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Scrutiny & Overview Committee Agenda

To: Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair) Councillor Jan Buttinger (Vice-Chair) Councillors Carole Bonner, Patsy Cummings, Stephen Mann and Vidhi Mohan

Reserve Members: Sherwan Chowdhury, Mario Creatura, Bernadette Khan, Joy Prince, Sue Winborn and Callton Young

A meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on Tuesday, 30 January 2018 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX. A pre- meet for Members only will be held in room F5 at 6.00pm

JACQUELINE HARRIS-BAKER Director of Law and Monitoring Officer London Borough of Croydon Bernard Weatherill House 8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA Stephanie Davis 020 8726 6000 ext 84384 stephanie.davis@croydon.gov.uk www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. If you require any assistance, please contact the person detailed above, on the righthand side.

N.B This meeting will be paperless. The agenda can be accessed online at www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings



Delivering for Croydon

Item No. Item Title

Report Page nos.

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Committee.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2017 as an accurate record.

3. Disclosure of Interests

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 to the value of which exceeds £50 or multiple gifts and/or instances of hospitality with a cumulative value of £50 or more when received from a single donor within a rolling twelve month period. 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 Democratic Services representative at the start of the meeting. The Chair 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 of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. Children's Improvement Plan

5 - 12

	To update the Committee on the Improvement Plan.	
6.	Question Time: Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport	25 - 26
	An extract from the Constitution outlining the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport responsibilities is circulated.	
7.	Question Time: Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs	27 - 48
	Question time for the Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs, Councillor Mark Watson	
8.	Work Programme	49 - 52
	To consider and approve the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2017/18.	
9.	Exclusion of the Press and Public	
	The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder 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 items 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 Item 2

Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 12 December 2017 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

- Present:Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair);
Councillor Jan Buttinger (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Carole Bonner, Patsy Cummings and Stephen Mann
- Also Councillor Simon Hall and Tony Newman

Present:

Apologies: Councillor Vidhi Mohan and Alisa Flemming

PART A

57/17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

58/17 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

59/17 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

60/17 Children Improvement Plan

Officers updated the Committee Members with the progress of the improvement plan. They highlighted that the Improvement Plan had been signed off by Cabinet and had been submitted to Ofsted. The Department of Education had appointed a Commissioner who had completed and submitted a report to the Minister commenting on both the quality of the plan and he Council's capacity to improve the service. A decision on both these issues by the Minister would be published in the New Year.

Officers had been assertive in strengthening Children's Services. The service had received strong corporate support that was led well by the Chief Executive and elected Members. The Committee learned that a £3 million investment had been made into the core services, including the recruitment of social work surge teams to deal with high demand and additional business

support teams to reduce the amount of time spent on administrative duties by social workers.

Officers pointed out that there were still a number of challenges that would take time to progress. The idea behind the Improvement Plan Programme was to follow the journey of a child from the referral stage through to conclusion. The report indicated the strengths of corporate parenting panel, which had regular reviews on the considerable pressure that the service was experiencing.

The Committee learned that following changes in management, the service was implementing a new structure with temporary arrangements that had been put in place. The officers highlighted that the need of the service was to focus on the children that used the service, and to ascertain that the service was fully resourced to provide a better outcome. The new structure was scheduled to be implemented in the new financial year.

The Committee learned that there had been a forty percent increase in referrals following the inspection. With high cases loads entering from the front door service, the service had put in place additional temporary capacity to address the pressure.

The Committee was further informed of the challenges in the service including a stronger focus on transparency and improvement. They heard how the service had established new key performance indicators to better reflect the delivery of good outcomes for children and these had been developed in partnership with the Independent Chair of the Improvement Panel.

The Committee learned that recruiting permanent social workers in Children's Services was a significant challenge. Officers were confident that good social workers who had worked in Croydon for a long period of time would build relationships, support, and would also invest in training and self-development. Officers shared that the service needed to improve on its stability in senior leadership and frontline workers which would restore relationships with families and key agencies. Officers informed the Committee that the Service was working with the Director of Human Resources to develop a "Total Rewards" scheme to attract and retain high quality permanent staff.

Children's Services had also wanted to refresh and strengthen connections with universities to develop great students and Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) social workers.

The Committee learned that systems of support had been put in place for the health and wellbeing of social workers. Emotional resilience support work with human resources had also been put in place to support social workers.

The Committee learned that further work was in progress to gain trust from staff as the service improved. Officers had received a high level of staff engagement in open sessions and sprint sessions which had positively contributed to the work of the Improvement Board. Further opportunities for staff to have their voice heard ad been established through the creation of a suggestion box for all staff to use and an email discussion forum.

Officers shared the idea of the career pathway for social workers to progress through the system to become practitioners. A new proposed role of the Principle Social Worker would see a number of consultant practitioners, and this role would be to support practice development. The Committee learned that the role of consultant practitioners would be to provide support reflecting on cases. This role had been received well by staff as colleagues share their difficulty in similar and complex cases and receiving support to better manage their case. Officers shared that as social work teams are revising the line manager to staff ratio from 9:1 to 6:1, the work of a consultant practitioner would be part of a regular routine. There was an opportunity to share cases. The Committee learned that cases are managed by the unit manager, and the reflective casework would be supported by the consultant practitioner. The response from social worker team was supported, and there would be lots of opportunities from this move.

The Committee acknowledged the amount of development work with staff that was being delivered. They welcomed the idea of the suggestion box for staff to be candid without pressure of line management or senior management, and the level of support provided.

The Committee was updated on the pulse survey and work satisfaction, and learned that the pulse survey is circulated quarterly. Following the recent distribution of the survey to all staff, a high response had been fed back pending detailed analysis. It was clear that responses were challenging. The pulse survey was a way to understand staff satisfaction. The service had also heard more on staff satisfaction from staff reference groups. Staff had been spoken to in open door sessions and sprint sessions. Officers shared that there was a consensus from staff of dissatisfaction, and the service had proposed to address the interventions needed to make the service better for staff to contribute to better working and feeling valued.

The Chair noted the low percentage figure of the pulse survey and was concerned at the level of response to the survey as it had fallen below the initial baseline. The Committee would want to see a better response percentage from the next pulse survey to better understand staff satisfaction in the service.

The Committee learned of the ASYEs in Children's Services and heard that of the twenty-four that had started in the first cohort, all but one ASYE social worker had remained in Croydon. All the twenty-three ASYE's were now fully qualified and had committed to working in Croydon. Commitment in staffing was also retained by locum staff as many of the locum staff had been working in Croydon for two or more years consistently. The Committee learned that newly qualified social workers that completed their essential training were restricted in the number of caseloads that they could manage to balance their workforce. The Committee learned that the service was prioritising the management of caseload numbers for staff. They learned that child protection services had the highest pressure and additional resources had been put in place. There had also been an increase in the number of care proceeding cases where the number had reached over one hundred, and two additional solicitors had been recruited to support the service on these cases.

The Committee learned that financially Children's Services would need to improve over time for the service to have a benchmark. They heard that £3 million pounds had been invested for additional support and business support staff to meet the demands within the service. The Local Government Association report shared challenges around mental health, homelessness and housing provision and schools that had put pressure on the wider system. Croydon Children's Services had responded to the pressure and services from across the Council had responded with support, however, there was generally a wider funding issue impacting families, as such Children's Services had been allocated £10 million pounds to invest into developing a better service.

The Committee learned of the IT and software systems used by the frontline social workers, and heard that significant development had been put in place such as scanning documents directly onto the case management system. The system used was widely used across England. An active operational group for ICT was also arranged. The service was aiming for a higher success rate for ICT which included training and workshop to support staff.

The Committee learned of partnership working and the importance of working with other bodies i.e. the Croydon Commissioning Group (CCG) and the police in particular. They heard that the progress in partnership working with the Police and CCG over the last year included sitting on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which had a number of other partners involved. They heard that statutory partners such as the police and CCG amongst others had focused their priorities on outcomes for children. They heard that the focus on children and young people was around issues on vulnerable adolescence. Children's Services also had the Children's safeguarding board sit on the LSP Board alongside other partners with children being the core focus. Children's Services would be developing strategic level and assist on operational level in delivering enhanced Early Help service. The new Chair had been very clear and forceful in terms of determination in moving the system forward and working together with partners. This had added additional momentum in partnership working. Partners also would be creating robust professional challenge to develop better partnership. Officers shared that good outcomes cannot be delivered by one agency alone and needed to be a whole partnership working collectively. Officers noted that on the operational level Children's service had started to build relationships and understanding with key officers and organisations and needed to provide a clear message of the service provided by Children's Services and Early Help to key partners.

The Chair thanked the officers for the in-depth answers to questions asked, as the purpose is to challenge the Improvement Plan. The Committee

proposed for more information on the progress of the key performance indicators and IT systems over the coming months. The Committee was keen to invite the borough Commander to attend the Scrutiny and Overview meeting on 6 March to ask of his role in the Children's Services Improvement plan and partnership working.

61/17 Leader's Question Time

The Leader shared his presentation of pressures and highlights within the Borough, which included:

- the wider pressures of Children's Services following Ofsted's Report that welcomed the Children's Improvement Plan;

- the Brick by Brick scheme of affordable housing for local residents within the borough;

- the go-ahead of the redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre and the plan to provide seven thousand new jobs;

- the direct intervention of a new leisure centre in New Addington;

- the transformation of Fairfield Halls;
- the new investment in Surrey Street;

- the huge commitment and success of Box Park;

- the multimillion private sector investment in the Legacy Centre in Whitehorse Lane that provided the opportunity for hundreds of young people to participate in educational fun filled activities;

- the Choose Your Future Campaign, where young people were the centre of attention addressing what they wanted in their community;

- the extra resources for "Don't Mess with Croydon", which had achieved significant results; and

- the air quality in Croydon, as the borough wanted to be a part in improving quality in air, including proposals to dramatically expand the tram network.

The Leader proposed that in the next four years the Council would:

- drive a better standard in health devolution, to get more residents signed up with their GP to receiving services;

- Invest in providing decent wages to staff working in Croydon;

- The notion of Fair Funding as growth in population and infrastructure is under pressure in the borough which was a challenge.

The Leader highlighted that a lot of work would be required to secure Croydon's future which would take some time due to the current pressure Croydon is facing with the budget and demand for services.

The Committee learned that the public commitment to the redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre would bring Croydon more opportunities. Work had been proposed to start around the end of 2018. Members of the Committee noted that the Council was reaching the end of its four-year term and they heard that there had been areas of success and areas of work that were still challenges over that period. These had included:

- Keeping the streets clean and increasing the recycling rate.

- Building real partnerships with Stanley Halls, Ashburton Library Launch, Ward Budgets.

- Wandle Park success, although there was more work to do.

- The ongoing pressures within key services.

- South Norwood Library – and how to replicate this success in other district centres.

The Leader noted that there was real progress in most areas whilst not being complacent that there was still more that could be done. The Leader noted that money was not everything as the society's commitment working alongside the Council was also key to a thriving Borough.

Members of the Committee heard that the Council was continuing to Champion the London Living Wage amongst businesses in the Borough. The Committee learned that the London living wage would not work in Croydon if workers were not getting that pay. The bar would need to be set higher as the cost of residing in Croydon had risen.

The Committee learned that the Leader's largest long term concern was the budget pressure on local authority services, which would become unsustainable if the Government continued its programme of cuts. The Leader's immediate concern was responding strongly to the recommendations made by Ofsted regarding Children's Services ensuring that the improvement plan was delivered.

Members of the Committee noted that the Gateway service had been a huge success despite budget pressures. They learned that there were plans to expand the service and support families and households that were affected by Government cuts. The Leader further described the challenge to increase work focused on the health prevention and the challenges facing Croydon's health providers.

Members of the Committee noted that over recent months, there had appeared to be some changes to Boxpark. Some Members of the Committee expressed a view that events at the venue were targeted at only a small audience and sought assurance that he Venue would continue to have a broad appeal.

The Chair asked the Leader about the challenges the Council would face as a result of 'Brexit'. The Committee learned that there was uncertainty on the impact on the local economy and public services. The Leader asserted that London and Croydon were resilient but needed to plan well to ensure that they remained resilient as the full impact of 'Brexit' became clear.

The Chair thanked the Leader for his Question Time.

62/17 Budget 2018-19

Presentation from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury spoke of the current status of the financial position, the growth pressures and saving options.

The Committee learned that the growth pressures are having a massive impact on the local authority and the current underfunding in Croydon is having an impact. The overall position of the level of funding was highlighted in the presentation. The Committee was reminded that Croydon is an outer London borough with inner London needs and would have had an additional £28 million more to spend on Council services if funded at inner London rates.

The Committee heard that there was a lot of budget pressures within Adults and Children's Social Care and Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The Committee learned that there was a growing pressure on demand in Children's Services following the recent Ofsted inspection. With investment being made to enable the delivery of the Improvement Plan.

The Committee learned that there had been a recruitment freeze within the borough for all but essential roles.

The Committee learned of the 2018/19 financial budget plans and growth pressure. Officers shared that £10 million pounds had been allocated to Children's Services were the biggest pressure currently resides. The Committee learned that Adults of all age and disability group was a growing population where the service had a duty to deliver and support.

The Committee learned that complexity was increasing and staffing in SEN had increased to deal with demand. There was an improved service in out of hospital care and this was improving lives of residences.

The Committee learned of the savings and what the local authority could do to save money. These were all listed in detail in the appendix to the report.

The Committee learned that there had been options considered and discarded as savings by officers and members as part of the budget preparation process.

Members of the Committee learned that some spending was on things the Council could not control, for example concessionary fares, and would not change the overall funding in Croydon.

Members of the Committee noted the presentation. They learned that Croydon was doing more to promote commercialisation, for example, Brick by Brick. The Chair thanked Councillor Hall and the officers for their presentation and contributions, and concluded that Council tax and the council tax precept would be a decision for the Cabinet in February.

63/17 Work Programme

The Senior Democratic Services and Governance Officer guided the Committee through the proposed work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. It was noted that the schedule would be subject to change for the coming scheduled meetings.

The Chair made note that the forthcoming meeting in January 2018 would hear Question Time of two Cabinet Members as well as the Children's Improvement Plan.

The Committee **NOTED** the work programme.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

Signed:

Date:

Agenda Item 5

REPORT TO:	Scrutiny and Overview committee 30 January 2018
SUBJECT:	Update on Children's Improvement
LEAD OFFICER:	Barbara Peacock Executive Director (People)
CABINET MEMBER:	Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item follows the recent OFSTED inspection of the council's children's services.		
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are invited to:		
	 i) Note the submission of the final Children's Improvement Plan ii) Note the Minister's agreement that Croydon should continue to manage its own improvement, in line with the Commissioner's recommendations iii) Note progress on delivering the actions outlined in the improvement plan in December iv) Note the priority performance indicators for November 		

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 On 4th September 2017, The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) published its report providing an overall judgement that Children's Services in Croydon are inadequate. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) was also judged inadequate, as inspectors found that the LSCB had not fully established effective arrangements to discharge its statutory functions. The Council fully accepted the findings of the report.

1.2 On 4th September 2017, the Minister for Children and Families at the Department for Education (DfE) issued Croydon Council with a Direction which required the council to cooperate with an appointed commissioner, Eleanor Brazil. The Commissioner's Report was submitted to the Minister on 4 December. The final Children's Improvement Plan was submitted to Ofsted and the DfE on the 8th December. The plan has been published on the council's website (link below) and hard copies distributed to staff across Children's Services.

https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Croydon_Children%27s_I

mprovement_Plan_Nov_2017.pdf

1.3 The Commissioner's advice to the Minister of State for Children and Families is that the Council should continue to have responsibility for managing children's services and be given time to drive the improvements forward. However she also concluded that support is needed to undertake these improvements effectively and at pace, as the service does not currently have the necessary capacity and expertise to lead, manage and direct improved day to day practice alongside the improvement programme, given the breadth of the challenges in Croydon. Camden Council, who were recently judged as good with outstanding leadership, management and governance by Ofsted, have expressed a willingness to provide this support.

1.4 On 19th December the council was notified that the previous Minister for Children and Families had formally agreed the recommendation that Croydon continue to manage children's services, subject to the service actively pursuing intensive support arrangements with Camden Council. A fully developed proposal for this support needs to be submitted to the DFE by the end of March 2018.

1.5 The change in Secretary of State on 8th January 2018 delayed the publication of the Commissioner's report along with a revised Direction that reflects the recommendations. However the key points of the Commissioner's report have been shared with senior officers and are included in this report. The Commissioners report is due to be published in January 2018, the date is yet to be confirmed.

1.6 Ofsted carry out quarterly monitoring visits to children's services departments judged inadequate to assess progress. The first monitoring visit to Croydon took place on 12th and 13th December 2017 and was focused on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Assessment Service. Initial monitoring visit reports are not published but are shared with the Local Authority and the DFE. Subsequent monitoring visit reports will be published on the Ofsted website. Key messages from the visit are included in section 3 of this report, and were reported to cabinet on 26 February 2018.

1.7 At its meeting on the 12th December 2017, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee were provided with a progress update on implementing the actions in the improvement plan in November, including key highlights for the month and an overview of investment to date. The Committee were also made aware of the key challenges facing the service, including a significant increase in demand (contacts and referrals) at the front door which has prevented caseloads from being reduced to be more manageable for social workers, and ongoing challenges to recruit more permanent social workers and managers across the service.

1.8 On 12th December the Scrutiny and Overview Committee also discussed the children's temperature check survey findings and processes and posed a number of challenges and questions which are answered in paragraph 2.3.7 of this report.

1.9 This report seeks to provide an overview of children's improvement activity in December 2017, including the delivery of the actions outlined in the plan and the overall status of the four key work streams; Practice, People and Performance, Partnerships and Platforms. It also provides an update on progress against the priority performance indicators and a brief discussion around Ofsted's findings on 12th and 13th of December

2018.

2. PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

2.1 Overview of progress in December

2.1.1 The table below provides a high level overview of the actions in the improvement plan for December. Each of the four work streams are 'on track' in the first two months of the plan and the overall status of the programme is therefore 'on track'. This means that the vast majority of scheduled actions for this period have been completed, or are 'on track' to be completed by the specified deadlines; we are doing what we said we would. It should be noted that in many cases it is still too early to see what the impact for children has been from these actions, although this impact will be tracked and reported when available.

Work stream	SRO	Progress RAG
Practice	Philip Segurola	On track
People and Performance	Barbara Peacock	On track
Partnerships	Barbara Peacock	On track
Platforms	Richard Simpson	On track

2.1.2 There was activity across all four work streams of the plan in December, highlights of which are outlined below;

- The Improvement plan was submitted to Ofsted and the DfE on the 8th December
- A new temporary structure in the assessment service with smaller spans of control for managers was approved to respond to rising demand, reduce social workers' workloads and ensure sufficient management oversight
- 'Train the trainer' sessions on the new social work practice model (strengthening families) were commissioned for January and staff across the service have volunteered to act as 'champions'
- A new Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) was finalised and endorsed at the last Children's Improvement Board, which will be rolled out from January
- An open session for Elected Members focused on the MASH took place on the 6th December, with positive feedback from members who attended.
- Executive Director, People and the Lead member for Children and Families visited and observed Camden's Corporate Parenting Panel on 14 December.
- The results of the staff 'pulse' survey have been returned and analysed, with some encouraging feedback around awareness of the improvement journey and staff feeling that they are making a difference for our children and young people

• The Head of Early Help and MASH and Head of Targeted Services visited Camden on the 11th December to learn from best practice there around MASH and supporting vulnerable adolescents

2.1.3 Despite the overall good progress against actions in December there are also a number of key challenges that should be noted, set out below. Areas of underperformance, in line with the key priority performance indicators, are set out in section 3.4 of this report.

- High demand at the front door: despite the deployment of the best start team into the assessment service to increase capacity, the service has continued to see an increase in demand (referrals), reaching a peak of 70 families per week in December, which is more work than can be absorbed by one team of six social workers on duty. A business case for a new temporary (6 month) structure with larger teams and assistant management capacity has been approved in principle, to be implemented from early January. However, it should be noted that it is proving difficult to source the additional staff required through both permanent and temporary recruitment channels and steps are being taken by HR and the service to explore all recruitment options in order to implement the new structure as soon as possible.
- High workloads: increased demand and complexity of work means that workloads, particularly in the assessment service and to some extent in care planning, remain high despite additional ('surge') capacity being added. This impacts on staff morale, retention and performance around assessment, child in need and child protection timescales.
- Staffing: Creating a more stable and permanent workforce remains a major challenge and applications through the recruitment campaign and microsite have been lower than anticipated, although they are of a high quality. There has been some progress in converting agency to permanent staff with 5 in the process of converting, including one manager.
- Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's): The percentage of ICPC's held within 15 working days (priority indicator CP5) remains low, despite additional capacity, which is partly due to the surge in demand at the front door. However, there was a slight improvement in performance in November. There are issues with the Police CAIT team requiring 5 working days' notice of an ICPC that appears to be impacting on this indicator. This will be raised with the CSCB Chair and CAIT.
- Protecting vulnerable adolescents: This continues to be a significant risk across the council and wider partnership, and has added to the pressure on the front door and assessments as referrals relating to youth violence, gang associated activity, County Lines and risks of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) remain significant. A safeguarding board learning review on vulnerable adolescents is underway and a new 'Targeted Services' service with a dedicated Head of Service is in place integrating the Youth Offending Service (YOS), CSE and missing teams.

2.2 Practice actions

2.2.1 In relation to the first priority outlined the Children's Improvement Plan; 'Ensuring consistent, high quality social work', a detailed implementation plan for rolling out the new social work practice model (Strengthening Families) was endorsed at the last improvement board on 5th December and 'train the trainer' sessions have been commissioned for January, with volunteers from across the service identified to take part and act as 'champions' (alongside the consultant practitioners). Guidance on pre-birth assessment and intervention to promote early permanency has been developed in consultation with health and there is some evidence that the use of the Public Law Outline (PLO) in pre-birth work to promote early permanency is increasing, although further work is required to fully embed this at the referral stage. The Children's Improvement Programme Team are supporting the service to ensure that all policies, guidance and templates (including those revised as part of strengthening families roll out) are collated and stored in a central location which all staff have access to.

2.2.2 Actions to improve the quality of practice for children who need early help and protection (priority 2 of the Children's Improvement Plan) included strengthening oversight of the quality of social work for children with disabilities (CWD) by giving the Head of Service for QA and Safeguarding a clinical supervisory role with the Service Lead for CWD. The Service Lead for CWD also attends Children's Leadership Team, where performance is discussed monthly.

2.2.3 Progress has also been made on improving outcomes for our Looked after Children, for example, steps have been taken to promote early permanency for children through timely adoption, with Unit Mangers from the Adoption Service attending legal planning meetings to ensure that adoption is identified as a long term plan for children at an early stage of the PLO or legal proceedings. Temporary administrative support has been put in place to support the work of the adoption service and a new social work post has been created to focus on increasing access to the adoption support fund.

2.2.4 Although additional business support is in post to manage the notification for initial and review health assessments for looked after children, there is a concern relating to capacity within the provider to meet demand and fulfil their responsibilities. The current capacity for initial health assessments is meeting demand but there is a deficit in capacity for review health assessments. A case has been proposed to increase the resource which will be presented to the CCG senior management team to be agreed.

2.2.5 In order to better protect vulnerable adolescents, including those who go missing and those at risk of CSE, serious youth violence or criminal exploitation (priority 5) A new Head of Service for 'Targeted Services' has been in post since November. She has reviewed the systems and processes for responding to young people who go missing and is working closely with the performance team to improve data accuracy in this area. A system is in place to track the completion of Return Home Interviews (RHIs) for missing children and performance continues to be below target but improving.

2.3 People and performance actions

2.3.1 With regards to strengthening leadership and governance (priority 6) a series of open sessions for Elected Members to meet social workers and understand a child's journey through the system have been scheduled. The first session took place on 6th December and focused on the MASH. There was good cross party attendance and Elected Members were shown a presentation by the recently appointed Head of Service for Early Help and MASH outlining the functions of his services and recent trends around contacts and referrals. The second session took place on January 17th and was focused on the assessment service.

2.3.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) terms of reference and membership have been reviewed. The panel has put in place a plan of work and regular reporting schedule to ensure it can focus on key practice areas. The Chair and Executive Director of People (DCS) have visited Corporate Parenting Meetings at Camden to learn from best practice.

2.3.3 With regards to staff engagement, the results of the first Children's Services 'temperature check' survey were received in early December, with 99 respondents from across Children's Services. The purpose of these surveys is to help us understand the impact that changes are having on staff and this initial survey will help us to benchmark against future surveys. There were some encouraging responses to the following statements;

- I understand the wider improvement journey for children's services (9% ' strongly agree 39% agree' 33% 'somewhat agree')
- I am making a difference for our children and young people & improving their outcomes (27% ' strongly agree' 45% 'agree' 16% 'somewhat agree')
- I leverage opportunities to work with partners (26% 'strongly agree' 45% 'agree' 19% 'somewhat agree')
- Colleagues and peers value my contributions (11% 'strongly agree' 42% 'agree' 39% 'somewhat agree')

2.3.4 However there were still some strong messages around high caseloads, poor work/life balance and not having the tools and resources to do a good job. For example;

- 51% tended to disagree that they are able to maintain a good work/life balance
- 48% tended to disagree that the tools and resources they need (e.g. CRS, Business Support) enable them to manage their workload

2.3.5 The survey response rate was approximately 25%. Although this is a statistically significant number across the whole service, the service is working with corporate learning and development colleagues to look at how we can improve the return rate for future surveys in order to ensure that the rate is more robust at team level. An all-council staff survey is also due to take place in February.

2.3.6 The findings from these surveys are being reviewed by senior managers and will inform further improvement planning and communications, in addition to the Workforce and Learning and Development strategies.

2.3.7 At its meeting on the 12th December the Scrutiny and Overview discussed the Children's Temperature check findings and the way that the survey was carried out, and sought clarity on the following questions;

- a) Why was the return so low?; 109 participants started the survey and 99 completed it, common reasons for non-completion include survey/feedback fatigue (following an extensive series of in person staff engagement sessions between September and November), Staff just wanting to get on with their jobs and not having enough time to complete the survey and a lack of buy in and belief that their feedback will change things.
- b) *Greater clarity on who participated;* The table below shows the teams that were sent the survey of which 109 staff accessed the survey with 99 end to end completions.

Permanence [Looked after Children]	15	14%
Leaving Care [Looked After Children]	7	6%
Adoption and Fostering [Looked After Children]	11	10%
Safeguarding and Looked After Children Quality Assurance	15	14%
MASH [Children in Need]	3	3%
Assessment [Children in Need]	10	9%
Care Planning [Children in Need]	17	16%
Early Help	17	16%
Children with Disabilities [CWD]	4	4%
Targeted Services	2	2%
Children's Integrated Commissioning	8	7%

- c) What can we do to increase return in the future?;
- Share survey results in a timely manner post survey close
- Produce a 'you said' 'we are doing' or 'we did' communication before launching another survey. This signals that there is a follow up and follow through on the feedback received and their feedback matters
- Leave enough space and time in between temperature checks to ensure we can evidence what is being done as a result of the results
- Increase communications through direct line management prior to release of next survey
- Explore incentives for survey completion
- d) Lessons learned?; Lessons included the need to validate HR data to gain greater clarity on the target audience and to increase communication & engagement prior to launch from line managers
- e) What date will the next one go out & when will it report?; The current intention is not to distribute another temperature check survey until June or July as staff will have another opportunity at telling us what they think through the corporate staff survey to be launched on 15 January, closing 2 February.

2.3.8 Actions to develop a stable and skilled workforce (priority 7) included agreeing a proposal to increase capacity within the assessment service in response to rising demand. This has been identified as a key risk, and the proposal involves implementing a new temporary structure, moving from 6 teams of 6 social workers with 1 unit manager to 5 teams of 9 social workers with a unit manager and deputy team manager who will share supervisory responsibilities. It is hoped that this new structure will enable to service to respond to rising demand, reduce social workers' workloads to manageable levels and ensure sufficient management oversight of all cases and support for social workers.

2.3.9 Work is also underway to create an overarching Workforce Strategy for children's services and a year one workforce action plan has been agreed and is in progress in support of the wider children's improvement plan. Workforce working group meetings have been scheduled from January onwards to monitor progress on delivery.

2.3.10 Although there has been a considerable amount of traffic to the recruitment microsite, the number of applications has been lower than anticipated and Jobs go Public are calling those who didn't complete the application to find out the reasons why. However, the quality of candidates has been high. There has been slow but steady progress on converting agency staff to permanent staff, with 5 in the process of converting, including one Unit Manager. Going forward it will be important to refresh the Jobsgopublic micro-site post ministerial letter to ensure that potential candidates are not deterred from applying to Croydon by the prospect of government intervention

2.3.11 With regards to learning and development, initial training has been commissioned on the strengthening families' model and the graded care profile. A Children's Services induction event took place on the 19th December for recent starters, which introduced staff to the new practice model.

2.3.12 In order to strengthen management oversight and ensure robust quality assurance and performance management (priority 8) a new quality assurance framework has been finalised and was endorsed at the last Improvement board in December. The framework includes a process for monitoring and following up on actions; a clear learning loop, and roll out will begin in January.

2.4 Partnership actions

2.4.1 The Interim Chair of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) presented an update on the Board's activity in November, highlighting partnership work around vulnerable adolescents.

2.4.2 With regards to the actions set out in the Children's Improvement Plan outline proposals regarding arrangements for safeguarding partners and implications for the remit of the executive group were presented. These proposals were drafted in early Jan.

2.5 Platforms actions

2.5.1 The 'Platforms' work stream of the Children's Improvement Plan is about establishing sufficient organisational (corporate) support and fit for purpose systems that enable high quality social work, including sufficient resource, administrative (business) support and recording systems. The Commissioner's report recognised the strong corporate support and focus on children's improvement provided to date.

2.5.2 Actions to improve the level of business support to social workers and managers have included:

- 30 business support temps recruited to backfill gaps and provide additional interim support to social care teams
- Revised interim Service Level Agreements for business support have been consulted on and agreed by most service areas, this includes details of a more flexible offer and inclusion of new tasks e.g. increased meeting support
- A short term agreement is in place to support Unit Managers and Service Leaders with recruitment during this period of high volume and rapid recruitment.
- A scanning amnesty, which has been very well received by social workers, was extended until 15 December

2.5.3 With regards to systems improvements, the following should be noted;

- The CRS document management module went live on 1 December 2017, which makes the indexing process much easier for social workers and business support staff. Feedback from staff has been positive and it is hoped this will improve recording across the service
- A legal workspace has gone live on CRS with some initial positive feedback from staff on improved ease of use
- An automated payment form in CRS is in development which will link payment requests to the case file and is expected go live in January 2018. As an interim measure, an automated finance request e-form has been designed by Business Support and rolled out to Care Planning and Assessments
- Pre-Paid card use for service users is also being progressed. Payment process efficiencies using Pre-Paid cards have already been evidenced by use in Leaving Care, and we are going to replicate this by the end of January in Care Planning and Assessments with the aim of reducing cash payments.

3. KEY MESSAGES FROM THE OFSTED MONITORING VISIT

- 3.1 The first Ofsted monitoring visit took place on the 12th and 13th of December and was focused on the Front Door, including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and assessment service. During the course of this visit, inspectors reviewed the progress made in the areas of help and protection, including:
 - the identification of risk and the timeliness of responses to assessing risk, in the assessment service

- the understanding and application of thresholds, management oversight and decisionmaking, and support of and guidance to social workers in the assessment service
- consideration of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) response, as part of looking at the assessment work undertaken.

3.2 Children's Improvement Plan and performance information for October 2017 were reviewed. Inspectors spoke predominantly to social workers in the assessment service and to a small number of managers.

3.3 Positively, inspectors noted that staff morale is generally improved and staff say that they feel better supported and that they are being listened to, although there is still remains an issue to address in relation to high demand in the assessment service and the pressures this brings for social workers and managers.

3.4 Feedback from the Ofsted monitoring visit was varied, with positive feedback on the prompt action taken by senior leaders to establish the strategic infrastructure for improvement, secure initial financial investment and ensure sufficient senior management capacity. The strong corporate focus on improvement was noted. Continued improvement in the MASH and some examples of good social work practice were also highlighted.

3.5 Nevertheless, there were some strong messages on the variable quality of social work practice, high caseloads in the assessment service, weak management oversight and a lack of rigour in quality assurance and case auditing which highlights that there is still more to do to ensure risk to children is fully understood and explored, in all cases.

3.6 Inspectors noted that Croydon is not in an unusual position at this first visit, and reinforced the challenge of moving forward in delivering parallel improvements on infrastructure and practice at pace. They also acknowledged the pressures presented by increased demand at the front door; a higher number of referrals coming in to the assessment team has meant that despite additional resources caseloads remain too high, although it was recognised that senior managers have taken steps to reconfigure resources and add capacity to address this.

3.7 The council accepts the feedback from the monitoring visit and senior managers have begun to address the issues inspectors raised, reflecting the findings and building upon the good practice observed as part of the wider children's improvement plan activity, and in preparation for the next visit in March. A new Quality Assurance Framework was agreed at the Improvement Board in December and will be rolled out from January to increase the rigour of the quality assurance and case audit activities. In addition, an action plan is being developed to ensure that the findings from the first monitoring visit are addressed and embedded in the Improvement programme, and to prepare for the second visit will be put in place.

3.8 The next monitoring visit will be on 20th and 21st March. The final scope of the visit is still to be agreed but it will focus on children and young people where there is a known risk including that of sexual exploitation or those who go missing from home or care. Inspectors have indicated that they will focus on assessing and addressing risk, actions taken to reduce risk and their impact on outcomes for children and young people.

4. UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE PRIOIRITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

4.1 The priority performance indicators for November have been included as an Appendix to this report (see Appendix 1). This document includes a summary from the Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help, Philip Segurola, on key areas and strength and underperformance in October (see page 2).

4.2 It should be noted that the council continues to see a significant increase in the volume of contacts and referrals into Children's Services, which is having a detrimental impact on some performance indicators, including caseload figures in the assessment service and adherence to timescales for assessment and child protection work.

4.3 Areas of strength or improvement for the month of November include;

- A reduction in average caseloads in care planning, permanence, children with disabilities and amongst newly qualified social workers (ASYEs) to more manageable levels
- Stable re-referral rates within 12 months (19%)
- More children subject to CP plans being visited in timescales (87%)
- Visiting patterns for looked after children remain healthy
- Placement stability remains strong

4.4 Areas of underperformance include:

- No movement in the overall vacancy rate (43%)
- High caseloads in the assessment service
- A slight drop in the % of completed contacts actioned within 1 working day, due to an increase in the volume of contacts and referrals
- A drop in the % of assessments completed in timescales due to the volume of work coming in
- The % of ICPC's held in timescales remains significantly below target (32%)
- The % of children's cases subject to supervision within timescales (43%) is low, although the ability to accurately record and report on this indicator through CRS remains an issue and will be a priority going forward
- Records relating to the recording and monitoring of supervision for individual social workers are inadequate. Tracking information over the last six months is incomplete and insufficient to report against. A revised tracker has been developed to provide consistent reporting and it has been made clear to managers at all levels that regular monthly reporting of these figures is an absolute requirement.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 Key priorities and actions for January include;

• Developing and implementing actions in response to feedback from the December Ofsted monitoring visit around the quality of assessments, quality assurance and internal auditing

- Implementing a new temporary structure in the assessment service in order to respond to rising demand at the front door and reduce caseloads for social workers in this service
- Beginning the roll out of the new social work practice model, starting with train the trainer sessions
- Continuing to drive improvements in performance to ensure child protection conferences are more timely and children are seen with greater regularity

5.2 Actions scheduled for January include;

- Review the Early Help screening and assessment process and the MASH interface
- Work with foster carers to better understand the support that they need and improve the service
- Undertake an end to end review of the case transfer processes to ensure children are at the heart of decision making, support continuity of relationships with the adults responsible for their care and ensure that any impacts of delay for children are understood and minimised
- Model optimum staffing requirements and team sizes
- Refresh the supervision policy and recording template so that social workers and managers are clear about the expectations and standards for the frequency and quality of supervision
- Refresh the Jobsgopublic micro-site post ministerial letter and got to advert for specific roles including the HOS for quality assurance and HOS for the CWD

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The sub-committee is asked:

- i) To note the submission of the final Children's Improvement Plan and the Minister's agreement that Croydon should continue to manage its own improvement, in line with the Commissioner's recommendations
- ii) To note progress on delivering the actions outlined in the improvement plan in December
- iii) To note the priority performance indicators for November

CONTACT OFFICER: Kerry Crichlow, Programme Director

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Priority performance indicators

Agenda Item 6



Councillor Timothy Godfrey Cabinet member for Culture Leisure & Sport (CLS) Deputy, Councillor Maggie Mansell

Responsibilities

- Bereavement Services
- Culture
- Libraries
- Parks & Leisure
- Registrars

Policy Developments

The Mayor of London manifesto pledges to:

- Oppose building on Green Belt land and strengthen protection for Metropolitan Open Land, playing fields & nature reserves.
- Produce a cultural infrastructure plan for 2030 to identify what is needed to sustain London's future as a cultural capital.
- Support London's theatres, galleries and museums to open up access for Londoners.
- Establish creative enterprise zones, providing small live-in workspaces for artists from a range of disciplines.
- Establish a London Borough of Culture, similar to the European City of Culture.
- Support major cultural festivals to celebrate London's diversity.

Projects and Programmes

Re-commissioning of leisure service

• Work towards determining service approach and delivery model. The existing contract which covers leisure facilities at New Addington, Purley, South Norwood, Thornton Heath and Waddon expires in October 2017.

Parks Transformation Programme

• The Parks Transformation programme starts with a big conversation with residents and stakeholders – reporting back to Cabinet in late autumn winter 2016/17. The programme focuses on improving health outcomes, enhancing Croydon's cultural offer, developing community stewardship and protecting biodiversity.

Culture

- Creation of a Cultural Quarter with a redeveloped Fairfield Halls at its heart, including C2C LEP bid to support Fairfield development.
- Development of a cultural events programme with a good seasonal spread including the Ambition Festival in order to create opportunities that will increase participation in cultural activity, engage and grow audiences, support inward investment and nurture artistic talent.

Libraries

• Engagement with residents to develop the best possible 21st century library service within current public sector funding constraints.

Ashburton Park

• The Council in partnership with The Friends of Ashburton Park (FoAP) and in collaboration with UCL is undertaking consultation to find out what the local community thinks about Ashburton Park and its pavilion and their views on potential improvements, including events programme. Findings will help to inform decisions on the future of the park and the allocation of resources.

Outdoor Sports facilities

• Consultants have been engaged to develop a supply and demand assessment of sports pitches and other facilities such as bowling greens and tennis courts.

Parklife

• Potential to bid for funding from £130m pot held by DCMS, Football Association and Premier League to develop local football led sports hubs, that can also support multiple sports.

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Agenda Item 7



Councillor Mark Watson Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs (EJ) Deputy, Councillor Humayun Kabir

Responsibilities

- BIDs Croydon & District Centres
- Business, SME Growth (ST)
- Economic Development & Growth –Croydon Opportunity Area and District Centres – HRP*
- Employment & Jobs
- Evening Economy CSJ*
- Growth zone HRP*
- ICT digital & enabling
- Jobs Brokerage
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Strategic Communications
- Surrey Street Market

Policy Developments

- Local Growth and Jobs Bill will give councils more incentives to support business and develop the local economy, including 100% retention of their business rates and strengthening councils' powers to cut business rates for local firms if they wish.
- Digital Economy Bill includes entitlement to broadband for all; simpler planning rules for building broadband infrastructure; and the sharing and use of publically-held data to improve services, help people with multiple debts and combat fraud.
- City/Growth Deals devolution deals.

Projects and Programmes

Value Croydon

• Promoting socially responsible procurement and business practices across the borough. Ongoing promotion of Value Croydon (www.valuecroydon.com) including development of a Value Croydon Charter setting out the values and social considerations we would like businesses to ascribe to.

Growth Zone

 Croydon has secured a new growth zone deal which will allow the Council to retain half of new town centre business rates as well as £7m of Treasury funding to help underpin the delivery of a £350m infrastructure programme comprising 39 key projects including transport, schools and community infrastructure, regeneration and public realm improvements, and support for small businesses. The programme is set to deliver huge economic benefits to residents and businesses, including the creation of 23,500 new jobs and 8,000 homes.

Metropolitan centre regeneration – logistics and operations

• Both the planning and the delivery, to ensure the town centre and environs are supported throughout the redevelopment.

BIDS

• Croydon town centre BID reballot (March 2017); working with new Purley BID (started Feburary 2016); working with New Addington BID.

Job brokerage

• Croydon has established a job brokerage service 'Croydon Works' which aims to match residents into the employment opportunities that will be generated in the borough over the next 5-7 years through its growth plans.

Devolution of DWP Health and work programme to SLP

Croydon as accountable body

Digital Enabling

• A programme to transform the way the Council works.

continued...

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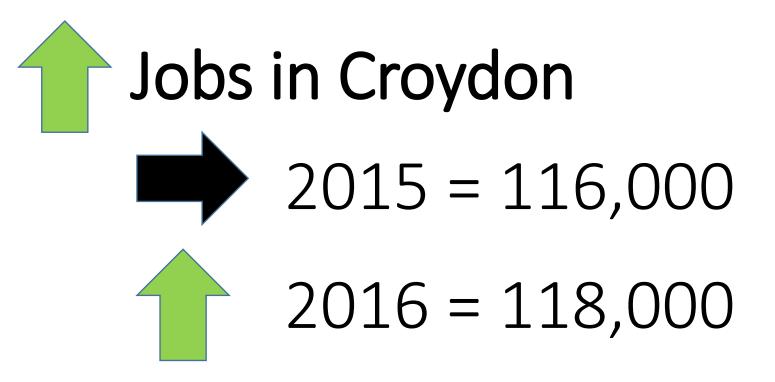
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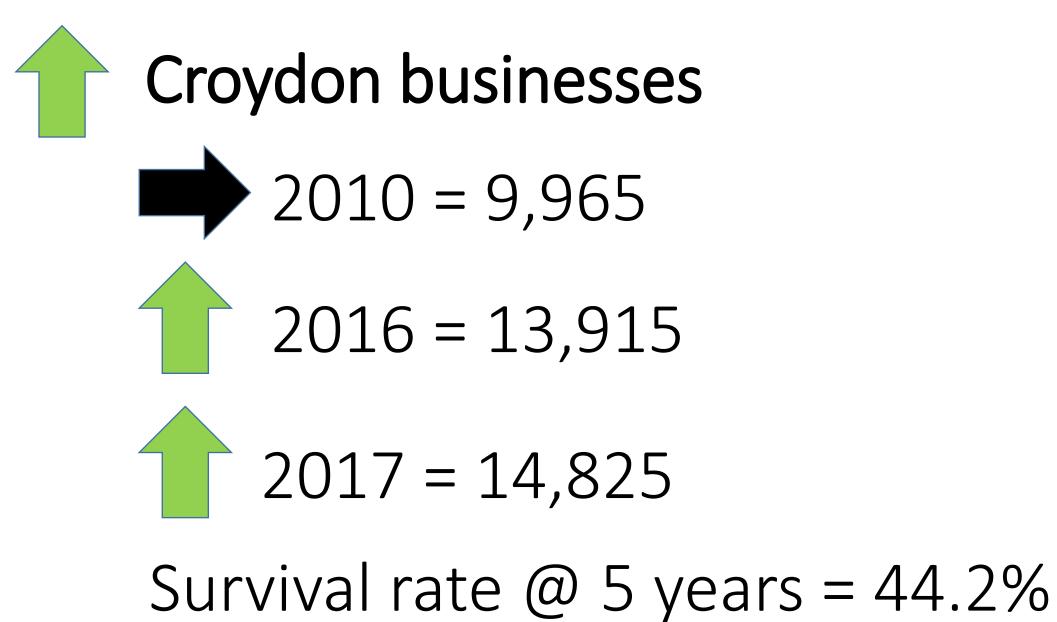
Councillor Question Time Economy & Jobs

Cllr Mark Watson



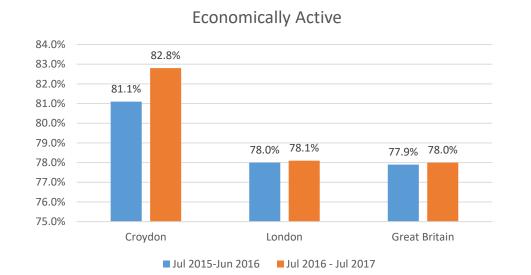


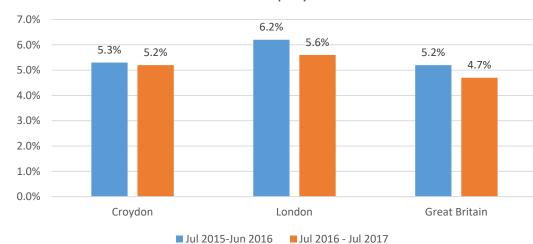
Growth in Construction, Professional Scientific & Technical, and IT



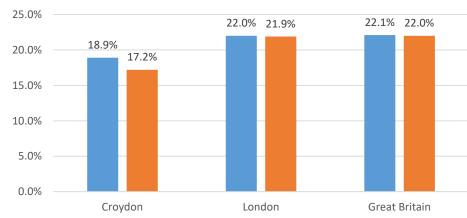
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Croydon Labour Market





Unemployed



Economically Inactive

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Jul 2015-Jun 2016 Jul 2016 - Jul 2017

Growth Zone

Page

CROYDON'S GROWTH ZONE – UPDATE JANUARY 2018







District Centres





Good Employer Croydon

- 34 accreditations
- 36 pledges

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- 4 events hosted plus GEC representation at other events
- New S106 guidance for developers and their contractors to become GEC accredited
- Employer-led Board to drive GEC agenda forward in 2018

Pay Living Wage

Pay the London Living wage

Buy Local

Support the local economy by investing in the local supply chain and local business

Employ Local

Create employment and training opportunities for local people

Include All

Implement equality, diversity and employee support best practice





WILLMOTT DIXON

SINCE 1852

YOUR LONDON AIRPORT Gatwick



Employment Devolution - Work & Health Programme





















Apprenticeship Programme

"I've been given a lot of support and encouragement, which makes me feel like I can achieve anything I want to inside and outside of the council..." Michelle (22) – Business Administration Apprentice



Access to Finance

Rising Costs

Talent



Small Business Commission



Contraction of the second seco

Employment Land

Office Space

Right Advice

Skills

Innovation Transport Diversity New Markets







Partnership

- Funding
- Influence



South London Partnership 'Representing and connecting'

MAYOR OF LONDON

- Connections
- Growth





Surrey Street Market

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- Minimised impact of Surrey Street improvements works on traders through temporary relocation to North End
- Sunday market relaunched in September 2017 with a weekly events programme
- Sunday market events programme to continue monthly in 2018
- New colourful wayfinding lighting to attract further footfall to Surrey Street in 2018





Evening & Night Time Economy













ROOFTOP CINEMA





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Agenda Item 8

REPORT TO:	SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE	
	30 January 2018	
SUBJECT:	WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18	
LEAD OFFICER:	Stephen Rowan	
	Head of Democratic Services & Scrutiny	

ORIGN OF ITEM:	The Council constitution requires 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 2017-18

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:	Michelle Gerning Democratic Service Officer 020 8239 4246 michelle.gerning@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						
12 December 17	30 January 18	6 March 18	17 April 18			
Leader Q&A	Economy & Jobs	Communities,	Devolution			
Budget 18/19	Q&A	Safety & Justice				
		Q&A	Children's			
Children's	Culture, Leisure		Improvement Plan			
Improvement Plan	and Sport Q&A	Community Safety				
		Strategy				
	Growth Zone	Culture Plan				
	Good Employer					
	Scheme	Children's				
	Small Business	Improvement Plan				
	Commission					
	Children's					
	Improvement Plan					

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