and identifying the buildings of concern, to be followed by advice on other buildings (ie those with materials other than ACM, or where cladding has been removed or new construction halted because it was planned to install ACM); and an independent review of building regulations and fire safety with a particular focus on high rise residential buildings. The terms of reference for the public inquiry have now been approved. These mostly concern matters directly related to the Grenfell Tower fire but there will no doubt be findings of general relevance including the scope and adequacy of regulations, legislation, guidance and industry practice relating to the design, construction, equipping and management of high-rise residential buildings. Whilst not included specifically, the prime minister has promised that the Government will also consider the broader questions raised by the public including the wider social housing issues.
- 6.2 The council will be examining all findings and provisions as they emerge to ensure that our own buildings, measures, procedures and enforcement policies are updated accordingly.

Appendices

None

CONTACT OFFICER: *Stephen Tate, Director of District Centres and Regeneration extension 47446*

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

REPORT TO:	SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 5 September 2017
AGENDA ITEM:	8
SUBJECT:	CABINET RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS
LEAD OFFICER:	Stephen Rowan, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny
CABINET MEMBER:	N/A

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	Appendix A of this report provides Cabinet responses to recommendations made by this Committee at its 10 January 2017 meeting.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To receive and comment on the Cabinet responses

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At its 10 January 2017 meeting, the Committee resolved to make a number of recommendations following discussions on Surrey Street Market. Appendix A lists these recommendations and the Cabinet responses, which were presented at its 17 July 2017 meeting.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are invited to appraise and comment on these responses.

CONTACT OFFICER: James Haywood
Members' Services Manager
020 8726 6000 x 63319

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDIX A: Responses to Recommendations

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SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPT/ REJECT RECOMMENDATIONS (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (ie Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - At its meeting on 10 January 2017, the Committee RESOLVED to recommend the following:						
1. The Council should make explicit that one of its key objectives is to ensure a thriving street market in Surrey Street.	Place Dept, Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs	Accept – a marketing strategy will be developed in advance of the re-opening of the market in Surrey Street	Emma Lindsell	Yes, although minimal and can be absorbed within existing budgets	June 2017	5 September 2017
2. The physical refurbishment of the Surrey Street area needs to be future-proofed not just for the changing needs of the market, but also for the evening/night-time economy and for one-off events. This includes the installation of street lights and power supplies that accommodate these demands, and avoid the need for temporary supplies.	Place Dept, Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs	Accept – these have been considered as part of the design for the refurbishment	Jessica Bolsin	Yes, although included within refurbishment budget	June 2017	5 September 2017
3. The Council further shows its commitment to having a thriving street market in Surrey Street by installing arches to the entrances of the market and to maximise potential benefits from the refurbishment by funding the upgrade of the market stalls.	Place Dept, Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs	Accept – although it is not agreed that arches will definitely be installed but signage and wayfind is included as part of the refurbishment plan. The upgrade of the stalls is also included as part of the plan although the extent of	Jessica Bolson	Yes, although included within refurbishment budget	June 2017	5 September 2017

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPT/ REJECT RECOMMENDATIONS (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (ie Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
		this is dependent on the overall costs of the project				
4. The Council review its stakeholder management of market and surrounding area to give all a voice.	Place Dept, Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs	Accept – there has been engagement with market traders, businesses and residents in the lead up to the refurbishment. The market inspector will continue to engage with stakeholders following the refurbishment.	Fiona Woodcock	None	Ongoing	5 September 2017
5. Review the trading arrangements of Sunday Market and the restrictions on who can trade.	Place Dept, Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs	Accept – this will be considered in advance of the refurbishment being completed and included in the future marketing strategy	Michael Goddard	None – although it may generate a small amount of additional income if there are more traders on a sunday	June 2017	5 September 2017
6. When the Council reviews its licensing strategy that its key objective of a thriving Surrey Street is taken into account.	Place Dept, Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs	Accept – although there is currently no agreed timetable to review this part of the council's licensing policy	Michael Goddard	None	No timescale at present	5 September 2017

For general release

REPORT TO:	SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE 5 SEPTEMBER 2017
AGENDA ITEM:	9
SUBJECT:	WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18
LEAD OFFICER:	Stephen Rowan Head of Democratic Services & Scrutiny

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	The Council's constitution requires the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to agree the scrutiny work programme for the municipal year.
PURPOSE:	To agree the scrutiny work programme for future meetings.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee has a constitutional responsibility to monitor the scrutiny programme each municipal year.

2. WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17

2.1 The Scrutiny Procedure Rules (extracted from the Constitution) state that:

“6.01 ...the Scrutiny and Overview Committee shall be responsible for setting its own work programme and the initial work programme of its Sub-Committees.

6.02 A balanced work programme should be developed including pre- and post-decision scrutiny, monitoring and external scrutiny. As far as reasonably practicable, there should be wide consultation on the work programme with Councillors, Chief Officers, external agencies and the wider community prior to its consideration by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.”

2.2 The Scrutiny and Overview Committee work programme 2017-18 is attached as **Appendix A**.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

3.1 Members are asked to agree the Work Programme.

CONTACT OFFICER:

James Haywood
Members' Services Manager
Democratic Services & Scrutiny
020 8726 6000 x 63319
james.haywood@croydon.gov.uk

APPENDIX A:

Scrutiny and Overview Work
Programme 2017/18

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

Draft Scrutiny Work Programme 2017/18

SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE						
27 June 17	5 September 17	31 October 17	12 December 17	30 January 18	6 March 18	17 April 18
Finance & Treasury Q & A July Finance Paper (include risks and issues) Contract Management	Leader Q & A Fire Safety in Croydon Homes	Culture, Leisure & Sport Q & A Fairfield future vision (introduction to the new operator)	Leader Q & A Budget 18/19	Economy & Jobs Q & A Growth Zone Good Employer Scheme Small Business Commission	Communities, Safety & Justice Q and A Community Safety Strategy Culture Plan	Devolution

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