

## Cabinet

Meeting held on Monday, 11 May 2020 at 6.30 pm. This meeting was held remotely

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Tony Newman (Chair)

Councillor Alison Butler, Stuart Collins, Hamida Ali, Jane Avis, Alisa Flemming, Simon Hall, Stuart King (non-voting – Job Share), Oliver Lewis, Paul Scott (voting – Job Share) and Manju Shahul-Hameed

**Also Present:** Councillor Tim Pollard, Jason Cummings, Jason Perry, Mario Creatura, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Simon Hoar, Yvette Hopley, Vidhi Mohan, Helen Pollard, Sean Fitzsimons, Robert Ward, Pat Clouder, Clive Fraser, Helen Redfern, Leila Ben-Hassel, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Janet Campbell, Patsy Cummings, Nina Degrad, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, David Wood and Louisa Woodley

### PART A

The Leader invited all present to join them in a minute's silence in remembrance of all those who had sadly passed away due to the covid-19 pandemic.

The Leader noted that the council had supported the vulnerable residents of Croydon throughout the pandemic and continued to battle to secure PPE for those working on the frontline, including those working in care homes. The very close working with the NHS, through the One Croydon Alliance, was highlighted as supporting a coordinated response and putting the borough in a stronger position to respond than it may have been.

The Leader thanked everyone who had supported the response to the crisis and highlighted the work of the CVA, food banks, residents' associations and the people of Croydon who had stepped up to respond positively to the pandemic. Additionally, the Leader thanked all the officers of the council who had worked to ensure that residents had received the support they needed.

26/20                    **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The part A minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24 February 2020 were agreed.

27/20                    **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

28/20

**Urgent Business (If any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

29/20

**Update on Croydon's response to Covid-19**

The Director of Public Health noted that the report circulated within the agenda was written on 3 May and since that date there had been nationally an increasing number of people who had been tested and sadly an increase in the number of people who had died. It was, however, noted that there had been a slowing down of the rate of cases.

Whilst most people suffered from mild symptoms, primarily a fever and cough, severity did appear to increase with age. With most people suffering mild symptoms only, it was stated that many people may have had covid-19 but were unaware of it.

Of those who had contracted covid-19, the Director of Public Health stated that 15% had been admitted to hospital and 5% had been admitted to intensive care.

Whilst it was noted that infections had peaked, in terms of those being diagnosed, due to the population practising good social distancing; the pandemic was not over. The curve, it was stated, had been flattened artificially through the lockdown. The risk remained that there may be a second or third peak in cases and as such, the Director of Public Health stressed that the nation was in a dangerous period of the pandemic and so it was important people continued to socially distance.

The Director of Public Health stated that everyone had come together at a difficult time to tackle the most significant public health issue for a century. It was important, she reiterated, that everyone needed to maintain their resolve until there was a vaccination or a scientific intervention.

The Chief Executive of the council informed Members that Croydon had the largest care market in London with 123 care homes of which 63 worked with older residents. The situation for care homes had been chronic and the council had been working closely with the sector to support them through this terrible time, however unfortunately a number of residents had passed away due to the virus.

Members were informed that the council had worked closely with care homes to ensure they had the right support, training and PPE for their staff. It was stated that the council had been the care homes main supplier of PPE during the crisis. Work continued with the care homes, and the council maintained daily communication with them and were ensuring staff had access to testing. The Chief Executive informed Cabinet that the Director of Public Health had been appointed as the Borough's lead on testing and tracing in care homes.

It was noted that PPE had been a topical issue throughout the pandemic and that in the early days of the crisis, supply had been a major issue. However, due to the work of officers and through the pan-London local authority network, this concern had been addressed and the council had ensured that staff and care homes had sufficient supplies throughout the pandemic and work had begun to ensure schools had supplies also. The Chief Executive thanked the procurement team for their tireless work in securing supplies of PPE.

The Chief Executive informed Members that the council had received a database from the government of over 11,000 residents that required shielding. Whilst the government was providing food supplies for those residents, the council had provided additional supplies where required. Every resident on the shielded list had been contacted so they were aware of how to contact the council for support. The council had also worked closely with the NHS to ensure residents had their medicines delivered.

It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of residents requiring the support of food banks and the council had sought to support the community sector. An emergency grant scheme for the sector had been established for grants up to £10,000 and due to over-subscription, the council was looking to set up a second phase to continue supporting the sector.

Street homelessness had been another area of focus for the council and it had worked to support the GLA in providing accommodation for people including central London rough sleepers during the pandemic.

Cabinet was informed that the majority of schools had remained open during the pandemic, with 90 schools open on 7 May 2020. The majority of the children attending school were the children of key workers and the council continued to support vulnerable children to access education. All vulnerable children had been contacted by children's services to ensure they were receiving the support they required.

The Chief Executive stated that the council was provided funding by government to issue business grants with an accumulative value of £38m. To ensure due diligence of the grants, the council had required businesses to complete short surveys after which the grant monies were released.

Members were informed that the key priorities going forward were to continue supporting vulnerable residents through the crisis. When moving from a health crisis to recovery it was important that the council supported the restarting of the economy to provide both economic and environmental stability.

In terms of the council resuming services, the Chief Executive advised that the key concern was a possible second or third wave of the pandemic

and ensuring staff safety. As such, it was noted that social distancing guidance in the workplace would be important and the council had begun to look at the implications of social distancing. It was stated that Bernard Weatherill House would have a staff capacity of 20%, circa 375, and so it was important to assess priority services to return to the office. Not only did the council need to review its office space to ensure it was safe and the return of staff was well managed, but also leisure centres, libraries and museums. To ensure the safety of staff, PPE would be provided for the office and for commutes and through the support of Croydon University Hospital (CUH) staff would have access to testing. The Chief Executive stressed her thanks to the hospital during this period and the importance of the strong partnership.

Mike Bell, Chair of CUH Board, gave Cabinet an overview of the impact of covid-19 on the NHS and started by thanking all staff for their help and support during this period.

It was noted that London had been hit hard by covid-19 and Croydon had been hit particularly hard and early on during the pandemic. Much like, Brent and Newham, it was noted that a number of residents in Croydon had diabetes, hypertension and other underlying health conditions which were known to have an impact on people's ability to survive the virus.

Members were informed that CUH had admitted 937 patients who had tested positive for covid-19 and sadly 265 of those patients had passed away.

In terms of trends, three weeks previous the hospital had around 250 covid-19 positive patients admitted whereas on the day of the meeting there were around 50 patients with covid-19 in the hospital. Not only were there fewer numbers of patients, it was noted that the number of new cases being diagnosed was also reducing. Whilst the curve of infections had been flattened it was stressed that the threat of covid-19 continued.

Members were informed that Mike Bell was happy to attend future Cabinet and committee meetings to discuss the resilience of the NHS in terms of ongoing covid-19 and returning services to the hospital. It was noted that partnership work with the council and all parts of the health sector had been integral to driving the borough's response to the pandemic.

Mike Bell advised Members that the NHS in Croydon had prepared for covid-19 and had sought to maintain as many of its core services as possible and would seek to reintroduce more services in the next month.

Whilst covid-19 had been devastating, it was noted that it had pushed for the development of services with over 80% of outpatient activity now taking place on the telephone which was hoped would continue. Intensive care capacity had also increased from 15 to 37 beds and high dependency care capacity had increased from 37 to 59. Again, it was

anticipated this increased capacity would be maintained following the pandemic.

Members were informed that primary care had been transformed over this period with video conferencing appointments. However, practices had also remained open for business and patients were encouraged to speak with primary care practitioners if they were unwell as it was feared that people were avoiding accessing health services due to covid-19.

The role of pharmacy care was highlighted as having been vital to the response to the pandemic and had facilitated the expansion of prescribing and home delivery of medicines to those self-isolating.

Whilst it was noted that there had a huge amount of coverage of NHS workers struggling to access PPE, Members were advised that CUH had maintained full supplies of WHO compliant PPE throughout the pandemic. Supplies had been of a sufficient level to enable the hospital to respond to emergency calls for PPE for care homes.

The strain of working during this period was noted as being deeply traumatic and the hospital had put in place additional mental health support for staff and had worked with the trade unions to ensure the health and safety of all staff.

It was recognised that covid-19 was not an equal opportunities virus and had impacted poorer communities and BAME communities harder. CUH were working to analyse the admissions data and were cross referencing it to demographic information to gain a greater understanding of the impact of the virus. Early indications suggested there was a link between cardiovascular diseases and body mass index however more work would be undertaken to gain a greater understanding of the virus and to support working with the communities. It was recognised that it was imperative that more work focussed on conquering health inequalities.

The Chair of CUH Board thanked the people and businesses of Croydon for their amazing support during this time. Over 1,000 meals were being delivered per day as were treats such as Easter eggs. Schools were also recognised for their work to create additional equipment for hospital staff. It was stressed that supporting staff welfare was integral to the hospital and all support was appreciated.

The Chief Executive thanked all partners, and in particular NHS partners, for their work during this period and noted that the partnership and integration which had been developed over the preceding years had enabled the borough to respond and support its residents. All council staff were thanked for their work to ensure the council was able to continue providing core services and frontline contractors were thanked for their commitment to delivering services.

The Leader thanked the Chief Executive, Director of Public Health and the Chair of the CUH Board for all their work during this period and noted that CUH would play a leading role in furthering understanding of the virus' impact on health inequalities.

The Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services thanked all those who had responded to support the most vulnerable residents and highlighted the work of Evolve, Thames Reach and others which had been working with the homeless sector to ensure rough sleepers were not left on the streets.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the work of the Gateway Service which was already in place to support those impacted by Welfare Reform. This service, it was noted, had been able to step up and support those in need.

The work of caretakers and the responses repair service were thanked for ensuring repairs continued to take place, so residents had heating and safe homes. The Cabinet Member stated that the crises had highlighted the importance of people having a home to call their own and this remained a priority for the council.

The Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon thanked council officers, in particular Steve Iles and Tom Lawrence, who had worked with Veolia during this challenging time to ensure residential bin collections still took place. Members were informed that the Cabinet Member had written to Veolia staff to personally thank them for their commitment.

The enforcement team was also thanked by the Cabinet Member as it was noted that a small minority of residents had continued to fly-tip during the lockdown and these had been caught with the 47<sup>th</sup> vehicle being seized during the period.

Members were informed that from Wednesday 13 May 2020, the household refuse and recycling centres would be reopened. Social distancing measures would be put in place and guidance had been posted on the Council's website. It was recognised that residents may experience queuing at the centres initially and so the council would provide expected wait times when known. The Cabinet Member also confirmed that the bulky waste collection service was also being restarted and could be booked in advance.

Veolia staff were thanked for their hard work to continue to deliver services during this difficult time for frontline staff.

The Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities thanked and paid tribute to all council staff for their response to covid-19. The work of the Resilience team was highlighted as they had provided around the clock support to the council's response. Additionally, the Cabinet Member highlighted the work of the Family Justice Service which had increased service provision to be a seven day service. The Licensing team

continued to work to ensure premises which should have been closed during lockdown were closed.

Members were informed that the council continued to support communities and had sought to maximise help from the voluntary sector with the CVA coordinating requests for support and managing new volunteers. The Cabinet Member noted that everyone owed the voluntary sector a huge debt for their extensive response to the pandemic, including the expansion of food banks to provide a six day a week service. The council had established an emergency grant scheme to support the voluntary sector and whilst almost 30 organisations had received funding it had been oversubscribed and so more funding had been made available.

Whilst it was noted that violent crime had reduced, there were increasing concerns in relation to domestic violence and the Family Justice Centre had been working with the police to develop a safe spaces campaign with supermarkets and other venues.

The Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care noted the incredible amount of work and partnership working between the health service and the council during this period. Discharges from hospital had aided recovery and had been possible due to the partnership working.

The council and CUH were congratulated for their work in successfully sourcing PPE during the crisis. It was stated that this success was not because of the government but had been achieved in spite of the government.

The work of care workers was particularly highlighted by the Cabinet Member, noting that they were often wrongly underappreciated and had continued to put themselves on the frontline despite concerns of a lack of PPE and a lack of testing.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning noted that schools had done a large amount of work during this period by not only ensuring schools were open for the children of frontline children but had also supported the most vulnerable children in the borough. Schools had continued to support families, and teachers, teaching assistants and nurseries were thanked for their tireless work to ensure young people were supported.

Members were informed that young people were being called to ensure they were supported and technology was being provided where required. It was recognised that more work was required to support access to technology and work would continue on this over the following months.

Vulnerable families were continuing to be supported by the council with social workers ensuring all children in need and children with protection plans were contacted. Members were advised that 90% of visits with

priority 1, priority 2 and priority 3 children had taken place in person and virtually.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources stated that the pandemic had been a huge financial challenge for the council and despite the promises at the start of the crisis from the government only £19.9m had been received which was only a fraction of the amount the council had spent on responding to covid-19. Costs related to covid-19 included expenditure, lost income and budget savings not being realised. It was highlighted that to-date £400,000 had been spent on PPE and £500,000 had been spent on accommodation.

Members were informed that the council had worked closely with suppliers to ensure they were still able to deliver services, where appropriate. Sustainability payments had been provided to the care sector and providers had been paid four weeks in advance.

Business grants had been paid to local businesses to support them during the difficult period and council tax support had been extended. The Cabinet Member announced that new claimants for council tax support would receive £150 reduction and those residents which had seen a reduction in their wages would be able to apply for a reduction of £150 also. The council, it was stated, remained committed to supporting those impacted by covid-19.

The Cabinet Member paid tribute to the work of Croydon Digital Services which had enabled the council to have excellent working from home functionality, had developed new services such as a hotline for shielded residents and had launched a service update page which provided an overview of the status of council services.

The Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs thanked officers who had been working to support businesses and residents during the lockdown. It was noted that covid-19 was first a health problem and then an economic problem.

The council was working with key stakeholders to ensure the council can support the local economy. Over 2,000 businesses had been contacted and almost £39m in business grants had been released. The Cabinet Member noted that a number of businesses had not applied for grants and so encouraged everyone to highlight the grant scheme to local businesses.

Croydon Works had been redeveloped and had been engaging with businesses across the borough with a particular focus on those sectors with increased vacancies. Croydon Works had facilitated vacancies being filled for a number of organisations including those outside the borough such as St Helier Hospital and St George's Hospital.



The Cabinet Member informed Members that a business survey had been launched which was hoped would enable the council to better understand how it could support local businesses. To further support the local economy, a business support website had been established and would be updated with further information.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport stated that work had initially taken place to close libraries and museums and work with partners to ensure they were in line with government guidance.

To support residents and the culture sector there had been an increased online presence which people were engaging with. New content was being released online and those producing it were thanked.

Whilst parks had been kept open, play areas had been closed in line with guidance and would remain closed following updated guidance. The Cabinet Member advised Members that the council remained in contact with Friends of Parks groups to keep them updated of the situation in their local areas.

Members were informed that a culture relief fund of £135,000 had been established to support the cultural sector and whilst the Cabinet Member noted that there were challenges, he looked forward to reintroducing services as and when it was safe to do so and looked forward to 2023 when Croydon would be the London Borough of Culture.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment & Regeneration (non-voting – Job Share) stated that at the outset the council had put in place parking dispensations for NHS and key workers which was followed by the suspension of parking charges. The council had only issued fines for dangerous driving and traffic violations.

The council had introduced low traffic initiatives which had reflected use patterns and sought to promote greater adherence to 20mph speed limits, support social distancing and encourage walking and cycling. To further support cycling, the Cabinet Member stated that improvements to cycle routes would be introduced and included a London Road cycle route being introduced by the end of the month.

It was noted that public transport capacity would be significantly reduced with social distancing measures as such, across London, there would be a need to repurpose the roads to meet demands for walking and cycling and to support this work, the council would work with all interested parties to access the funding available for new transport schemes.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Regeneration (voting – Job Share) thanked all the staff in planning and regeneration teams for their work during the period and for supporting the wider council's response. It was noted that the teams were looking to the future and to combating the housing crises as the pandemic had brought to light the

lack of decent homes. Work continued to develop the Local Plan which would ensure the delivery of those much needed homes.

Members noted that the planning team had maintained business as usual, where possible, and two remote Planning Committee meetings had been held to-date, which were meetings held in public.

The Cabinet Member noted that the regeneration team was working to develop recovery plans to assist the council in supporting regeneration of the area following the pandemic.

The Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board noted that one initial concern had been the home delivery of medication to shielded residents and thanked the volunteers who had supported home deliveries to those residents. Work continued to ensure the vulnerable and shielded their medicines when they were due.

The localities work which had been undertaken by the council prior to the pandemic was stated to have been invaluable in the council's and NHS' response. Communities had also stepped forward and had worked with the council to provide services to vulnerable residents.

The Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board noted that mental health would need to be a focus going forward as a number of people will have been adversely affected by the crises and it would be ongoing concern.

The disproportionate impact on BAME communities was highlighted by the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board and the work by CUH to gain a better understanding of this impact was welcomed. It was noted that there were concerns within these communities as it was recognised that the poorest residents would have no other choice but to use public transport and would face an increased risk of infection.

Members were informed that the Health & Wellbeing Board would look to develop strategies to support mental health and tackle health inequalities going forward.

The Leader of the Opposition thanked the NHS for their fantastic work and council staff who had worked to maintain services. He also highlighted the work of care workers which was very important but was often under appreciated. The work of the voluntary sector was also noted for its support to assist vulnerable residents during this time. Finally, the Leader of the Opposition stated that many residents were initially concerned that the kerbside waste collection service would be disrupted but due to the work of Veolia staff this had not been the case.

Whilst the opposition supported the council in its work to respond to the crises and support residents, it was stated that it was important that challenge remained. The Leader of the Opposition queried whether it was appropriate that Brick by Brick had submitted a number of contentious

planning applications a few days after lockdown had begun. It was suggested that the message from the council, in relation to this, was inappropriate as residents did not have an opportunity to meet to form a coherent objection to the applications. It was further suggested that lessons would need to be learnt following the pandemic on appropriate forms of intensification which did not increase transmission rates.

In response to the concerns raised, the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services stated that the engagement process for planning applications started long before the application was submitted and that for Brick by Brick applications, engagement had taken place prior to submission. In terms of the council's engagement period on planning applications, this had been extended by a week to enable residents greater opportunity to respond. Members were also informed that the Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee had referred all Brick by Brick applications to the Planning Committee to ensure they were fully considered.

The Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services noted that the covid-19 crisis had increased the need for people to have their own home and not be in bedsits, or similar, and so it was important that the council did not obstruct the development of good quality homes in appropriate locations.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Tim Pollard, the Leader noted that the meeting was the first meeting of Cabinet since the pandemic had begun and that it was important that the council gave a full presentation on the significant work which had been undertaken; however future meetings, it was stated, would be more traditional. The Leader further noted that members of the public could dip in and out of the webcast and that it was not a requirement to watch the entire meeting.

The Leader informed Members that there were a number of challenges facing local politicians and suggested that it may be pertinent to review options to devolve more powers and ensure best use of ward budgets. It was hoped that the Governance Review Panel would reflect on this and bring forward possible options. The Leader confirmed that he was confident that the political parties could work together in the future to ensure the council responded in the best manner.

Concerns were raised by Members of the Shadow Cabinet that the council had received £60m for business grants and that while the council had been advertising these grants there were a number of businesses which had not received the support. Members stated that some businesses had waited four to five weeks for grant payments which were urgently required and requested that these be paid urgently.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources confirmed that the council had spoken with other councils to get an understanding of best practice. Furthermore, it was stated that a number of officers had been

transferred to support the allocation of grants and were now undertaking doorstep visits to encourage applications. The Cabinet Member informed Members that difficulties had arisen due to MHCLG guidance changing several times over the period and it was necessary to undertake sufficient checks on a business to avoid the concern that MHCLG may demand monies returned if not correctly allocated. In relation to concerns raised in relation to six business grant applications submitted on 4 April, the Leader confirmed that an update would be provided to the councillor by the following day on the progress of processing those grant applications.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources stated that the council was in conversation with tenants on the investment purchases and noted that there may be some need for flexibility however any short-term impact would not impact the long-term return of the investment.

Everyone involved in the continuation of education in the borough was thanked for their hard work and dedication, including social workers who had engaged with vulnerable children who were not attending school. Despite the work of all those involved, it was noted that education had been interrupted and would be impacted.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning informed Members that there had been a number of initiatives put in place to support the work of schools. Where children had not been able to access education via technology take-home packs had been provided and the sector was looking at the support which could be provided and supporting families to have access to the internet as a number of secondary schools were setting homework through online portals.

Opposition Members advised the meeting that they had phoned a number of care homes based in their wards and had found that a number of staff were concerned about the impact of the virus on care homes as there had been high numbers of deaths and cases. Members were advised that the council had been providing guidance to all care homes in the borough and had procured PPE for care home staff. The council had focussed on supporting care homes as it was recognised they were at high risk of infection and had not had the attention that the NHS had received nationally. It was stated that it was imperative that a national solution to adult social care was developed.

The Executive Director Health, Wellbeing and Adults expressed his condolences to everyone who had lost someone during this time and thanked families for their understanding when they had not been able to visit a loved one. The Executive Director noted that there were a number of homes being supported in the borough and not just those caring for the elderly but also those supporting residents with learning difficulties or mental health problems.

In response to questions the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Regeneration (non-voting – Job Share) confirmed that the details of the specific roads included within the low traffic initiatives were published on the council's website and that notices had been placed in the affected areas. The webpage also gave the option to residents to suggest additional roads for low traffic schemes.

Members were informed that the council had used emergency powers to introduce the initiatives which lasted initially for 21 days and could be extended for a further 21 days. If the scheme was to be in place for longer then the council would need to implement a temporary traffic order. The Cabinet Member stated that the council wanted to engage with ward councillors who knew their areas best to support the implementation of the schemes.

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decisions:

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council record its thanks for all the front line and support service staff that have continued to provide vital services across the borough;
2. That the Council record its thanks for the work of organisations, staff and volunteers across Croydon, including voluntary and community groups, who have enabled a strong coordinated response across Croydon and ensured vulnerable residents receive the support they need;
3. That the Cabinet note the report and the actions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic; and
4. That the Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, Chief Executive and S151 Officer continue efforts to raise awareness of costs incurred by Croydon Council in responding to Covid-19, supporting residents, business and communities, and the need for further funding from central government.

30/20

**Outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of Early Help and Children's Social Care**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning thanked all involved in the council's journey to being rated 'Good' by Ofsted inspectors and highlighted to work of Rob Henderson, Nick Pendry and previous directors, Martin Pratt at Camden Council and the work of the Safeguarding, Scrutiny Committees, Deputy Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Members.

Members were advised that Ofsted had made four judgements which were outlined at paragraph 3.2 of the report. It was noted that Ofsted inspectors had seen a great transformation of the service to support children in need of help and protection which was enabling the council to meet the needs of individuals. Concerns in relation the Single Point of Contact had been addressed quickly so there was only one “front door” and the voice of the child was heard. Members were also advised that promising conversations were taking place to further enhance opportunities for children and families to access services and ensure meaningful work was taking place at the right time.

In terms of children in care and care leavers, the initial inspection in 2017 had found serious concerns and since then progress had been made to ensure social workers were committed, knowledgeable and knew their children well and understood the importance of permanence. It was noted that Croydon had a large cohort of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children UASC, with over 350 UASC at any one time, and these children were benefiting from the effective multi-agency work taking place. Members were informed that work continued in this area as the council continued its journey to achieve ‘outstanding’.

The Cabinet Member informed Members that services to support children with disabilities had undergone a dramatic transformation with staff being well supported. Furthermore, significant work had gone into supporting children with disabilities during the covid-19 pandemic. The Cabinet Member thanked Mike Brown for his work in transforming this service.

It was noted by the Cabinet Member that more work was required to maximise the stability of placements so children can have their ‘forever home’ at any earlier stage. The council remained committed to supporting UASC despite the continued underfunding by the Home Office and the Ofsted report acknowledged this work.

The impact of strong corporate and political leadership had been noted by inspectors and the Cabinet Member stated that the council’s financial commitment to deliver changes in the service could not be underestimated and thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources for their support on the improvement journey.

Cabinet noted that Ofsted had made four recommendations which included the need for improved quality of written plans for young people. Whilst it was recognised that social workers knew their children and their needs well this had not always been fully recorded and it was important that records were completed. Additionally, a recommendation had focussed on supporting care leavers to find accommodation and the Cabinet Member noted the council’s commitment to support care leavers with housing and council tax support.

The Leader of the Council reiterated the thanks for the Cabinet Member of all involved who had been committed to improving children's social care in the borough.

The Executive Director Children, Families & Education stated that he was very proud of the work of all involved and noted that the outcome was the best that the council have hoped for in a short period of time. It was noted that Ofsted had seen real action and pace of change in addition to the passion and commitment of the skilled workforce. The practitioners, families, Members, transformation board and the council were thanked for their support to achieve the transformation of the service.

The Shadow Cabinet Member congratulated all involved in the improvement journey and highlighted the work of staff. It was noted that the financial commitment of the council and the appointments of Rob Henderson and Nick Pendry had supported the improvements made in addition to the virtual school and improved partnership working.

Whilst it was recognised that the council had improved services for children and young people there was still some way to go and that it was important that the council remained focussed on making progress with the four recommendations from Ofsted.

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decisions:

**RESOLVED:** To note the findings from the re-inspection of Croydon's Early Help and Children's Social Care Services by Ofsted which concluded on 14th February 2020 and was published on Ofsted's website on 16th March 2020.

31/20

### **Children, Young People & Families Plan**

Due to time constraints during the meeting, the Leader requested that this report be taken to the next meeting of Cabinet to enable a full discussion of the Plan.

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decision:

**RESOLVED:** To take the report to the next meeting of Cabinet for discussion.

32/20

### **Report on Consultation on proposals to renew the private sector housing Selective Licensing Scheme in Croydon**

The Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services informed Members that the council had launched the first Selective Licensing Scheme in Croydon in 2015 which sought to ensure private rented homes met

required standards. The scheme covered over 36,000 properties in the borough.

Through the scheme, the council had taken action against non-compliance however it was noted that most landlords took corrective action where required and that it had not been necessary to take many to court. Although, Members were informed that over 70 landlords had been banned following contraventions.

Given the impact of the current scheme, the Cabinet Member stated it was imperative to renew the scheme to ensure private renters in the borough had good quality homes. The council had completed 12 weeks of consultation of the proposed new scheme through a variety of means including residents' surveys and stakeholder group meetings. The outcome of the consultation found that 64% of residents felt that the current scheme had been effective and that 70% of Croydon residents were in favour of the council continuing with some form of Selective Licensing.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the report sought Cabinet's approval to proceed the preferred option, option 3 of the report, which sought two designations within the borough with a proposed implementation date, subject to Secretary of State Approval, being 1 February 2021.

The proposed option included the two designations; designation A covered 92.5% of the borough's privately rented sector and focussed on poor housing conditions whilst designation B covered 7.5% of the private rented sector and sought to focus on problems of persistent anti-social behaviour.

Cabinet was informed that the objectives of the scheme included full compliance with all licensable dwellings being licensed, improved property conditions, reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents, improved professionalism of private landlords and an increased focus on the health and wellbeing of tenants and their families.

In terms of the licensing fee, the Cabinet Member informed Members that it was proposed that the fee would be payable in two stages and would amount to £750 for a single dwelling which it was noted to be favourable in comparison to other councils' licensing schemes.

The Cabinet Member concluded by thanking Shayne Coulter who had recently retired and had been instrumental in introducing the first scheme and at the initial stages of the proposed scheme. It was noted that Shayne had been dedicated to improving the standard of housing in the borough and the council wished her well for the future.

The Shadow Deputy Leader noted that the Opposition did not object to the principle of the scheme as they also wanted to see poor landlords



removed from the private rented market; however noted that it was felt that the proposed scheme appeared contrived and concerns were raised that the evidence base was not complete as an area highlighted as suffering from persistent anti-social behaviour included a woodland area.

In response to the concerns raised, the Cabinet Member stated that a large amount of work had gone into developing the proposed scheme including working with barristers, other boroughs and undertaking extensive consultation to ensure the proposal was appropriate. It was, however, noted that there was only guidance on Selective Licensing Schemes and so it was not clear what the Secretary of State's comments may be.

The Cabinet Member stated that the anti-social behaviour incidents highlighted in the map related to specific properties and not to the general area.

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decisions:

**RESOLVED: To**

1. Consider the outcome of the consultation process detailed in the Consultation Report produced by Opinion Research Services (April 2020) (at Appendix 1 of the report), in particular the representations received and the Council's consideration of, and response to, these representations (at Appendix 2 of the report).
2. Consider the Consultation Evidence Report (at Appendix 3 of the report) which highlights the scale of problems relating to poor housing conditions and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the private rented sector, identifies the objectives that a selective licensing designation would help the Council achieve and possible alternatives to such a designation and the equalities analysis at Appendix 13 of the report.
3. Upon consideration of the matters at 1 and 2, agree to choose selective licensing scheme option 3; from the three options presented at Cabinet on the 21st October 2019 that were central to the public consultation exercise and with due consideration of the alternative options presented; as the best option to proceed with, with the aim of achieving the significant improvements needed to the private rented sector in Croydon.
4. Upon consideration of the matters at 1, 2 and the agreement in 3 and using its powers under s.80 Housing Act 2004, agree to the designation of 22 wards, called area A (predominately in north Croydon), as a selective licensing area delineated and edged red and infilled green on the map at Appendix 4 of the report.

5. Upon consideration of the matters at 1, 2 and the agreement in 3 and using its powers under s.80 Housing Act 2004, agree to the designation of 6 wards, called area B (in south Croydon) as a selective licensing area as delineated and edged red and infilled orange on the map at Appendix 5 of the report.
6. Having agreed 4 and 5 that Cabinet delegate to the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services and the Director of Law and Governance, responsibility for agreeing the final document/s forming the application(s) to request confirmation of the selective licensing designation(s) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG);
7. Having agreed 4 and 5 and where the appropriate national authority (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) confirms one or both designation(s) that Cabinet:
  - a. Delegate authority to the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services to agree, along with the national authority, that the respective commencement date(s) for the designation(s) be the 1st February 2021 or from such other date as is specified by the national authority for this purpose;
  - b. Agree the proposed scheme objectives as detailed in Appendix 6 of the report;
  - c. Agree to the proposed fee structure for licence applications made under the selective licensing scheme(s) at Appendix 7 of the report;
  - d. Agree the proposed licence conditions that would apply to any granted selective licence as set out at Appendix 8 of the report;
  - e. Agree the proposed policy regarding the granting of property licences under any new licensing designation(s) at Appendix 11 of the report;
  - f. Delegate to the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services authority to agree changes to the proposed implementation of the schemes where necessary including updating scheme documentation to reflect revised commencement date/s specified by the national authority for this purpose and to ensure that all statutory notifications are carried out in the prescribed manner for the designations and to take all

necessary steps to provide for the operational delivery of any licensing schemes agreed by Cabinet.

33/20

### **Stage 1: Recommendations arising from Scrutiny**

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decisions:

**RESOLVED:** To receive the recommendations arising from the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee (4 February 2020), Scrutiny & Overview Committee (25 February 2020) and the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee (10 March 2020), and to provide a substantive response within two months (i.e. at the next available Cabinet meeting on 13 July 2020).

34/20

### **Stage 2 Response to Recommendations arising from Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 29 October 2019, Children & Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 5 November 2019 and Streets, Environment & Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 17 December 2019**

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decisions:

**RESOLVED:** To approve the response and action plans attached to this report at Appendix A and that these be reported to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or relevant Sub-Committees.

35/20

### **Investing in our Borough**

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources informed Members that the report detailed important contracts which had been negotiated and awarded during the covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, it was noted, that the council had acquired further property which had been required to support residents during this period.

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decisions:

**RESOLVED:** To approve

1. The procurement strategy which will result in contract awards for the provision of ANPR solution, and Parking ICT Case Management system for a maximum term of 10 years as set out at agenda item 11a.

**RESOLVED:** To recommend

2. To the Leader of the Council, that in respect of decisions requiring Cabinet's approval, or prior reporting to Cabinet, concerning the

acquisition or disposal of property, procurement strategies and contract awards and variations, where due to the challenges created by Covid 19 a decision cannot reasonably await the decision of Cabinet:

- a. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to agree such decisions concerning the disposal or acquisition of properties;
- b. The nominated Cabinet Member in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources or, where the nominated member is the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to agree such decisions concerning the award and/or variation of contracts;
- c. Note that any awards made under these delegations will be notified in the standard contracts report to the next meeting of Cabinet following the decision being made.

**RESOLVED:** To note

3. The list of delegated award decisions for contracts over £5,000,000 in value made by the nominated Cabinet Member in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources or, where the nominated Cabinet Member is the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader since the last meeting of Cabinet, as set out in section 4.2.1 of the report.
4. The contracts between £500,000 and £5,000,000 anticipated to be awarded by the nominated Cabinet Member, in consultation with the nominated Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources or, where the nominated Cabinet Member is the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Leader, as set out in section 4.1.2 of the report.
5. The list of delegated award decisions made by the Director of Commissioning and Procurement, between 18/03/2020 – 17/04/2020, as set out in section 4.2.3 of the report.
6. The delegation agreed by the Leader in respect of the purchase of properties in relation to the HRA, and the delegated decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources to approve the purchase of properties in relation to the HRA, as set out in section 4.3.1 of the report.

7. Property acquisitions and disposals agreed by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader since the last meeting of Cabinet, as set out in section 4.3.2 of the report.

a **Parking ICT Case Management System & ANPR Cameras Procurement**

The Leader of the Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to make the following decisions:

**RESOLVED:** To approve the procurement strategy for the Parking ICT Case Management System & ANPR Cameras Procurement with the following recommendation:

Procure the Parking ICT Case Management system with an estimated value of £1.5 million and the provision of an ANPR solution, providing hardware, software and support, with an estimated value of £8.9 million for a 10 year term. The procurement will use an EU Open tender process consisting of two lots: Lot 1, provision of a Parking ICT system, hosting, support and maintenance & Lot 2, provision of ANPR cameras, back end IT system to manage and control the camera network and images, associated support and maintenance and hosting of the camera management system.

36/20

**Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This item was not required.

37/20

**Minutes of the previous meeting**

The part B minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 24 February 2020 were agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm