

# Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub- Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Chair)  
Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors Robert Canning, Sherwan Chowdhury, Luke Clancy,  
Felicity Flynn and Vidhi Mohan

Reserve Members: Karen Jewitt, Michael Neal, Andrew Pelling, Joy Prince,  
Callton Young, Jan Buttinger and Oni Oviri

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday, 17 December 2019** at **6.30 pm** in **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**. **A pre-meet for members only will take place at 6:00pm in room F5**

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www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings  
Monday, 9 December 2019

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](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

## **AGENDA – PART A**

**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 1 October 2019 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. Sustainable Croydon (Pages 5 - 44)**

To receive an update on the Sustainable Croydon agenda.

**6. A Housing and Homelessness Strategy For Croydon (Pages 45 - 150)**

To receive and consider the development plans for the Croydon Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

**7. Policy for Council Community Properties, Rent Subsidy and Rate Relief (Pages 151 - 208)**

To receive information on the background to the current approach and the proposed approach to the policy for allocation of Council community properties, setting rent and provision of rent subsidy and rate relief to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

**8. Work Programme (Pages 209 - 212)**

To note the Work Programme for the remainder of 2019/20 municipal year.

**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.”

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**For general release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b> <b>17<sup>th</sup> December 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SUSTAINABLE CROYDON</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Stuart King, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport &amp; Regeneration (Job Share)</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director of Place</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

*The recommendations contained in this report aims to deliver against multiple priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan including but not limited to:*

- *Improved air quality, especially at or near schools*
- *To increase resident engagement to*
- *Transport, digital and social infrastructures are effective and support economic growth*
- *Less reliance on cars, more willingness to use public transport, walk and cycle*

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	This item has been identified by the Streets Environment and Homes Sub-Committee as an area of Scrutiny.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the update on the Sustainable Croydon agenda.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is an update on the Sustainable Croydon agenda which was last taken to Cabinet in October 2019. That report asked for approval from Cabinet for the methodology of the Citizen's Assembly which is detailed below in order for a delegated decision to be taken by the Executive Director of Place.
- 1.2 This followed a report in September providing a summary of the Sustainable Croydon Summit 2019 on the 27<sup>th</sup> June where the Leader announced the intention to take a declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergency to Council. This was unanimously ratified by Full Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> July.

## **2. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY**

- 2.1 Earlier this year, the IPBES published a report that indicated that around 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades, due to the rise in global warming. This report came after the IPCC published their report stating that there is a very limited time left to reduce carbon emissions and stop many species, including coral, from going extinct.
- 2.2 Due to these reports, global concern rose and climate change came to forefront for communities across the world. Groups like Extinction Rebellion came together to raise awareness on the issue and encourage governments, world leaders and everyday residents to take action.
- 2.3 At the end of last year, the Mayor of London declared a climate emergency to avert an ecological breakdown that he says poses an existential threat to future generations and the UK government has committed to cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. At the time of writing this report, over 250 District, County, Unitary & Metropolitan Councils have declared climate emergencies across the UK.
- 2.4 Citizen's Assembly UK will be taking place from January to March 2019 to tackle climate change. This is an initiative set up by cross-party MPs that will look at what members of the public can do to reduce CO2.
- 2.5 Croydon is also taking steps to tackle the climate emergency but is also aiming to make the borough a more sustainable place.

### **Sustainable Croydon Summit 2019**

- 2.6 At the start of the Sustainable Croydon Summit, which was opened by Shirley Rodrigues – Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy for London – Councillor Tony Newman, Leader of the Council, declared a climate emergency. This was recognition from the Council that the damage to the world's climate had reached a state of crisis requiring urgent, significant action. We are at a critical point in time, where immediate change is necessary at an international, national and local level to ensure the best possible future for our community.
- 2.7 This emergency is not restricted to the severe impact upon our environment; it exists as a health problem as well, with many residents hospitalised by the poor air quality resulting from pollution. A radical agenda is therefore needed to create a sustainable borough to protect the people of Croydon. This agenda must have young people at its heart so that the needs of future generations are embedded into the borough's plans, but all of us have a responsibility.
- 2.8 In recognition of the need for ambitious and effective change, the Leader made the commitment to make Croydon Council carbon neutral by 2030 to ensure we take personal responsibility and react appropriately to this severe global issue. Further, the Leader also announced Croydon's ambition to become the leading sustainable green place in London to ensure we are doing all we can at a local level.
- 2.9 In the weeks after the Summit, Cabinet considered a report which was referred to Full Council and led to the official declaration of a Climate and Ecological

Emergency by the Council on July 15th. The report also committed to empowering businesses and residents to play their part in making Croydon the most sustainable borough in London.

- 2.10 Already, action has been taken to make Croydon a greener, more sustainable place:
- The Green Croydon Fund of £250k was announced at the summit - this annual fund provides financial support for projects, activities and initiatives that promote environmental protection, green living and a sustainable lifestyle in Croydon and link into the priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan. The fund launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.
  - An increase in the recycling rate borough-wide by 9%;
  - A published five-year Air Quality Action Plan 2017 – 22;
  - More than 1,500 new bin installations all across the borough to revamp the system for waste collection;
  - The School Street Scheme which prohibits most vehicular transport at the start and end of the school day to improve air quality around schools in the scheme and protect children from the harms of air pollution;
  - The award-winning “Don't Mess with Croydon” campaign
  - A commitment to planting at least 3,500 trees between 2018 – 2023;
- 2.11 However, more must and will be done to ensure that the Council fulfils its commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and for Croydon to become a sustainable city. This will also tie into the Mayor of London's commitment for London to become carbon neutral by 2050.

### **3. CITIZEN'S ASSEMBLY**

- 3.1 This report details the launch of a Citizen's Assembly in the New Year, of which the first theme discussed will be targeting Climate Change.
- 3.2 A citizens' assembly is a group of people who are brought together to discuss an issue or issues and reach a conclusion about what they think should happen. Using this method would ensure that the actions the Council takes in regards to climate change would be heavily influenced by the voice of residents.
- 3.3 Multiple Councils have undertaken Citizen's Assemblies after declaring climate emergencies to great success including Camden Council.

#### **Recruiting Assembly Members**

- 3.3 The Council is working with an independent consultant to deliver this Citizen's Assembly to ensure that the recommendations that result from the assembly will be independent and based solely on resident input.
- 3.4 In order for an assembly to come to a borough-wide consensus of opinion, members of the community have been recruited and entered into a pool where 70 residents will then be selected by the various aspects of Croydon across wards, and across groups that share protected characteristics to ensure they are representative of our borough's diverse communities. The aim is to retain

as many assembly members for all three sessions; only an average of 50 are expected to attend from the 70 invited.

- 3.5 Assembly members will be provided with £50 worth of vouchers from a selected retailer for each session they attend to encourage those selected to participate in all three of the meetings that are currently being planned. Members will need to attend all three sessions to receive the vouchers.

### **Assembly Meeting Management and Results**

- 3.6 Participants that have been recruited to take part in the Citizen's Assembly process will be provided with pre-meeting briefings before each meeting to ensure that they are clear about what to expect before each session. This should also allow each member to take an active approach over the course of the assembly.
- 3.7 The content of the meetings will be co-designed by the independent consultant with the Council to ensure that the assembly members are:
- Informed of any relevant background information regarding climate change and lowering carbon emissions in Croydon and London for context;
  - Given the opportunity to scope the issue of climate change in Croydon in the first session;
  - Able to take evidence and explore options around what can be done in Croydon to lower our carbon emissions across the borough as well as as a Council;
  - Able to form a conclusion based on the scoping they have done and the evidence they have seen to produce a set of recommendations to be taken to Cabinet for the review of Council Members.
- 3.8 The meetings will be scheduled to take place over a 2.5hr slot during either evenings around the borough depending on the availability of assembly members to ensure most are able to attend.
- 3.9 The independent consultant will design deliberative activities to produce focussed outputs and summary reports after each event.
- 3.10 A final report will be produced after the last session which will include details of the whole process as well as summary outputs and a set of recommendations from the assembly members.

## **4. SUSTAINABLE CROYDON COMMISSION**

- 4.1 The Council is working with the New Economics Foundation to create the independent Sustainable Croydon Commission to be brought to Cabinet in the New Year.
- 4.2 This commission is to identify long term goals in order to dramatically reduce the Council's carbon emissions as well as recommend realistic actions in order for Croydon as a borough to become a sustainable city.



- 4.3 As has been said from the beginning with the Sustainable Croydon Summit, the Council intends to work closely with residents, including young people, and businesses to become more sustainable. To this end, the New Economics Foundation is currently consulting with stakeholders around the borough to form the proposal for a commission independent from the Council.
- 4.4 The current thinking is that the recommendations from the Citizen's Assembly will be used by the commission as a starting point for the commissioners to then form an action plan to make Croydon more sustainable. Strategy groups sitting under the commission which will likely be a mix of relevant officers, experts, businesses and residents could then begin to enact this plan.
- 4.5 However this is subject to change as the Sustainable Croydon Commission is still in development and the commissioners not yet appointed. Also to note, the commission is independent from the Council, so once appointed the commissioners will be expected to take part in setting the brief for the commission.

## 5. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2022

- 5.1 Croydon is committed to improving air quality within its borough; the five year plan builds on existing successful actions and develops new proposed actions to improve air quality.
- 5.2 Our key priorities over the next five years are controlling pollution from new developments by tackling emissions from construction sites and construction vehicles, tackling emissions from servicing and freight vehicles, reducing exposure to air pollution, and raising awareness for residents and those who work in Croydon. By working with Public Health England we want to raise awareness through school projects, local community projects and local businesses.
- 5.3 The actions are under the following six broad topics:
- **Emissions from developments and buildings:** emissions from buildings account for about 15% of the NOX emissions across London so are important in affecting NO2 concentrations;
  - **Public health and awareness raising:** increasing awareness can drive behavioural change to lower emissions as well as to reduce exposure to air pollution;
  - **Delivery servicing and freight:** vehicles delivering goods and services are usually light and heavy duty diesel-fuelled vehicles with high primary NO2 emissions;
  - **Borough fleet actions:** our fleet includes light and heavy duty diesel-fuelled vehicles such as mini buses and refuse collection vehicles with high primary NO2 emissions. Tackling our own fleet means we will be leading by example;
  - **Localised solutions:** these seek to improve the environment of neighbourhoods through a combination of measures; and
  - **Cleaner transport:** road transport is the main source of air pollution in London. We need to incentivise a change to walking, cycling and ultra-low emission vehicles (such as electric) as far as possible.

5.4 Summary of progress attached (Appendix 1).

## 6. WASTE & RECYCLING

6.1 In 2018 Croydon embarked on an ambitious change to the waste and recycling service. The start of a new waste and recycling contract allowed Croydon to review the recycling and waste service it provided to residents.

6.2 From both a financial and environmental perspective recycling is preferable to disposal of residual waste. Environmentally, recycling helps conserve the finite resources associated with making new products and reduces dependency on virgin materials. Financially it costs considerably less to recycle waste than it does to dispose of it as residual waste.

6.3 Recognising the previous waste collection system Croydon provided disproportionately more capacity for residual waste, which made up approximately 60% of the total waste capacity. A decision was made to increase the container capacity for households to recycle more whilst simultaneously reducing the capacity for residual waste.

6.4 **Impacts of service change** - Figures show that residents have embraced the new service with recycling rates improving from 38% before the roll out to 48% currently. Less residual waste was presented per household and the amount of recycling significantly improved. This is particularly impressive given the population growth that the borough has experienced, and the Council has put on record its thanks to residents for their efforts to recycle more and their patience whilst the service was in its infancy. The increased recycling rate in 2018/19 puts Croydon on track to meet the target of 50% recycling by 2020.

6.5 **Recycling Week** - One year on from the new service commencement, Croydon marked the success already achieved and undertook a range of recycling activities for National Recycle Week (23-29 September 2019). This marked the success of the roll out and looked toward improving the recycling rate even further.

6.4 For National Recycle Week the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) undertook advertising on the local tram network with promotional adverts to encourage residents to recycle and move away from single use plastics.

6.5 A new educational video was commissioned which follows the journey of different waste streams. The full video is available on the SLWP website, and shortened sections demonstrating the journey from doorstep to recycled product, of particular waste streams was promoted using a paid for social media campaign. This campaign exceeded its target by 541%, the video has so far been viewed 81,397 times by Croydon residents.

6.6 **Schools engagement** - School educational talks play a significant part in achieving the target of 50%. Croydon has one of the largest populations of young people in London and we recognise that shaping their views at an early age will ensure that a sense of pride in their local environment will stay with them for life. There are also further benefits, as the messages these children

hear at school often form the basis for home work activities, creating further discussions at home with the message being passed on to parents, brothers, sisters and family friends.

6.7 To this effect there has been a rolling programme of educational talks to Croydon's schools. Since the service change there have been 18 assemblies where the team spoke to 7,347 pupils. The team will continue to engage with schools and provide waste and recycling talks.

6.8 **Future focus** - The waste and recycling team are continuing to engage with the residents of Croydon and are looking at ways to improve the recycling rate and the services that residents receive:

- **Garden Waste** - Increasing garden waste subscriptions is a key focus over the next few months to divert as much garden waste into recycling and away from residual waste. There was a successful spring promotion that increased customer subscriptions substantially, bearing in mind the limited investment, and we are looking to replicate this again for 2020.
- **Expanding the service** - The team are looking at areas where the provision of recycling is not the same as kerbside due to different factors. This includes flats recycling and flats above shops. The aim of the project is to enable all residents in these harder to recycle location the opportunity to recycle at kerbside the same as households. By working with the contractor they will be trialling a range of solutions to over the challenges these locations pose.
- **Reduce, Reuse Recycle** - The waste hierarchy favours reducing as the preferred option with reuse as secondary and recycling as the final option. Consequently the team are working with local retailers, third sector organisations and the HRRCs to encourage the public to follow this hierarchy. They are exploring options to help residents further such as an interactive map of locations that supports more sustainable behaviours. They are also looking into the feasibility of a reuse shop for the items Croydon collect via a free bulky waste service.

## 7. TREES & WOODLAND

7.1 The trees and woodlands teams remit is to maintain and improve the Boroughs tree stock for safety, nuisance, biodiversity and aid in improving air quality through tree planting. This encapsulates the trees on highways, parks, communal housing land, other Authority land and Woodlands. New planting is being achieved through a five year capital new tree planting programme to aid in "greening up" the north of the Borough and replacing as much as possible the trees lost to old ages and disease.

7.2 **Woodlands** - Croydon's woodlands have been used by the Forestry Commission as examples of Best Practice and Croydon's woodlands are used regularly by the Commission for onsite training days. Many of Croydon's woodlands are ancient and have a bespoke programme of management that aims at improving public access and biodiversity for fauna & flora through active management. This generally means continued ancient management practices of coppicing, removal of selected trees to allow light onto the forest

floor, removal of certain mono culture species to allow native species to establish and increasing the variety of habitats throughout the woodlands.

7.3 **Highway Trees** - Highway trees play a vital role in reducing particulate matter from vehicles, helping to cool the surrounding areas and the general feeling of wellbeing trees provide in an urban setting. Many of Croydon highway trees however are significantly aged and will require removal and replacement in the very near future. A robust tree safety inspection is due to start in 2020. As part of this reduction of risk from trees it is envisaged that increased numbers of street trees may be felled due to age related defects such as decay. This will require a yet unknown increase in trees planted numbers to maintain the status quo and to increase the overall tree numbers for future generations.

7.4 **Tree planting Project: 2018 to February 2023** - Tree planting numbers are on track to meet and exceed the 3500 trees by 2023.

- Year 1 November 2018 to April 2019 total of 1100 trees were planted
- Year 2 November 2019 to April 2020 total of 847 trees projected to be planted, made up of:
  - 662 made up of a mixture of public requests and felled trees
  - 105 introduction of new tree pits
  - 80 Greener City Fund
- Year 3 November 2020 to April 2021 numbers over the annual 650 trees is dependent on funding level from Urban Tree Challenge.

7.9 **The Mayor's Greener City Fund** – 80 no. trees; a successful application (received July 2019) for £20k to carry out tree planting in 7no. 'Sheltered' housing sites located in the north of the borough (refer to attached list) including Cherry Tree Green (Sanderstead), a community based project.

7.5 **Urban Tree Challenge** – This is a £10 million scheme recently launched to plant more than 130,000 trees across England's towns and cities and 'open' to individuals, local authorities, charities and NGOs. Grants will be administered by the Forestry Commission and will fund tree planting including three years of aftercare.

7.8 Croydon Council has been successful in securing funding for planting (2020/2021) in Wards identified by the Forestry Commission as having 20% less tree canopy than other parts of the Borough.

7.10 **Sakura Cherry Tree Planting Project from the Japanese Embassy**; This project is due to be delivered November 2020 and following sites have been identified including communications with Friends of Groups:

- Addiscombe Recreation Ground (Addiscombe East)
- Sanderstead Recreation Ground (Sanderstead)

## 8. IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- 8.1 Over the years Croydon's council homes have benefited from a sustained programme of investment in energy efficiency measures including, insulation, cladding, new windows for example. All of these measures have reduced carbon dioxide emissions, as well as reducing energy costs for our residents.
- 8.2 Improving energy efficiency in this way is one way of not only reducing fuel bills, but also improving health inequalities and fuel poverty. The Council is also piloting the use of ground source heat pumps, a cheaper way of heating homes, on one of the council housing blocks.
- 8.3 The ground source heat pump at a council-owned block in New Addington will cut carbon emissions, help improve air quality, and save up to £300 per home per year on more than 40 households' heating bills. The project and aims to contribute towards a local target of cutting the borough's carbon emissions by 34% by 2025.
- 8.4 The heat pump works by extracting the natural heat stored more than 200 feet beneath the ground, and then piping it into residents' homes. Council tenants at the 10-storey block at will be the first to get the technology, which will replace the existing electric storage heaters.
- 8.5 As well as saving each home between £260 and £300 a year off their bills, the ground source heat pump is designed to cost less for the council to maintain than storage heaters. Removing electric storage heaters cuts enough carbon emissions equivalent to a 4,150-mile car journey. The average night storage heater produces approximately 1,092kg of carbon dioxide per year, compared to the new system that produces around 396kg per year.

## **9. TRANSPORT**

### **Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

- 9.1 So far on-street there have been installed:
- 20 Source London EVCPs, with 8 new in January 2019
  - 6 rapid charging points on Red Routes
  - 18 lamp column Ubitricity bollards, mainly in the north and west of the Borough,
- 9.2 Early 2020, we have planned for a further:
- 50 Source London 'destination' charging points
  - 4 rapid charging points
  - 22 residential locations are being prepared as part of an Innovate UK funded trial with Vattenfall. Loughborough University and a consortium of 30 local authorities to use Virgin Media broadband cabinet power supply for EVCPs (up to 22kW) in residential streets
  - 20 in Fairfield car park.
- 9.3 We are in the process of developing a wholly new contract for the provision of 200-300 EVCPs in residential locations to achieve 400 public charging points by 2022.

## **Parking**

- 9.4 Parking affects almost everyone that lives, works or visits Croydon to some extent. Whilst our road networks have grown, so too have the competing demands for this space for use by pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, parking and public realm. With the pace of growth in homes and developments that Croydon is set to undergo, this Parking Policy, and its emerging action plan, respond to the challenges posed and deliver effective and safe parking infrastructure and management in the borough.
- 9.5 The policy sets out the aims and objectives over the period 2019 to 2022 for managing on- and off-street parking infrastructure, parking demand management, traffic and parking compliance, school streets safety and related customer services.
- 9.6 The Policy is formed on six core principles:
- Collaborative working
  - Parking management
  - Controlled parking zones
  - School streets
  - Parking charges
  - Innovation and technology

## **Emissions Based Parking**

- 9.13 The introduction of emission-based parking charges addresses overarching national, regional and local drivers with an aim of reducing emissions. The 2017 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health identifies that Croydon currently has the highest rate of hospital admissions for childhood (0-9 years) asthma and the third highest number of asthma deaths in London. An estimated 205 deaths each year in Croydon are attributable to air pollution. The Council has a duty under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 to exercise its power to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicles and other traffic (including pedestrians) and having regard to the amenity, the national air quality strategy and any other relevant traffic management matters.
- 9.14 The emission-based permit parking charges are intended to help to encourage a gradual switch to lesser polluting cars and also help influence the choices of those who are able to give up a car in the future. Phase 2 of emission-based parking charges will extend to all other permit types and also introduce a £50 p.a. diesel surcharge. Phase 2 commences on 1 April 2020. Phase 3 will extend emission-based charges to on- and off-street destination parking places. This is planned for 2021 and will be subject to a separate statutory consultation on a Traffic Management Order.
- 9.15 Public health data is continually monitored. Due to the complex and multi-factorial nature of public health outcomes, it will be difficult to specifically correlate the emission-based parking charges to any resulting public health effect.

The parameters being monitored include:

- a) Air quality, measured at established monitoring sensor stations. Whereas an effect immediately to the roadside can be expected, it can be more difficult to correlate a general reduction in the background air pollution levels to the parking charges. Air pollution is not a static problem, but drifts across boundaries.
  - b) Average CO<sub>2</sub> emission level for vehicles paying parking charges, including in all the 3 phases. This will indicate the trend in emissions reduction.
- 9.16 In line with our Air Quality Action Plan the Council has now implemented 8 School Streets, with a further 3 expected to be in place by the end of 2019. The 11 schemes cover 16 schools, which represents some 13% of all schools in the borough. It is planned to introduce a further 10 schemes in 2020/21 and 10 schemes in 2021/22, which will then reach about 33% of all schools in the Borough.

## **Cycling and Walking Strategy**

- 9.17 We have programmes delivering segregated cycle routes, new routes on quieter streets and in parks, and improved signing on the existing London Cycle Network. Projects recently completed or nearing completion include the delineated cycle track on the Fairfield / college forecourt; the contraflow cycle lane along Bedford Park (both part of the planned Town Centre 'Ring Route') and the route through Lloyd Park.
- 9.18 The needs of people on foot and those of people on bikes are often very different, but where we can we try can combine initiatives to support both forms of active travel within the one project/programme (eg the Bedford Park scheme is a follow-on project connecting to the pedestrian/cycle crossing implemented on the Wellesley Road). Our more major proposals are now in design / development, with design options prepared for high quality infrastructure and improvements to the public realm to facilitate people walking and people on bikes as a combined 'Healthy Streets' approach on the Brighton Road from the Town Centre to Purley as and we are beginning work with TfL on design options for the Purley gyratory. A similar design approach to design development is being taken along the Mitcham Road and London Road Corridors including working with TfL at the Thornton Heath Pond gyratory and Lombard Roundabout (see below).
- 9.19 Our Liveable Neighbourhood designs include ambitious proposals to help pedestrians and cyclists at the Old Town Roundabout and to help them along and across the Roman Way and Old Town.
- 9.20 We convinced TfL to include a redesign of the Lombard Roundabout in its Better Junctions programme. We then supported a TfL bid for the Roundabout to the Department for Transport's Major Road Network funding programme. The Roundabout has been accepted into the DfT programme. What started as a £2m project to improve conditions for walking and cycling at the Roundabout, now has the potential to access much more funding from the DfT.

- 9.21 Last year we extend our programme of providing 'Bike Hangar' cycle storage (for residents who do not have space to keep a bike) from Council housing estates (35 hangars on estates so far), out onto the public highway. So far we have installed 5 on street. The next tranche is twenty more. This will be a continuing programme responding to residents' need/demand.
- 9.22 The summer saw a trial of electric 'Lime' dockless hire bikes in Croydon. Following a review of operations, with winter coming (and the weather and daylight changes) and the inability to negotiate memoranda of understanding with borough councils in southwest London, Lime decided to suspend their e-bike trials in South London (Croydon, Sutton, Bromley) from 14th October with the possibility to return in the Spring. There were some issues including some bikes being left in unsuitable locations. We are working with London Councils on a pan-London bylaw to enable better manage the parking of dockless bikes on the public highway. We are also in discussions with other operators regarding coming to Croydon.

## **10. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS & WORK IN PROGRESS**

### **Planning system and how it encourage and protects diversity & eco matters**

- 10.1 For all Major Planning Applications the Highways Team as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) ensures that developers have carried out a surface water drainage assessment and are able to demonstrate that the proposed development makes use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and will not create an increased risk of flooding from surface water to the development site and the surrounding area.
- 10.2 The LLFA ensures that Drainage Strategies from developers are carried out in accordance with the London Plan 2016 and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guide (PPG) and the adopted Croydon Local Plan (2018). All development are expected to make use of SuDS and give preference to infiltration over discharge to a watercourse, which in turn is preferable to discharge to surface water sewer. Further, the design of the proposed drainage system should also adhere to the Defra Non-Statutory Technical Standards (NSTS).
- 10.3 Our crossover procedure specifies that the hard standing for vehicles should be permeable so that it allows as much rain water as possible to permeate into the subsoil below.
- 10.4 We also protect our verges to ensure biodiversity can thrive within them and have committed to increasing the amount of new trees in Croydon to protect diversity and improve ecological opportunities.
- 10.5 We also undertake bat surveys on our highway structures to assess if bats are present and to protect them.

### **Disinvesting in fossil fuels from our Pension Fund**



10.6 The current investment Strategy of the Pension Fund, as agreed by the Pension Committee in September 2018, has this to say about fossil fuels:

*The Fund will only invest in investments with a strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) policy that includes no tobacco investments. The Fund will disinvest from existing fossil fuel investments in a prudent and sensible way that reflects the fiduciary responsibility due to stakeholders. Furthermore, where this is consistent with the agreed investment strategy, the Fund will invest in assets that positively address these issues. Examples of this approach include investing in renewable energy projects, screening out regional markets where there might be issues with modern slavery, and looking to explore opportunities to contribute to and invest in the Borough.*

10.7 The value of the Fund's investments as at the end of September was approximately £1,330m. In line with a general movement across LGPS funds, this authority has moved away from fossil fuel investments and towards asset classes that are positively engaged with ESG issues.

10.8 The Fund is now invested in the following asset classes:

	£m	% of fund
Listed equities	560	42
Fixed interest	300	23
Property	180	13
Infrastructure	160	12
Private equity	120	9
Cash	10	1
TOTAL	1330	100

10.9 Currently, the Pension Committee are actively reviewing the Pension Fund portfolio of assets to ensure that it is consistent with this strategy.

### **Construction Logistics & Consolidation Activity**

10.10 £450k was bid for / secured from the GLA to develop and implement a Construction Consolidation Centre to reduce the impacts on construction traffic on the Borough's roads and in particular within the Growth Zone

10.11 The Construction Logistics management efforts in Croydon have maintained the environmental quality of the Town Centre well above that of other high-density development areas. By generally restricting construction traffic to times outside of peak hours, we have reduced the effect on congestion and air pollution by ensuring HGV's are not in conflict and competition with the bulk of day to day traffic. This also benefits cyclists and pedestrians by removing these vehicles as possible dangers at the times when these road users are present in the largest numbers.

10.12 We have also successfully utilised sites that have not yet begun construction as consolidation areas for others that are currently being built. This has resulted in

significant time savings for the affected projects and further reduced impact on the surrounding environment by allowing larger single deliveries to be made, often bringing in days or weeks' worth of materials, instead of having multiple daily deliveries using vehicles that are only slightly smaller. In addition we have proved holding areas that if a site cannot accept delivery the driver can wait in this designate areas until the site can accommodate the vehicle thereby reducing the vehicle's carbon footprint by having to circle the site using the Croydon roads.

10.13 Thus, after over 2 years of construction activity, we have not experienced any serious accidents involving construction traffic, which is well below the national and London statistical averages.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

11.1 While Croydon Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and will be holding both a Citizen's Assembly and a Sustainable Croydon Commission to tackle this, the Council has not been idle as shown by this report.

11.2 This issue is not just a Council issue, however, and will require the input from residents, young people and businesses to truly make Croydon a sustainable city. Already the Council is working closely with City Hall and partners to make this a reality.

11.3 We look forward to working with our residents over the coming years to make lasting and holistic change in our borough.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Yasmin Ahmed, Senior Strategy Officer

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None

**APPENDICES:** Appendix 1 – Air Quality Action Plan Table 2018 - 19

No.	Measure	Action	Progress	Further information
1	Emission from developments and buildings	Visit construction sites to ensure emissions from construction are minimised.	<p>Implementation ongoing</p> <p>141 CLP's reviewed and approved in 2018</p> <p>Five sites checked for compliance in 2018</p> <p>279 applications were reviewed for CEMPs in 2018</p> <p>AQ monitoring ongoing</p>	<p>To undertake compliance checks at 5 sites during 2018/19</p> <p>Identified further Vehicle holding sites.</p> <p>Proactive visits to confirm compliance Enforcement visits following complaints and noncompliance.</p> <p>A number of large projects have been delayed in 2018-19 due to Whitgift development delays in commencement of works therefore actions not progressed.</p> <p>New large development at Queen's square commenced last quarter of 2018 - demolition works ongoing.</p>
2	Emission from developments and buildings	Monitor air quality in central Croydon during major construction works for the next 5-7 years to ensure emissions are minimised.	<p>Implementation ongoing</p> <p>Equipment has been installed and monitoring commenced in the second quarter of 2018.</p> <p>Second project commenced at Queen's Square, baseline sampling on going.</p>	<p>Investigated monitoring equipment to be purchased for long term monitoring.</p> <p>Currently trialling low cost monitors.</p> <p>Toolkit being developed by EMSOL.</p> <p>Trackers to be deployed on construction vehicles and NRMM from February 2019</p>

3	Emission from developments and buildings	Ensuring enforcement of Non Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) air quality policies through officer visits.	<p>Implementation ongoing</p> <p>During April 2018-2019 NRMM Conditions were applied at all developments.</p> <p>The London Borough Croydon achieved a Total Compliance status of 67% (Total compliance status is Compliant and Self-Compliant combined).</p>	<p>LB Croydon undertook 19 site Audits, 3 sites were self-compliant, 7 sites worked towards and achieved Compliance and 5 sites failed to achieve Compliance, 4 sites had No NRMM.</p> <p>Revisits and further visits to be carried out 2019.</p>
4	Emission from developments and buildings	Enforcing CHP and biomass air quality policies	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>All planning applications reviewed for air quality assessments including CHP.</p> <p>24 assessments included comments on CHP.</p>	<p>The council requires the proposed CHP to comply with the Mayor's new London Plan.</p> <p>We do NOT recommend the installation of biomass boilers.</p>
5	Emission from developments and buildings	Enforcing air quality neutral / positive policies	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>All planning applications reviewed for air quality assessments and we require compliance with the Mayor's new London Plan.</p> <p>14 developments have agreed S106 agreements in 2018-19.</p>	<p>Section 106 agreements are required for all major developments.</p>
6	Emission from developments and buildings	Ensuring adequate, appropriate, and well located green space and infrastructure is included in new developments	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Currently no data captured as to number of developments who agreed</p>	<p>Review in December 2019 to ensure the Local Plan refers to the most up to date policy in the London Plan.</p>

7	Emission from developments and buildings	Ensuring that Smoke Control Zones are appropriately identified and fully promoted and enforced.	<p>Only half the borough has been designated a smoke control zone and there is a need to consider options to extend the area to the whole of the borough.</p> <p>Barrister instructed to undertake review process</p>	<p>The proposed action is to consider the revision of the current smoke control order to cover the whole of the borough, subject to the necessary evidentiary basis and consultation requirements being complied with.</p> <p>Discussion with legal team to investigate best way forward to implement.</p>
8	Emission from developments and buildings	Installation of Ultra Low Nox boilers.	<p>66 developments in planning applications were required to install ultra-low Nox boilers.</p> <p>Awaiting update from procurement regarding the inclusion in procurement policy.</p>	<p>Include in procurement policy that all new replacement boilers in Council buildings, maintained schools and Council housing properties should install ultra low NOx boilers.</p>
9	Planning Policy	Supplementary Planning Document for Air Quality	<p>No progress is expected on the Air Quality SPD in advance of the Local Plan Review.</p> <p>Local Plan Review commenced 31.03.19</p> <p>The Local Plan Review will be adopted in early 2022, post to rounds of consultation and an Examination in Public.</p>	<p>The now commenced Local Plan Review will consider and update the Local Plan 2018 Air Quality content to reflect the most up to date London Plan policy and legislation.</p> <p>To ensure the Local Plan refers to the most up to date policy in the Mayors London Plan &amp; Environment Strategy.</p> <p>To include the provision of green infrastructure for new schools on busy roads.</p> <p>To ensure the Local Plan refers to the most up to date policy in the London Plan.</p> <p>To include a requirement for construction sites to utilise new technology for diesel generators.</p>

10	Public Health and awareness raising	Ensure that Directors of Public Health (DsPHs) have been fully briefed on the scale of the problem in your local authority area; what is being done, and what is needed.	Implementation ongoing  AQ Scrutiny Report and AQAP provided to PH team.	Quarterly meetings with PH
11	Public Health and awareness raising	Engagement with local stakeholders (businesses, schools, community groups and healthcare providers).	Implementation ongoing Quarterly meetings with PH set up. Next meeting 05.08.19	Public Health Teams should be supporting  They should be asked for their support via the DsPH when projects are being developed.
12	Public Health and awareness raising	Director of Public Health to have responsibility for ensuring their Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has up to date information on air quality impacts on the population	Implementation ongoing To be reviewed 31.03.19	To include air pollution data to the list of PHOF indicators which are reviewed at senior management/cabinet level.

13	Public Health and awareness raising	Strengthening co-ordination with Public Health by ensuring that at least one Consultant-grade public health specialist within the borough has air quality responsibilities outlined in their job profile.	Implementation ongoing  Confirmed that one public health specialist has been assigned air quality responsibilities	Meet up quarterly to discuss actions going forward
14	Public Health and awareness raising	Director of Public Health to sign off Statutory Annual Status Reports and all new Air Quality Action Plans	Completed May 2019.	Reviewed by Director of Public health
15	Public Health and awareness raising	Ensure that the Head of Transport has been fully briefed on the Public Health duties	Ongoing Briefing provided to Strategic Transport team at Steering group.	All directors (not just Director of Public Health) are responsible for delivering Public Health duties, as well as air quality opportunities and risks related to transport in the borough.
16	Public Health and awareness raising	Promotion of availability of airTEXT	Ongoing promotion at events such as National Clean Air day and on the Love Clean Air website.  The number of airTEXT subscribers continues to grow, with a 5.4% increase in email, text, voicemail and Twitter subscribers/followers between 1 Dec 2017 and 25 Sep 2018 to 16,762	Provision of airTEXT information for wider dissemination and to provide information on health effects of air pollution and actions being taken to reduce emissions and exposure through engagement with public health leads, CCG and other health professionals.  <b>During 2018:</b> • The GLA funded the development of the service to incorporate LAQN monitored data into the forecast

			<p>airTEXT funding levels are secure, with 32 out of 34 original airTEXT boroughs opting to pay the annual fees</p> <p>A new version of the airTEXT iPhone app will be developed following the recruitment of a new web developer at CERC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thurrock joined airTEXT</li> <li>• to retain the service until 31 March 2019</li> </ul> <p><b>2018 airTEXT Survey results</b>  Out of 507 airTEXT subscribers who responded to the 2018 airTEXT Subscriber Survey, 97% say that airTEXT increases their awareness of high pollution days; 83% say that when they receive an airTEXT alert they take action to reduce their pollution exposure; 94% say that airTEXT is useful to them, with 66% saying that airTEXT is very useful; and 98% say that either they or someone they care for suffers from a health condition adversely affected by air pollution.  Number of Croydon subscribers - 437 (2018)</p>
17	Public Health and awareness raising	Expand the airTEXT service	Ongoing	<p>To provide information on health effects of air pollution and actions being taken to reduce emissions and exposure through engagement with public health leads, CCG and other health professionals.</p> <p>To investigate with the airTEXT consortium long term sustainable funding.</p>
18	Public Health and awareness raising	Cleaner Air Champions	One awareness session has been held so far to train interested volunteer.	<p>This project delivers a comprehensive volunteer programme to help tackle air quality issues by empowering local people to raise awareness and understanding of problems around air quality in London and promoting activities that people can undertake to help improve their local air quality.</p> <p>Support through funding to deliver a volunteer programme to tackle local air quality measures.</p>



				Find ways to encourage volunteers
19	Air quality in schools	Encourage schools to join the TfL STARS.	Total 54 schools have achieved TFL stars 28 bronze, 9 Silver and 17 Gold  Aim to recruit 5 new schools this academic year (2019-20)	TfL STARS (accredited travel planning programme by providing information on the benefits to schools and supporting the implementation of such a programme).
20	Air quality in schools	Promote sustainable travel to schools (Working with schools to implement packages of measures to reduce pollution and minimise exposure)	14 nitrogen dioxide tubes have been installed at primary schools, data available 2019.	The Council is working on a pilot project aiming to create 'superzones around schools' and this is being led by the public health team.
21	Air quality in schools	School Streets	On going Three school streets already in operation - St Chads, heavers Farm and Woodcote Primary.  Further 8 schools to be included in 2019 with 3 to commence in September 2019.	AQ Monitoring to be undertake to obtain baseline air quality data. 1. Norbury Manor School – tackles rat run at peak hours 2. Cypress Primary School – tackles rat run at peak hours 3. Winterbourne Road – Boys Academy & Infant School – tackles rat run at peak hours 4. Downsview Primary 5. Fairchildes Primary school 6. Harris Primary Academy Kenley

22	Air quality in schools	To continue Clean air 4 schools each year. To train travel plan champions at schools to promote sustainable travel and carry out idling vehicle checks.	Clean Air 4 schools no longer a project however we continue to work with schools as part of the 'No idling' project lead by City of London.	3 schools took part in this project in 2018/19. Further 8 schools to be included in 2019/20
23	Air quality in schools	Carry out air quality audits in primary schools located in the worst polluted areas in Croydon.	Audits not carried out in 2018/19.	To undertake audits at the schools taking part in the Schools street project initially, to identify suitable measures for improving air quality. List of proposed measures will include the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving school entrances and play areas to reduce exposure to busy roads.</li> <li>• 'no idling engine' schemes to reduce harmful emissions during the school run. Minimising emissions from boilers, kitchens and other sources.</li> <li>• Changes to local roads, improved road layouts, restricting the most polluting vehicles round schools and pedestrianisation around school entrances.</li> <li>• Green infrastructure such as 'barrier bushes' along busy roads and in playgrounds to help filter toxic fumes. Improvements to encourage walking and cycling to school along less polluted routes</li> </ul>
23	Delivery servicing and freight	Ensure sustainable logistical measures are implemented	Would require 1 year to review the current contracts and agree a policy statement. To review by 31.12.19	To include requirements for preferentially scoring bidders based on their sustainability criteria).

				To agree a policy statement and evaluation criteria.
24	Delivery servicing and freight	Re-organisation of freight to support consolidation (or micro-consolidation) of deliveries. By setting up or participating in new logistics facilities and/or requiring that council suppliers participate in these.	<p>Low Emission Logistics project ongoing</p> <p>Following completion of feasibility study, an MAQF bid was submitted for a pan-borough South London project to develop a Construction Consolidation Centre (CCC) on a temporary site. The bid was successful, £450K secured.</p> <p>So far 60% reduction in delivery from one source achieved.</p>	We are already investigating potential CCC sites as to mitigate the impacts of the Growth Zone activities in Central Croydon and reduce HGV movements within the town centre.
25	Delivery servicing and freight	Retiming of deliveries and servicing to be undertaken outside peak hours	On going Work with TFL completed.	To be put in place at suitable locations as part of planning process
26	Borough fleet actions	Develop options for the implementation of FORS Bronze for the Council's Passenger Transport operations. Other Operational services to follow this pilot project	<p>Some LIP Funding has been identified to fund this work.</p> <p>A Fleet Supervisor has been recruited (commenced 14/01/19) and will be taking this forward</p>	<p>Council fleet and hired fleet to meet Quality Standard</p> <p>Other Operational services to follow this pilot project</p>

27	Borough fleet actions	To review procurement policies to consider including a requirement for suppliers with large fleets to have attained Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) accreditation	Waiting for update from procurement services.	
28	Borough fleet actions	Utilising the Mayor's new 'Vehicle Checker' for the purchase of new fleet vehicles. Promote this service to local businesses and residents	Owned vehicle - 38 ULEZ compliance - 21 NOT ULEZ compliance - 13 N/A - 4 Contract Hire vehicles - 88 ULEZ compliance - 52 NOT ULEZ compliance - 34 N/A - 2 Fully electric hired vehicles - 2 Total -128 ULEZ compliance - 75 (58.5%) NOT ULEZ compliance = 47 (36.8%) N/A - 6 (4.7%)	
29	Borough fleet actions	Increasing the number of hydrogen, electric, hybrid, bio methane and cleaner vehicles in the council's fleet. To work towards a zero diesel fleet.	Delays to Stubbs Mead redevelopment delayed possible October 2019 are also delaying the procurement of electric vehicles. Additionally, lead time on EVs delivery is also above average for vehicle procurement (8 months for Renault) so unlikely to meet target. Current Minibus Tender (for Council-operated SEN minibuses) is due to go out to Tender January 2019 with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require 25% of Council fleet / hired fleet to be ultra-low emission capable (i.e. electric, hybrid,) by 31.12.19</li> <li>• Require 75% of council fleet / hired fleet to be ultra low emission capable by 2025. *This is subject to suitable infrastructure charging being available for council vehicles as without this it will not be possible</li> </ul>

			provision for 27/39 of those vehicles to be electric.	
30	Borough fleet actions	Accelerate uptake of new Euro VI vehicles in council fleet		All council fleet and hired fleet vehicles to meeting Euro VI by 2019 in line with the Mayor's ULEZ.  Additional insourcing of Grounds Maintenance contract vehicles (53) and the timeframe required to replace these older vehicle will mean that this target will be difficult to achieve
31	Borough fleet actions	Smarter Driver Training for drivers of vehicles in council own fleet i.e. through training of fuel efficient driving and providing regular retraining of staff	Staff are retested every 4 years through the Council's fleet driving provider, National Driving Centre	

32	Localised solutions	<p>Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>To install more green infrastructure along pavements.</p> <p>To seek funding to install green screens at a number of existing schools</p> <p>To investigate providing more pocket parks in Croydon</p>	<p>Green mile project ongoing</p> <p>Waiting for updates</p>	<p>To establish at least 4 green infrastructure installations to encourage more people to walk and cycle</p>
33	Localised solutions	<p>Ban on residential bonfires between 6am and sunset.</p>	<p>Appointed barrister to review process and inform of the best options by 30.08.19.</p> <p>Once reviewed to commence consultation process</p>	<p>Bonfires have been identified as a contributing factor to emissions of smoke and other pollutants. All of these pollutants can have health impacts, especially for people with breathing difficulties and those with heart problems. A typical garden bonfire will emit 2.8kg of particulate matter, 25kg of carbon monoxide, and 4.25kg of volatile compounds.</p> <p>This option considers the restriction of residential bonfires to times where they will have a minimal impact upon others.</p> <p>Once implemented to review after 2 years to assess the effectiveness of the action.</p>

34	Engagement with businesses	Ecostars for Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs)	Waiting for updates	<p>The aim of the scheme is to have a positive impact on local air quality by supporting and encouraging operators of PHV's to reduce harmful NO2 emissions by reviewing operational fleet vehicles and management practices and advising on efficiency and environmental improvements.</p> <p>In addition the scheme reduces PM and CO2 emissions from vehicles and has economic benefit to vehicle operators.</p>
35	Engagement with businesses	Travel demand management programme for the town centre	<p>Introductory meetings was held January 2019.</p> <p>10 target businesses that have been contacted to date.</p>	Awaiting response on second meeting
36	Cleaner transport	Undertake idling vehicle awareness campaign at hot spots such as taxi ranks and bus stands and schools.	<p>Idling awareness campaign carried out at 4 schools &amp; Croydon taxi rank in</p> <p>Two awareness raising campaigns and idling vehicle checks.</p> <p>4 idling vehicle checks carried out following complaints including taxi rank, schools and bus garage.</p>	<p>Discouraging unnecessary idling through anti-idling campaigns or enforcement activity, using idling vehicle powers where appropriate.</p> <p>Dependant on funding the aim is to train at least 10 air quality champions to carry out patrols.</p> <p>Continue to carry reactive visits where required. To contact further 8 schools and commence from 30.08.19.</p>
37	Cleaner transport	Discourage queuing vehicles at taxi rank (East Croydon station)	Submitted MAQF bid for a 'Smart' Taxi Rank Queuing System at East Croydon Station to tackle the problem of taxi congestion – bid was unsuccessful.	To continue carrying out adhoc idling vehicle check in 2019/20

38	Cleaner transport	Speed control measures e.g. lowering the legal speed limit to 20mph in built up residential areas	Implementation ongoing  All residential roads completed with 20mph limits	
39	Cleaner transport	Increasing the proportion of electric, hydrogen and ultra low emission vehicles in car clubs	Pool car scheme ongoing. There are 23 vehicles (22 cars, 1 hybrid vehicle and 1 van) for Council use and	33 vehicles (30 cars and 3 vans) in total, in the borough, including the 23 exclusive-use vehicles for the Council. These are available for residents outside of Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.  The number of Croydon residents registered on the scheme continues to steadily increase. Croydon council registered users total 387. Other registered users in the borough total 4923 as of today, an increase of 1423 from the previous year statistics.
40	Cleaner transport	Installation of public and residential electric charging points	First 30 locations are planned for installation by 2019 and another 30-50 by 2022.	Croydon will be extending the network of public charging points for electric cars and vans, having signed the 'Source London' network agreement with Blue Point London in October 2017.  Other government grants and Section 106 planning or Local Implementation Plan funds to contribute to charging points in residential roads without off-street parking.



41	Cleaner transport	Installation of rapid chargers to help enable the take up of electric taxis, cabs and commercial vehicles (in partnership with TfL and / or OLEV)	There are currently six charging points, with a further 5-10 likely by 2022	TfL have half a dozen rapid on or nearer the A23.  They are expected to draw up a sign location list, for installation.
42	Cleaner transport	Trial ultra low emission vehicles in commercial setting	<p>Croydon and Sutton have been awarded additional money as part of the Go Ultra Low City scheme to provide five electric vans and trucks.</p> <p><b>THE VANS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FM van in busy use</li> <li>• Growth Zone van having some use and needing to be extended</li> <li>• Regular enquiries but no other live and valid takers at present</li> <li>• Chequers van in good use</li> <li>• Beddington BID / SWL had mechanical issues but is being replaced</li> </ul> <p><b>THE TRUCK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has not been forthcoming, but now promising for 2020 or so.</li> </ul>	<p>The newly-approved Croydon MAQF Consolidation Centre project looks set to support consolidation and freight in Sutton as well as Croydon and could benefit from using an electric van or truck.</p> <p>GULCs funding is until March 2020 only.</p> <p>The Chequers and SWL vans are on a 24 month lease until the end of 2020/ early 2021 so propose using GULCs money in 19/20 and S106 in 20/21.</p>
43	Cleaner transport	Reprioritisation of road space.	This project is ongoing and will proceed to other main routes focusing on the main east-west and north-south routes including any new Quietways.	Reduce parking at some destinations and or restricting parking on congested high streets and A roads to improve bus journey times, cycling experience and reduce emissions caused by congested traffic

44	Cleaner transport	Cycle route signs	<p><b>Signs</b> - First part completed January 2017 – “Avenue Verte” – part of the London Paris route.</p> <p><b>Cycle route improvements</b> - Road improvements for walking and cycling routes are being identified and an implementation schedule is being drawn up.</p>	Road signs are being put up for cycle routes from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
45	Cleaner transport	Provision of infrastructure to support walking and cycling	<b>Cargo Trikes</b> - The Croydon BID Ambassadors, and enterprises are due to be loaned a branded cargo trike for three years.	The aim is to demonstrate the viability of these zero-emission delivery vehicles and provide a visible presence of cycling around the town.
46	Cleaner transport	Installation of onstreet cycle storage	Waiting for updates	A phased programme of installing Sheffield stands on the street in key locations
47	Cleaner transport	Installation of off-street cycle storage	Implementation date to be reviewed May 2018	<p>Sites are being identified on the LBC housing estates and at pubs, cafes and other destinations with public access for cycle storage, including Sheffield stands, sheds and secure hangers.</p> <p>A larger programme will be drawn up once these are in place.</p>

48	Low Emission Neighbourhood	Implementation of a Croydon LEN project	MAQF bid was unsuccessful. Will still be investigating some elements of LEN depending on additional funding e.g. section 106.	The focus of the Croydon LEN project would be the London Road corridor from Thornton Heath Pond bus garage down to West Croydon Station. The LEN proposals along this corridor would include working with the Harris Invictus Academy, the Croydon University Hospital, the bus garage, mosques, hotels and various other businesses and stakeholders.
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# Sustainable Croydon

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Presentation to Scrutiny by Cllr King  
17<sup>th</sup> December 2019

# CONTEXT

- Sustainable Croydon Summit held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019
- Declared Climate and Ecological Emergency unanimously at July Cabinet 2019
- Commitment made for Council to become net zero by 2030
- Working closely with the GLA to deliver a sustainable agenda



# WORK ALREADY BEING DONE

- The Green Croydon Fund of £250k to provide support for projects, activities and initiatives that promote environmental protection, green living and a sustainable lifestyle in Croydon;
- An increase in the recycling rate borough-wide by 9%;
- A published five-year Air Quality Action Plan 2017 – 22;
- More than 1,500 new bin installations all across the borough to revamp the system for waste collection;
- The School Street Scheme aims to improve air quality around schools in the scheme and protect children from the harms of air pollution;
- The award-winning “Don’t Mess with Croydon” campaign;
- A commitment to planting at least 3,500 trees between 2018 – 2023;
- A commitment to promote the MoL’s London Power initiative later this year.

## NEXT STEPS

More must be done to ensure that we fulfil our commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and for Croydon to become a sustainable city.



# CITIZEN'S ASSEMBLY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

- A citizens' assembly is a group of people who are brought together to discuss an issue or issues and reach a conclusion about what they think should happen.

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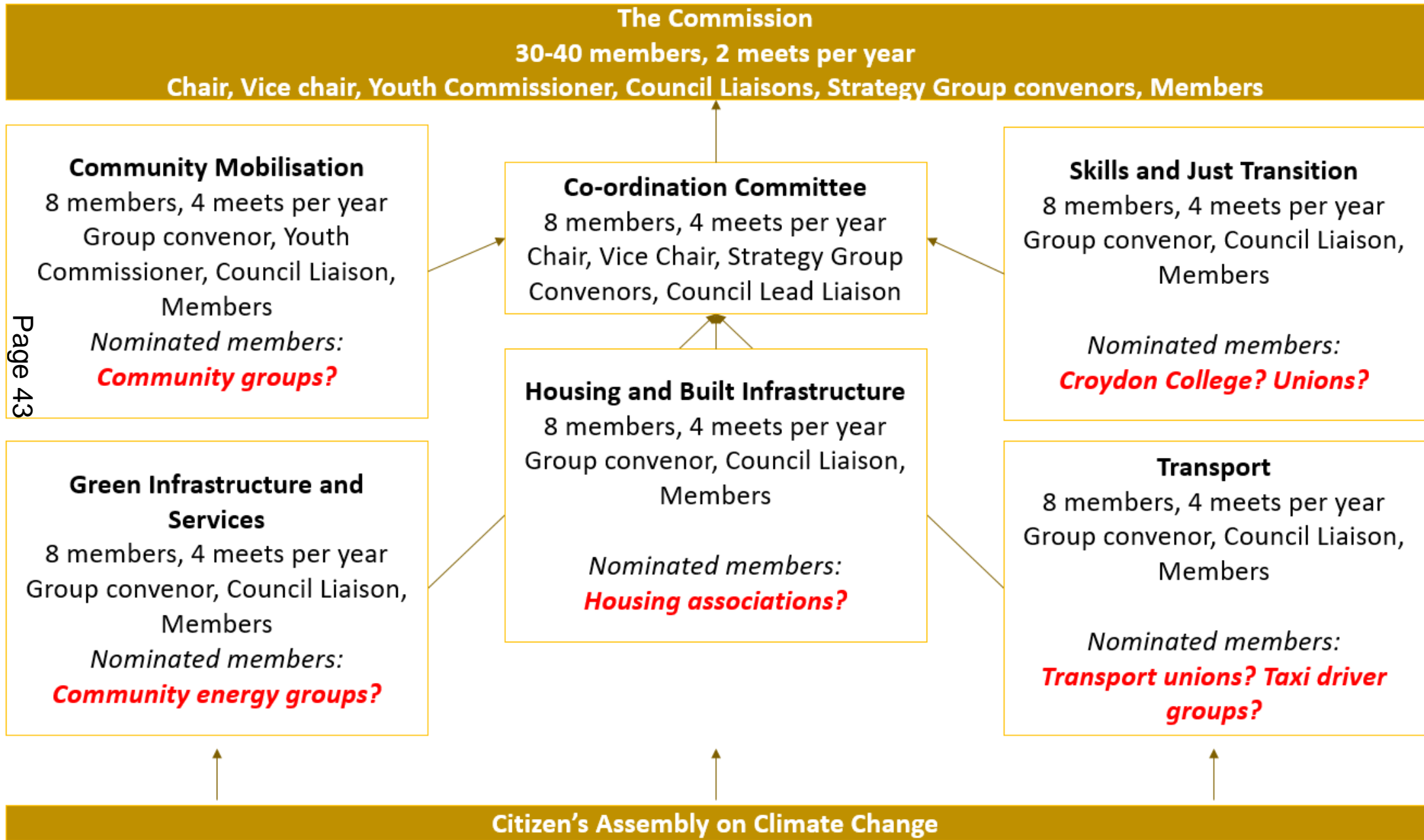
Using this method will ensure that the actions the Council takes in regards to climate change will be heavily influenced by the voice of residents.

- The assembly members are currently being recruited to take part in the three sessions that will form the assembly. These sessions are set to take place over the January – February 2020 period.
- The final report and recommendations will go to March Cabinet 2020.

- This commission's purpose is to identify long term goals in order to dramatically reduce the Council's carbon emissions as well as recommend/take realistic actions in order for Croydon as a borough to become a sustainable city.
- We intend to work closely with residents, including young people, and businesses to become more sustainable. To this end, the New Economics Foundation is currently consulting with stakeholders around the borough to form a terms of reference and list of commissioners for a commission independent from the Council.

# SUSTAINABLE CROYDON COMMISSION

# HOW IT COULD ALL FIT



# QUESTIONS



**For general release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b> <b>17 December 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>A HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY FOR CROYDON</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Hazel Simmonds, Executive Director – Gateway, Strategy and Engagement</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Alison Butler, Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Caroline Toogood, Head of Strategic Projects; John Montes, Senior Strategy Officer; Julia Pitt, Director of Gateway Services</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

This report builds on the commitment in the Council's Corporate Plan (2018) for *'good, decent homes, affordable for all'* and sets out the Council's strategic approach to housing, in all its forms, reflecting the three themes set out in the Corporate Plan: *new homes, quality homes and homes for everyone.*

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	This item has been identified by the Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee as an area of Scrutiny.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	To consider, comment and inform the plans for development of a Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Croydon.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Croydon is in the midst of a housing crisis. We are a growing borough, with more opportunities for education, employment and leisure than ever before, yet the supply of good quality housing is not increasing at a fast enough rate. What is more, many of our residents cannot afford to rent or buy a home that meets their needs and almost a quarter of private renters live in homes with a serious home hazard. A decent, stable home is a basic need for all of us: unsafe, expensive, overcrowded housing impacts on people's health and life chances. Securing safe, affordable, secure housing is often the first step to successful recovery and independence for individuals and families who have experienced addiction, trauma or violence.

1.2 Croydon's [last housing strategy](#) has lapsed. A [homelessness review](#) was published in 2018 and examines the causes of and trends in homelessness and the services available and how they need to change. We have also conducted a needs analysis and developed some strategic priorities for improving the supply, quality and range of homes for Croydon residents, along with an initial series of work streams to translate these priorities into action. 'Decent homes, affordable to all' (Appendix 2) sets out the full range of council services and current plans to meet housing need.

1.3 We are determined to do everything required so that all in Croydon have the chance of a decent home that they can afford and call their own. We aim to make best use of our assets and resources, seek new opportunities and investment, and work with our partners to:

- create **New Homes in Great Places** that local people can afford to rent or buy
- ensure existing social and private homes become **Good Quality Homes**; and
- provide **Better Access to Homes and Independent Living**, including ensuring people can live independently at home for as long as possible, and preventing and relieving homelessness.

Our priorities under these three aims will form the basis of the housing strategy.

1.4 These priorities were presented to cabinet in October 2019 (see Appendix 1: Cabinet report: A housing and homelessness strategy for Croydon). A homelessness and rough sleeping prevention strategy has been drafted for consultation. We are now developing a programme of engagement with stakeholders, partners and residents to develop the housing strategy for publication in 2020.

1.5 This report covers:

- the Croydon housing context and key drivers for developing new strategies
- national and regional policy
- financial context
- a SWOT analysis
- the priorities for the housing and homelessness strategies
- options for taking up opportunities and tackling challenges
- a draft engagement plan.

## **2. A HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY FOR CROYDON**

### **2.1 Croydon Housing Context**

- 2.1.1 Croydon's tenure profile has a relatively small social rented sector (15% of all homes); a relatively large and growing private rented sector (36%). Almost half of all homes are owner occupied (49%). The private rented sector has always been an important housing option for people, and will inevitably continue to be in coming years.
- 2.1.2 Croydon has 13,475 council homes, including 1,221 sheltered and special sheltered homes, fewer than many other London boroughs. There are also 2,400 leaseholders, who bought their homes through the Right to Buy. At least 99% of council homes meet the Decent Homes Standard at any one time. This is a technical standard for social housing: homes must meet the statutory minimum standard for housing, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services, and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Croydon's council homes have an average energy rating of 68.77, better than the national average of 65.6 points, so they cost less to keep warm. All 25 of our tower blocks of 10 or more storeys now have sprinklers, 1,252 homes in all.
- 2.1.3 An estimated 58,500 homes in Croydon are rented from private landlords (36% of all homes in the borough, compared with 30% across London). Most landlords provide decent housing. However, 23.8% of tenants rent homes that are overcrowded, cold, damp, or put them at risk of tripping or falling. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are some of the poorest quality housing, with greater health and safety risks for tenants. There may be up to 3,000 HMOs in Croydon. Currently owners can convert multi-bedroom properties to small HMOs under permitted development, which means they do not need planning consent. Overall, in 2018/19 we served 232 enforcement notices and 21 prohibition orders on landlords and imposed 16 financial penalties. Category 1 hazards (that pose a serious and immediate risk to the occupier's health and safety) were removed from 51 private rented homes as a direct result of action by the council. The Selective Licensing Scheme enables proactive inspections and targeting of rogue landlords. Since it was set up in 2015, the council has conducted 11,105 inspections (as of August 2019), 72% of which were satisfactory; 18% identified minor breaks of licensing conditions and 10% required enforcement action. 35,500 private rented homes are licensed on the scheme. There is extensive engagement with landlords via an accreditation scheme, landlord forums, and regular newsletters.
- 2.1.4 The council helps with repairs to private homes: 134 owner-occupied and 67 private rented homes were improved through grants and loans in 2018/19.

- 2.1.5 2,070 homes in Croydon had been empty for more than six months (as of 20 May 2019). We have a caseload of 800 properties. If appropriate we use enforcement powers. We also offer grants and loans to repair and renovate them in return for the ability to nominate future tenants for five years, saving £6,700 a year for each household no longer needing emergency housing.
- 2.1.6 Since 2013, Permitted Development Rights (which allow certain changes to be made to a building without requiring full permission from the Local Planning Authority) have been considerably expanded. These Rights now allow conversion from office and light industrial buildings to residential without full planning permission. Developers make an application through a ‘prior approvals’ process – and the local council is not able to hold a scheme to the criteria set out in its Local Plan, or those set in the Mayor’s London Plan, as it would for any other typical development. The authority may take into account impacts on highways and transport, the impact of noise from nearby commercial premises, but the converted dwellings do not need to meet minimum size standards or provide affordable housing.
- 2.1.7 A recent report prepared by London Assembly Member Tom Copley in May 2019, entitled ‘Slums of the Future: Permitted Development Conversions in London’ states that the London Borough of Croydon has seen the most residential units delivered via Permitted Development since 2013: 2,727, or 17% of the total across London. Of these, 80% are below the minimum size standard for new build homes, with 105 homes that are smaller than half the minimum standard.
- 2.1.8 The council introduced new planning policy in September 2015 which restricts such Permitted Development of office to residential conversions in the town centre ‘Croydon Opportunity Area’. However, there remains concern regarding the quality of the existing converted properties.

## **2.2. Key drivers for developing new Housing and Homelessness Strategies**

### **2.2.1 New homes**

- Croydon’s population is growing: in 2019 there are an estimated 164,763 households; these are expected to increase by 15% to 189,489 by 2029; that is 2,473 new households forming each year.
- Croydon’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment concludes that Croydon needs 46,040 new homes by 2036 to meet the borough’s housing need, compared with the current [Local Plan \(2018\)](#) that only plans for 32,890 homes up to 2036. A [Local Plan Review](#) is under way that aims to meet the need for new homes, whilst also considering how these must be delivered within the context of successful neighbourhoods, with appropriate associated transport, economic and social infrastructure.



- An increase in market housing supply has been shown to have minimal effect on affordability. Many residents cannot afford to rent or buy in Croydon. The market let definition of affordable housing (up to 80% of market rent) is beyond reach of many. Median house prices are 11.1 times median incomes (2018). Median rents were between £116 and £262 per month more than the maximum that Housing Benefit would pay (between July 2018 and June 2019).
- The Right to Buy has halved council stock since 1980 and following the reduction in grant funding housing associations have not built enough new homes to replace the homes sold.

### 2.2.2 Homelessness demand

- We currently have 2,129 homeless households in temporary accommodation (as at November 2019), 30% of which are in bed and breakfast emergency accommodation. We spend over £4m a year on properties obtained to house homeless households. In 2018/19 we secured settled homes for 220 homeless households to rent privately, discharging our housing duty.
- Around 3,500 households a year approach the council for assistance. More than 1650 at risk of losing their home were helped to avoid homelessness.
- The loss of a private tenancy is the most common cause of homelessness, followed by eviction by parents, relatives or friends, and domestic violence.
- Throughout 2018/19 we were aware of 274 people sleeping on Croydon's streets, only 27 of which had slept rough previously. In November 2018 there were 15 rough sleepers in Croydon on a typical night (excluding those sleeping in beds provided by night shelters). The figure from the 28.11.19 street count will be released by the Government in January 2020.
- The drivers of homelessness are:
  - **Poverty:**
    - Croydon residents earn less than elsewhere in London.
    - Welfare reform has reduced households' ability to meet their housing and living costs (the household benefit cap, the four year benefit freeze till 2020, Local Housing Allowance falling far behind market rents, and Universal Credit).
  - **Housing supply crisis:** a shortage of social and affordable housing
  - **Housing affordability:** market rents in Croydon are so high that many find it hard to access a private rented home, even with housing benefit

- **Austerity** and its impact on housing support, hostels, mental health, drug, alcohol services that help people avoid homelessness.
- **Limited recourse to public funds:** for non-UK nationals since 2014.
- **Domestic Violence:**
  - The Family Justice Centre (FJC) is a multi-agency co-located service offering support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) and their children. The FJC works closely with the Council's Housing Needs and Assessments Service where cases involve victims threatened with homelessness or needing to move to safe accommodation urgently.
  - In 2018/19 the FJC made 428 housing referrals, a 33% increase on 2017/18. However, when they arrange refuge accommodation, residents will not necessarily approach Croydon Council as homeless. The number of households applying as homeless to this Council as a result of domestic violence has increased by 25% from 114 in 2014/15 to 143 in 2018/19. The council also funds the Sanctuary Service to install security measures to enable victims to remain in their homes in safety.
  - Croydon Council commissions 20 refuge units for DASV victims from Hestia. In addition, Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid provides a refuge and support services. The Council has engaged with the FJC and they have not indicated additional need for refuge provision. In 2018/19 70 people left the Hestia refuge, 57 (85%) of which left in a planned way. 15 stayed for longer than the intended period. The reasons for this appear to be similar to those affecting single homeless people: where the individual is not owed the full homelessness duty, the move on route is the private rented sector, so delays result from limited availability of affordable private rented accommodation. On two occasions the delay was due to child safeguarding matters. (Data from Council's OHMS and the Supported Housing Market Position Statement, September 2019).

### 2.2.3 Need for affordable housing

- There were 5,458 households on the Council's housing register on 31 March 2019, many more than can be rehoused. 670 social homes became available for letting in 2018/19, of which 320 were let to new tenants from the housing register (the rest were let to homeless households as temporary or permanent accommodation). We offer grants and support to under-occupying tenants to encourage them to downsize, freeing up a family home; 37 were moved in 2018/19 and 31 in April to October 2019.

- People are living for longer: in Croydon the population age 65 years and over is expected to increase by 65% between 2016 and 2036, compared with an overall population increase of 14.8% in the same period. The highest projected increase (84%) is the 85 years and over age group. Some under-occupying their home may need better housing options and practical help to downsize. Others in residential care homes would be better suited to extra care housing: a new 37 unit scheme is needed and existing schemes need to be focussed on people needing more hours of care.
- The number of people with complex health and social care needs is increasing. This includes people with physical and learning disabilities and people with mental health support needs.
  - Some need adaptations to their current homes and others need to move to more suitable accommodation. 109 households on the council's housing register need a home adapted for or built for wheelchair use. Current planning standards and building regulations require new homes to be flexible for future adaptations, and 10% to be designed for full wheelchair accessibility, but only a small number of these are currently made available for affordable tenures.
  - 173 supported living units for council placements will be needed by 2025. This demand comprises the needs of people living in the community with ageing parents (expected to increase from 60 to 112 by 2025, two thirds being people with mental health needs) and people aged 25-65 with a learning and/or physical disability living in residential care homes who could live more independently with support (61 units to improve the ratio of people in residential care homes in relation to supported living from 55:45 to 50:50 over five years).
- Croydon has the largest population of young people in London. Between 2016 and 2036 the 10-19 population is expected to increase by 18.0%. Unemployment rates are higher amongst the younger population and their income and benefit rates are lower. Since 2014 there has been significant growth in the numbers of young homeless people. Croydon has around 500 care leavers, currently accommodated in the private rented sector, including houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), with estimated future demand of around 150 a year.

#### **2.2.4 Sustainability**

- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy estimates that in the UK, ca. 18% of carbon dioxide emissions were generated from the residential sector. Croydon Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, and intend to review all future policies to reduce our impact on climate change. This Council is committed to increasing the sustainability of new homes. It is setting up the independent Sustainable Croydon Commission. One of the Commission's themed strategy groups will examine how to reduce

carbon emissions from housing, by increasing the sustainability of new homes and retrofitting existing homes.

- Government statistics for 2017 indicate that over 17,000 Croydon households risk being in fuel poverty. However, there have been significant reductions in national funding schemes to tackle fuel poverty over the last decade.

## 2.3 National / regional policy

2.3.1 The Government set a target of increasing housing supply to 300,000 homes a year by 2022 and promised an Accelerated Planning Green Paper in 2019 with proposals to remove planning controls where local authorities fail to meet targets. Since 2010 the amount of government grant for each new social home has been reduced, so higher rents must be set to make them viable. These are 'affordable rents', up to 80% of market rent. Croydon, like most London boroughs, has had to find other ways to fill this gap. In 2018 the Government lifted the borrowing cap on the Housing Revenue Account and allowed prudential borrowing, yet the Right to Buy continues to deplete current council stock and threaten the long-term viability of future investment in new council homes. In March 2019 79% of government investment was still devoted to supporting private market or homeownership. The Future Homes Standard, currently under consultation, aims to cut carbon emissions in new homes by almost a third from 2025.

2.3.2 Consultation on implementing Hackitt Review recommendations on building regulations and fire safety has concluded. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates fell behind market rents for some years and have been frozen since 2016, making it harder for claimants to rent privately. A green paper proposed resetting the balance of rights and responsibilities between private landlords and tenants.

2.3.3 The Government has allocated £100m to deliver initiatives that will help to stop people becoming homeless in the first place, provide rapid rehousing (including piloting 'Housing First' for entrenched rough sleepers), and provide support to find work and live independently. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed new duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness and provide services to all affected by homelessness, whether or not they are in priority need for housing. Croydon's Gateway approach meant that the Council was prepared to meet this challenge, but the new burdens funding provided by Government is time-limited. There is a lack of consistent funding to support long-term programmes. The national Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018) aims to end rough sleeping entirely by 2027.

### 2.3.4 ***Conservative manifesto housing policies and implications for Croydon:***

- Home ownership is at the heart of the manifesto, with Right to Buy (RTB)

retained, shared ownership for housing associations standardised, and Help to Buy extended. The Council could use developers' planning contributions to discount homes in perpetuity by a third to people who cannot afford to buy locally and decide to support key workers in this way.

- A pledge to build 1m homes a year by 2025 covers all tenures.
- Renewing the Affordable Homes Programme could offer an opportunity to build more affordable homes in Croydon, but there are no targets for social or affordable rent.
- Croydon's Local Plan Review would be informed by ongoing Green Belt protection and prioritisation of brownfield development, and amended planning rules requiring the development of infrastructure before new homes. Residents would have more say on local development and the planning system would be simplified for the public and small builders and support modern methods of construction.
- A £10bn Single Housing Infrastructure Fund could provide opportunities to fund roads, schools, GP surgeries to support new housing supply in Croydon's growing places.
- Support for community housing to find land, access Help to Buy and support council tenants to take ownership of their estates.
- Private tenants would benefit from the abolition of 'no fault' evictions and 'lifetime' portable deposits, potentially reducing homelessness applications.
- Work would continue with housing associations and industry to remove unsafe cladding from high-rise homes
- Support for the creation of new kinds of homes that have low energy bills is undefined, as is housing's share of £9.2bn promised for energy efficiency
- Councils would have to implement measures in a Social Housing White Paper for better redress for tenants, regulation and better quality of social homes, but there is no mention of any funding for this.
- Expansion of pilots such as the Rough Sleeping Initiative and Housing First provides bidding opportunities for the Council to increase local provision

### 2.3.5 ***Labour manifesto housing policies and implications for Croydon:***

- A £75bn programme to build 150,000 social homes a year by 2025 would be an opportunity for the Council and Brick by Brick to build more council homes and for housing associations to build affordable homes in Croydon. A new affordability definition would be linked to local incomes.
- More low-cost homes would be reserved for first-time buyers in every area and Help to Buy would be reformed to on first-time buyers.
- The Council would gain more freedom to set planning fees and require the environmental emergency to be factored into all planning decisions.
- RTB would be abolished and the Council could bid for funding to buy back homes sold under the RTB that are let privately; this is a low-cost, convenient way of increasing council stock

- New rent controls and open-ended tenancies, while offering more affordability and stability to private tenants, may reduce Council options to lease from landlords. Nationwide licensing of landlords would enable the Council to renew its borough-wide selective licensing scheme for maximum effectiveness in raising standards.
- Decent Homes would be funded for councils and housing associations.
- A pledge to upgrade existing homes to the highest energy efficiency standards is undefined. If there is funding, the Council could bid for it.
- A £1bn Fire Safety Fund would support housing associations to improve fire safety in tower blocks and removal of dangerous cladding would be enforced.
- The Council's ability to return empty homes to use would be strengthened by new powers to tax homes empty for more than one year.
- People on benefits would find housing costs more affordable through an increase in the Local Housing Allowance to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of local rents and the abolition of the Housing Benefit under-occupancy charge.
- The Council's plan to end core homelessness would draw on measures from the national plan to end rough sleeping in five years, bid for funding for additional homes for people with a history of rough sleeping, and the promised £1bn a year for councils' homelessness services.

2.3.6 The Mayor's London Housing Strategy aims to address the housing shortage through an intensive use of London's available land, focusing on more genuinely affordable housing and providing help for people feeling the effects of the housing crisis – from private renters to rough sleepers. It has five priorities:

1. building homes for Londoners;
2. delivering genuinely affordable homes;
3. high quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods;
4. a fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders; and
5. tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers.

In support of priority 4, the Mayor has published proposals for reforming tenure and rents in the private rented sector. The Mayor's priorities are reflected in the strategic priorities proposed for Croydon's Housing Strategy.

## 2.4 Financial context

### 2.4.1 Funding available

- The council's principal funding stream for housing is the **Housing Revenue Account** (HRA), which is generated through rental income from council homes. There is strict governance over the use of this HRA funding, although it can be used for management, maintenance and investment in existing stock, as well as the development of new council homes, alongside services that are of direct

benefit to council tenants. Recently the government lifted the borrowing limit on councils' Housing Revenue Accounts, so borrowing against the HRA can now be utilised for the purchase or development of new council homes.

- The council can use the receipts from **Right to Buy** (RTB) sales to purchase or develop new homes. Central government requires that this money is used to provide additional properties within 3 years of the date of the RTB sale, or a proportion of the sale receipt has to be returned to the government, with 4% interest.
- This year Croydon received £6.8m from **New Homes Bonus** funding – this is incentive funding from central government to encourage housing growth and the use of empty homes. This funding is not ring-fenced for housing, but instead is incorporated into the General Fund.
- **S.106 and Community Infrastructure Levy** (CIL) funding is provided by developers to fund the physical and social infrastructure required alongside the development of new homes.
- The council's wholly owned development company, **Brick by Brick**, will generate income from the market sale of new homes, which will cross-subsidise the development of new affordable homes. Brick by Brick's overall profits will be returned to the council.
- The GLA provide grant funding for new affordable housing development through the **Affordable Homes Programme**. This includes a higher grant rate for the provision of supported and specialist housing.
- The council can seek **private investment** for purchasing and developing homes, for example via institutional investors and pension funds. To date Legal and General has invested in Croydon Affordable Homes (CAH) and the associated purchase of 250 street properties.
- In addition there is **funding from central government towards homelessness** prevention and support activity, including the flexible homelessness support grant, rough sleeping initiative funding and Homelessness Reduction Act transition funding. The majority of these funds are time limited and run until 2020 or 2021.

#### **2.4.2 Financial context – revenue costs to Croydon Council**

- The council's net expenditure for housing homeless households in Croydon for the financial year 2018/19 was £3.5m; a cost primarily met from the General Fund.

- There is an average estimated cost of around £7,000 per year for a household in Emergency Accommodation (EA). The council almost consistently can't reclaim the full costs associated with EA tenancies, with the amount of shortfall varying by location, size and tenancy type as well as the presence of any adaptations to the property. Some funding shortfalls are currently being funded by Homelessness Flexible Support Grant from central government.
- Larger Households stay for more extended periods in EA, particularly 6, 7 and 8 person households, and to a lesser extent 4 and 5 person households. Of the council's top 50 most expensive EA placements by nightly charge around 70% are for 4 or more person households. EA and Temporary Accommodation (TA) properties of 5 or more bedrooms can create significant cost pressure to the council, as the maximum LHA rate is for a 4 bedroom property.
- However, some of our most expensive placements aren't driven by the size of the household but by the complexity of their cases. The top 3 most expensive households in EA require fully adapted units for disabled access along with further bedroom(s) for children and/or carers.
- For temporary accommodation (TA), the costs of properties owned by the Council or on long leases (e.g. the 230 homes in Concord, Sycamore and Windsor Houses) are cost neutral for the council. However 1-3 bedroom TA homes sourced via the council's existing 'Croylease' and private sector leasing schemes cost between £8 and £38 per week to the council, as they are above the equivalent local housing allowance rate.
- Residents of both extra care, supported housing and supported living accommodation generally qualify for additional welfare benefit, known as Support Exempt Accommodation funding (SEA) to top up existing housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit – this supports the extra services and care provision in these types of homes. Additionally to the core rent, the council, through housing benefit, can pay up to 37% more than Local Housing Allowance per week per person for Supported Exempt Accommodation. Currently the council is unable to reclaim 40% of this additional SEA payment, although county councils, charitable organisations and registered providers can reclaim the full 100%. This creates a budgetary pressure on the general fund from Adult Social Care.

#### **2.4.3 Financial context: affordability**

- In addition to the existing 'affordable' tenures funded as part of the GLA affordable homes programme in London, the Mayor has introduced a new rent level targeting those on middle incomes, known as 'London Living Rent'. Analysis undertaken recently by the London Tenants Federation states that London Living Rent is unfortunately unaffordable to the majority of households



with 'equivalised' median incomes in most London wards. In Croydon, according to the Federation's analysis, no 3 or 4 bedroom homes at London Living Rent levels would be affordable to households on 'equivalised' median incomes, and two bedroom properties would only be affordable as assessed on this basis in a single Croydon ward.

- There are an increasing number of new homes in Croydon being planned from the outset for the private rental sector – known as 'build to rent'. These schemes are popular, particularly given their central, well-connected locations. However, there is no current analysis to confirm whether these new 'build to rent' homes are meeting local housing need in providing accommodation for existing Croydon residents, or, instead, attracting residents moving from elsewhere. Planning policy requires a proportion of these new rented homes to be for affordable tenures, but national planning policy guidance suggests that these should be generally marketed at rents 20% below local market rent levels. There is no requirement for such properties to be made available to nominees from the council's housing register, and typically these 'discount' rent levels would be above the Local Housing Allowance rate and therefore unaffordable for most households on the register.
- The council intends to undertake local research and develop a Croydon-specific definition of 'affordability' and a corresponding range of suitable tenure options, to inform local planning and housing policy. This would include assessment of affordable rent levels for households on our housing register, as well as those on higher or middle incomes who may not be able to afford typical market rents or private housing costs. As part of this research and analysis we will be reviewing our potential offer for 'key worker' housing, particularly in response to recruitment and retention issues for specific council roles where feedback suggests staff are struggling to find suitable affordable local accommodation.

### 3. Strategic Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Tensions

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><b><i>New homes within great places</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brick by Brick – flexible commercial construction vehicle</li> <li>• Croydon Affordable Homes; avoids RTB</li> <li>• Local plan pipeline of sites for housing development</li> <li>• Relatively low land and property values attractive for development investment</li> <li>• Suburban housing design guide</li> <li>• Place planning and regeneration</li> <li>• Learning gained through first Community Led Housing (CLH) tender.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>New homes within great places</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited regular liaison and partnership with RP sector</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Good quality homes</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small social housing stock (15% of total)</li> <li>• Housing stock borough-wide which does not meet current space, access or environmental efficiency/sustainability standards</li> <li>• Inability to capture full supported exempt accommodation funding limits options for</li> </ul>

<p><b>Good quality homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated high quality council housing stock asset management data: 99% Decent Homes compliant, sprinklers installed to high rise blocks.</li> <li>• Selective Licensing Scheme</li> <li>• Established empty homes programme</li> </ul> <p><b>Better access to homes and independent living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holistic and collaborative Gateway approach</li> <li>• Development of Housing First model in Croydon</li> <li>• Re-procurement of social care dynamic purchasing system including supported living and supported housing</li> </ul>	<p>supported housing development and procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compulsory purchase and enforced sale policy re empty homes is very difficult and convoluted.</li> </ul> <p><b>Better access to homes and independent living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcrowding and under-occupation of homes, including council homes</li> <li>• Confusing multi-layered offer and incentives for landlords letting property to LBC</li> <li>• Under-provision of accessible and adapted homes for residents with disabilities</li> <li>• Over-provision of residential care homes and under-provision of supported housing/living schemes</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p><b>New homes within great places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Plan Review</li> <li>• Borrowing cap removed from HRA</li> <li>• Community Led Housing (CLH), including co-operative housing and the use of the GLA's small sites initiative</li> <li>• Partnership with RPs – research, policy development, land-assembly and home-building</li> <li>• Major regeneration and development programmes</li> <li>• GLA grant funding, inc. for supported housing, and closer working with GLA on funding bids</li> <li>• Potential to develop a more comprehensive community engagement and resident involvement approach as part of planning for new housing development or regeneration</li> <li>• Ongoing infill development via BxB</li> <li>• Scope for further institutional investment and property purchases via CAH</li> <li>• Modern methods of construction</li> </ul> <p><b>Good quality homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Croydon Standard based on residents' priorities and contractor knowledge</li> <li>• Sustainability Commission: council commitment to sustainability</li> <li>• Renewal/expansion of selective landlord licensing in 2020</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TENSIONS</b></p> <p><b>New homes within great places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brexit – rising construction costs, departure of EEA workforce</li> <li>• Weak housing market reduces ability to cross-subsidise affordable housing</li> <li>• Population growth</li> <li>• Older people housing need (support, downsizing)</li> <li>• Growing numbers of care leavers requiring transitional support and housing</li> <li>• Ongoing losses of council homes to RTB</li> <li>• Communities' concern over new development and opposition to new homes at a local level</li> </ul> <p><b>Good quality homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government limits range of renewed Selective Licensing Scheme, weakening the ability to tackle rogue landlords</li> <li>• Less national funding to improve energy efficiency of homes; 17,000 Croydon homes at risk of fuel poverty (2017)</li> <li>• Climate change and the need to improve housing fabric and fuel efficiency: council homes achieve an average energy rating of 68.77 (EPC rating D)</li> </ul> <p><b>Better access to homes and independent living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large volume of emergency and temporary accommodation/need</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of article 4 direction for new HMOs</li> <li>• Community Led Housing to bring empty homes back into use</li> </ul> <p><b>Better access to homes and independent living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationalise incentives and engagement with landlords for TA, forward plan procurement and reduce spot-purchasing</li> <li>• Expansion of Croydon Lettings</li> <li>• More strategic planning and policy for provision and allocation of accessible homes</li> <li>• Capital letters London-wide collaboration for TA procurement</li> <li>• London Councils working group on pan-London hostel commissioning</li> <li>• Existing extra care schemes transferring to 'in house' management - potential to improve and rationalise provision</li> <li>• Opportunity to procure/acquire or develop new supported living and extra care homes</li> <li>• Develop more targeted approach to meeting the needs of downsizers, including high quality new homes for older people</li> <li>• New Gateway homeless support hub</li> <li>• Partnership with Crisis to end core homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing impact of austerity on services preventing homelessness: hostels, housing support, mental health, drug, alcohol services.</li> <li>• Household benefit cap, benefit freeze, Local Housing Allowance uncoupled from market rents, and universal credit</li> <li>• Competition for affordable market housing from other London boroughs seeking placements for their residents</li> <li>• Homelessness Reduction Act new burdens funding ends 2020</li> <li>• Build to rent market unaffordable to Croydon residents and does not fulfil local housing need</li> </ul>
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#### 4. Priorities of housing and homelessness strategies.

##### 4.1 Housing strategy priorities (See Appendix 1 Cabinet report: Section 5)

***New Homes in Great Places - we will:***

1. Increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes that Croydon residents can afford to rent or buy.
2. Plan for new homes within sustainable neighbourhoods, where people want to live, work and socialise

***Good quality Homes - we will:***

3. Improve council homes in estates and neighbourhoods that residents are proud to call their home
4. Improve private rented homes
5. Help with repairs to private homes for those who need it most

6. Bring empty homes back into use

***Better Access to Homes and Independent Living - we will:***

7. Make better use of existing social (council and housing association) homes

8. Increase the supply of temporary and permanent housing for those without a home

9. Enable people to rent decent homes in the private sector

10. Enable people to gain and maintain their independence in their home

11. Prevent and relieve homelessness, and reduce rough sleeping in Croydon

**4.2 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy (See Appendix 1 Cabinet report: Section 6)**

1. Increase use of engagement and early intervention services

2. Prevent homelessness

3. Ensure sufficient sustainable accommodation to meet the needs of homeless households

4. Support our residents through localised support services based on local need

5. End entrenched rough sleeping

6. End youth homelessness in Croydon

**5. Options: current work programme (See Appendix 1 Cabinet report: Section 7)**

**5.1 Updated borough-wide housing needs assessment for Local Plan Review**

A working group of officers across the council is reviewing a revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment to ensure that the findings accurately reflect current and projected population trends and associated housing needs. In addition, as part of the development of an updated Local Plan, to be adopted in 2022, we will work to ensure plans are in place for sufficient physical and social infrastructure across all neighbourhoods to accompany new housing development, and ensure that new and refurbished homes meet excellent standards for environmental sustainability.

**5.2 Develop a Croydon-specific definition of affordable housing**

As noted above, we will develop an evidence-based approach to planning for a range of housing tenures and types that meet the needs of Croydon residents at rents and prices to suit a range of local incomes. We will work with the

Mayor of London to ensure genuinely affordable homes in new developments through planning policy.

### **5.3 Affordable housing pipeline and engagement with Registered Providers**

The council will develop more regular and streamlined reporting and monitoring of new affordable housing supply/development to better plan for the new homes being developed for a range of affordable tenures in Croydon. This will include improved engagement with developers and RPs focused on new homes developed for disabled households. We will engage with RPs to build a more positive and proactive partnership approach, including research and strategic analysis, and joined-up approaches to creating new housing supply such as shared land assembly and regeneration.

### **5.4 Investment criteria and housing supply briefs for the Council's capital investment in new homes and for partners developing affordable housing in the borough**

The council will develop agreed procedures and prioritisation for the assessment of asset/investment opportunities, to enable the council to consider options for asset investment, procurement or development as assessed against agreed strategic objectives for planning and housing supply. We will prepare housing supply briefs for different types of housing to meet a range of needs, (including supported living, extra care and wheelchair accessible homes) to inform investment decisions, embed good design quality and ensure operational efficiency.

### **5.5 Investigating new ways of developing new council homes.**

Building on the programme of new build homes set up by the council's development company, Brick by Brick, we will review and develop new ways to build additional new homes. This investment will run alongside continued investment in existing council homes including consideration of conversions, extensions and refurbishment to achieve improved energy efficiency and increased standards for residents. We will develop a cross-departmental approach to the evaluation of poorly performing council housing assets, including the development of clear guidelines for the consideration of emerging estate regeneration opportunities. This would involve developing clear offers to residents, and guidance around appropriate and timely local community engagement and resident involvement, both pre- and post-planning, building on best practice in the sector.

### **5.6 Supporting Community Led Housing**

The Council is piloting the development of community-led housing (CLH) in Croydon by offering small council-owned sites for resident-led schemes that produce 100% affordable housing. [Crystal Palace Community Land Trust](#) was chosen to develop homes on the first site with support from Brick by Brick. We

will review other potential types of CLH including housing co-operatives and self-help housing to bring private sector empty homes back into use.

### **5.7 Encouraging downsizing**

The council's housing team will research and test improvements to our approach to households significantly under-occupying family homes, both in the social and private sector. We will improve the effectiveness of incentives and housing options, with provision of alternative housing that genuinely meets downsizing residents' needs, and the development of associated policy and guidance which reflects this.

### **5.8 Accessible homes policy review**

We will analyse the waiting list for wheelchair accessible and adapted homes to inform potential amendments to planning policy in relation to wheelchair design and specification requirements and tenure mix as part of new developments and agree a protocol with RPs to improve the allocation and letting of such properties.

### **5.9 Housing and income dashboard and a borough-wide housing supply review**

A review will be undertaken of the private rented sector and the council's emergency and temporary accommodation portfolio, assessing exposure, risk and opportunity against demand and market profile, in order to shape proposals for future investment, incentives and/or partnerships with private providers to best meet our need for such accommodation.

### **5.10 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy – key actions**

#### **5.10.1 Develop a new partnership with Crisis and prepare a new 10 year strategy**

The aim is to end core homelessness in Croydon. This means: no one sleeping rough; no one forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation such as tents or squats; no one living in emergency accommodation such as shelters and hostels without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation; no one homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as prison or the care system; and everyone at immediate risk of homelessness getting the help that prevents it happening. Working with Crisis, the national homelessness charity and campaigning organisation, we will test innovative and effective ways of reducing homelessness and rough-sleeping in the borough, and lobby for further funding and research towards this end.

#### **5.10.2 Develop 'Croydon Lettings', the Council's Social Lettings Agency from pilot to full service offer.**

Croydon Lettings placed 47 households in private tenancies at LHA rents in its first year, with a support package for landlords. In some cases it provides extra help, such as the deposit, rent in advance or essential items needed to make a

house a home. The service will continue to prevent homelessness, crises and demand for statutory services.

#### **5.10.3 Explore the development of a local homelessness reduction board**

Developing a board would strengthen local accountability. Croydon has excellent examples of collaborative working and integrated approaches, but the local delivery landscape is complex, with a number of agencies and bodies with different priorities and funding constraints operating under a variety of accountability arrangements.

#### **5.10.4 Establish a 24/7 assessment hub for rough sleepers**

24 hours a day, seven days a week this space will provide instant respite with an average stay of 72 hours for up to 15 people who are street homeless or at risk of sleeping on the street that night. A comprehensive assessment will develop personal plans for them to move off the streets into suitable accommodation with intensive support.

#### **5.10.5 Develop the Housing First model to become integral to the Croydon homelessness offer**

This provides a stable, independent home, intensive personalised support and case management to people with multiple and complex needs who are street homeless.

### **6. Engagement plans**

6.1 The approach to engagement to inform the development of the housing strategy will involve:

- Themes/work streams for engagement, developed from the housing strategy cabinet report (see Appendix 4 for a table of work streams).
- Working groups set up by theme, including internal and external stakeholders. These would inform our understanding of the issues, opportunities and challenges, and help us to identify and develop joint actions to address them. The themes cover:
  - Increasing supply of new affordable housing (and developing a Croydon-specific affordability definition)
  - Key worker housing
  - Neighbourhood infrastructure for homes
  - Environmental sustainability (of new and existing homes)
  - Council homes and estate investment
  - Older people's housing needs (including downsizing)
  - Accessible homes policy review
  - Private sector housing improvement and empty homes

- Borough-wide housing supply review (for temporary and emergency accommodation for homeless households)
  - Access to private rented housing
  - Young people's housing issues
  - Supported Housing/Independent Living
- Targeted involvement of local residents (council tenants, housing association tenants, private tenants and owner occupiers) supported by the council's Communications, User Research and Resident Involvement Teams to understand their housing aspirations with regard to tenure and security (home ownership, social rent, community-led housing) and their expectations in terms of the quality of existing housing
  - Reaching out to established local networks and organisations, e.g. Croydon's Landlords' Forum, Disability Croydon, Age UK Croydon and the Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association
  - Use of the Registered Provider Forum, established by the council's Spatial Planning Team, to review and feedback policy/procedural proposals and opportunities to partner in further research and development
  - Review of current best practice that could be adopted (rather than necessarily creating LBC-specific guidance or policy), e.g. University of Research DWELL research on homes and incentives for downsizers, Housing LIN guidance on Extra Care design.
  - 'Decent homes, affordable to all' (Appendix 2), a document setting out current council services to meet housing need and existing plans, together with an abbreviated, more accessible version, will be available on the council website to set the context for the engagement.

6.2 Consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy will have three elements:

- An online consultation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy will take place for a period of 6 weeks.
- Focus groups with stakeholders including providers and the voluntary, community and faith sector will take place within the 6 week consultation period
- Focus groups with service users will take place within the 6 week consultation period.



## 7. Next steps (timetable)

7.1 The engagement and consultation processes for both strategies are set out below:

- The engagement process to inform the development of the housing strategy and the consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy will both commence at the beginning of 2020.
- The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy will then be finalised for publication in March 2020, subject to approval by full council.
- It is anticipated that following a 2 month engagement period, a draft Housing Strategy will go out for public consultation for a 6 week period, including online feedback/surveys and focus groups with key stakeholders. A final version would then be published, subject to full council approval, in Spring 2020.

7.2 A summary of the programme for the next steps towards publication of both strategies is set out below:

Activity	December	January	February	March	April	May
Selective Licensing Consultation						
Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation						
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation						
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy approval and publication						
Housing Strategy engagement programme						
Draft Housing Strategy Consultation						
Housing Strategy approval and publication						

7.3 As detailed in the table above, the public consultation regarding the proposals for a renewal of the council’s selective landlord licensing scheme, and the consultation on the local plan review ‘issues and options’ will both be running in parallel with the engagement and consultation around the homelessness and

housing strategies. The council will ensure that relevant feedback and amendments to the licensing scheme proposals are considered as part of the development of the final Housing Strategy. The timescale for the development of the updated Local Plan is such that there will still be scope for officers and relevant representatives from the housing strategy theme groups to feed into the Local Plan Review process, including informing any proposals for relevant planning policy amendments that emerge from the current Local Plan consultation.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Caroline Toogood, Head of Strategic Projects (Growth and Housing) Ext 63837  
John Montes, Senior Strategy Officer, Ext 61613

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None

**APPENDICES:** Appendix 1 Cabinet report: A housing and homelessness strategy for Croydon (October 2019).  
Appendix 2 'Decent homes, affordable to all': current council services to meet housing need.  
Appendix 3 Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy.  
Appendix 4 Draft engagement plan

**For General Release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 21 OCTOBER 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>A housing and homelessness strategy for Croydon</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Hazel Simmonds, Executive Director – Gateway, Strategy and Engagement</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Alison Butler, Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON</b>	
This report builds on the commitment in the Council's Corporate Plan (2018) for <i>'good, decent homes, affordable for all'</i> and sets out the Council's strategic approach to housing, in all its forms, reflecting the three themes set out in the Corporate Plan: <i>new homes, quality homes and homes for everyone.</i>	

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Any specific proposals requiring capital investment or with implications for the Council's revenue budgets will need to be reviewed and approved via the appropriate approval route ahead of implementation.

**FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:** 1919CAB

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.1 Agree the draft priorities for a Housing Strategy and Action Plan for Croydon and authorise the commencement of a process of consultation and engagement with key external stakeholders to develop the strategy and action plan.
- 1.2 Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services to agree the final draft of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan for consultation (currently under development).
- 1.3 Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services to recommend the updated Housing Strategy and Action Plan to full Council for adoption following consideration of the outcome of the consultation and engagement.

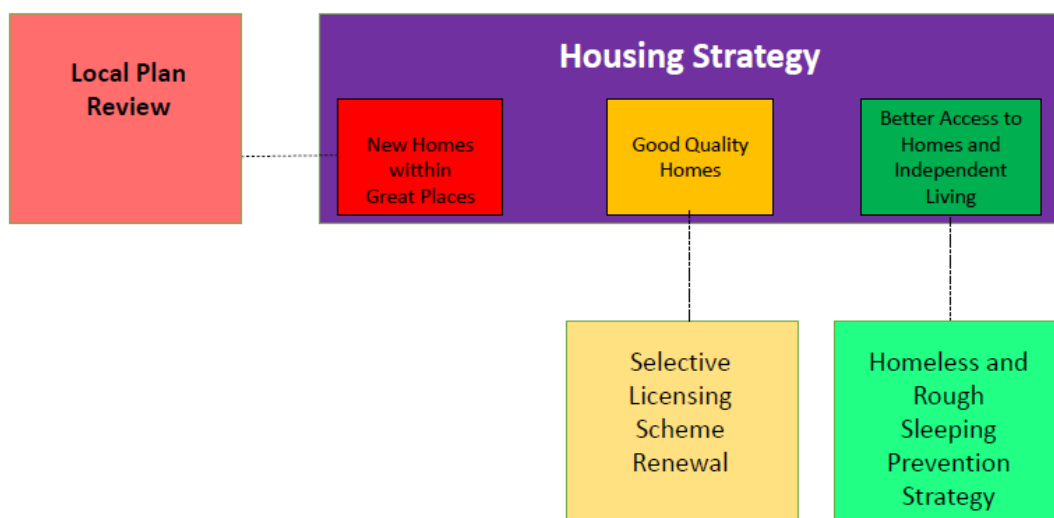
- 1.4 Agree the draft priorities for a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy for Croydon and authorise the commencement of a process of statutory consultation and engagement with key external stakeholders to develop the strategy.
- 1.5 Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services to agree the final draft of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy for consultation (currently under development).
- 1.6 Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services to recommend the updated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy to full Council for adoption following consideration of the outcome of the consultation and engagement.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Croydon is in the midst of a housing crisis. We are a growing borough, with more opportunities for education, employment and leisure than ever before, yet the supply of good quality housing is not increasing at a fast enough rate. What is more, many of our residents cannot afford to rent or buy a home that meets their needs and almost a quarter of private renters live in homes with a serious home hazard. A decent, stable home is a basic need for all of us: unsafe, expensive, overcrowded housing impacts on people's health and life chances. Securing safe, affordable, secure housing is often the first step to successful recovery and independence for individuals and families who have experienced addiction, trauma or violence.
- 2.2 We are determined to do everything required so that all in Croydon have the chance of a decent home that they can afford and call their own. Since it was introduced, the right to buy has reduced Croydon council stock by almost half. Council and housing association homes now make up just one in six of all housing in Croydon. This is fewer than in many London boroughs, even though Croydon is the second largest borough in London, and is not enough to meet the local need for affordable housing either now or in the future. Almost 1,000 more council homes will have been built or acquired by the Council by 2022. Nevertheless, the private rented sector must remain a strong part of housing provision in Croydon, as it has always been.
- 2.3 This Council rejects the Government's market-led definition of affordable housing (up to 80% of market rent) that many Croydon people in need cannot afford. 'Genuinely affordable' means different things to different people, depending on their income. We will adopt a definition based on local income levels to ensure homes of different types are created, from social rented, to intermediate rent and shared ownership, that suit various income levels in Croydon and provide options that do not force people to spend more than a third of household income on housing.

- 2.4 It's not just about new homes and better homes, but better places too, where residents want to live, work and socialise. To ensure our existing neighbourhoods are successful, and create new sustainable communities, the Council will engage with residents and partners on plans for the social and physical infrastructure required alongside new homes. This could include new schools, health and wellbeing centres, empty shops returned to use, new workspaces, and better community and leisure facilities; in short, all the other elements of social and civic life that make places work.
- 2.5 The Council declared a climate emergency on 8 July 2019 restating its commitment to tackle climate change. This strategy must play its part, as homes are currently directly responsible for [18%](#) of all carbon dioxide emissions in the UK. We will continue to seek high standards of sustainable design and construction from new developments, conversions and refurbishment work. However, existing homes have by far the greatest impact on carbon dioxide emissions. Investment in council homes will increase their energy efficiency. We must also enable private tenants and homeowners to access advice, and assistance if needed, to reduce their energy use.
- 2.6 This report outlines the Council's strategic priorities for improving the supply, quality and range of homes for Croydon residents, along with an initial series of workstreams to translate these priorities into action. We aim to make best use of our assets and resources, seek new opportunities and investment, and work with our partners to
- create **New Homes in Great Places** that local people can afford to rent or buy
  - ensure existing social and private homes become **Good Quality Homes**; and
  - provide **Better Access to Homes and Independent Living**, including ensuring people can live independently at home for as long as possible, and preventing and relieving homelessness.
- Our priorities under these three aims will form the basis of a housing strategy.
- 2.7 The report seeks authority to commence consultation and obtain delegated authority for the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services to recommend to full Council for adoption final versions of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy following consultation. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee will scrutinise and review the draft strategies. The recommendations set out in this report do not have any direct impact on the Council's financial planning and budget strategy. Any specific proposals requiring capital investment or with implications for the Council's revenue budgets will be considered under the existing financial regulations and brought for Cabinet approval if required by the scheme of financial delegation.

2.8 The diagram below shows the interrelationship between the reports to be considered by this Cabinet.



### 3. Housing need in Croydon

3.1 Croydon's population is growing. In 2019 there are an estimated 164,763 households in the borough (2014-based projections). By 2029 this will increase by 24,726 (15%) to 189,489. People are living longer. More people are living on their own. We have the most schoolchildren in London – they will need homes in future, as well as young people ready to leave home. Based on household projections between 2019 and 2039, the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has concluded that Croydon needs 46,040 new homes by 2039 to meet the borough's housing need. Given the planning constraints at the time it was adopted, the [current Local Plan \(2018\)](#) only plans for 32,890 homes up to 2036, which equates to 1,645 new homes a year. However, a Local Plan Review is now underway and is planning to meet the entire need of 46,040 homes. The Local Plan Review and the possible strategic options for how the planning process can assist in meeting the need for homes in the borough is subject of a separate Cabinet Report.

3.2 There is a need for both large and small homes across tenures, affordable rented, affordable home ownership as well as market housing for rent and sale. The Council is committed to securing an increase in supply for the borough across all tenures, creating mixed neighbourhoods. The size mix will vary according to tenure, recognising the role which larger family homes can play in releasing the supply of smaller homes and the role of smaller homes in providing housing options for new households and under-occupiers wishing to down-size.

- 3.3 Many local people cannot afford to buy or rent a home in Croydon. Median (average) house prices are over 11 times median incomes. Median rents are between £116 and £262 per month more expensive than Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, the maximum rent that could be covered by benefit. 5,468 households were on the Council's housing register on 31 March 2019, many more than can be housed either in council properties or through partner housing associations. In 2018/19 only 570 social homes were let to new tenants. Many thousands in housing need due to overcrowding do not meet the qualifying threshold for our housing register.
- 3.4 Between 2016 and 2036, older persons age groups in Croydon are forecast to experience the most significant proportional growth, with the 65 years and over age group increasing by 65% compared with an overall population increase in Croydon of 14.8%. Within the older population growth forecast the 70-74 age group increases by approximately 82%, 75-79 increases by approximately 70% and the 85 years and over group increases by 84% (Source: demographic projections/2014-based sub-national household projections). Some may age in private rented accommodation and find it harder to afford in later life. Some special sheltered (extra care) and sheltered accommodation is outdated and needs upgrading or replacing. Some people living in residential care homes are better suited to extra care housing. To meet this need and rising need in the wider population, a new scheme of 37 units of special sheltered accommodation is needed as well as the focussing of existing schemes on people needing more hours of care. The care provision in six special sheltered housing schemes will transfer to the Council by January 2020 and develop a service to deliver tenant-focused care in homes for life. The ability to deliver more care to tenants if they need it is intended to reduce the need for residential care. More detailed research is required to detail the housing requirements of older people in Croydon, including those who are under-occupying family homes. Our priority will be to enable people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible.
- 3.5 Of those households awaiting social housing on the Council's housing register, currently 109 need a home adapted for or built for wheelchair use. In addition, there is a need in the borough for the supply of private market (rent or sale) homes that are accessible and adapted or can be adapted for wheelchair users. Current planning standards and building regulations require new homes to be flexible for future adaptations, but we will seek to ensure that more new homes meet higher standards for meeting residents' needs as they grow older.
- 3.6 Croydon has the largest population of young people in London. Between 2016 and 2036 the 10-19 population is expected to increase by 18.0%. Unemployment remains higher amongst the younger population. Since 2014, there has been significant growth in the numbers of young homeless people. Croydon has around 500 care leavers who are currently accommodated in the

private rented sector including houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). In future demand is likely to be in the region of 150 a year. HMOs are not always suitable for these vulnerable young people. There is a need to develop options for self-contained accommodation to give them the best start in life.

3.7 The number of people with complex health and social care needs, such as people with physical or learning disabilities and people recovering from a mental health problem is increasing. There is currently a shortage of good quality housing for supported living in Croydon. Many people living in residential care homes could be managing their own tenancy and living more independently, with support. We also wish to move from a reliance on expensive nursing care provision towards the use of residential care for our residents, where appropriate. Some people with physical and learning disabilities are living with ageing parents and in future will need adapted accommodation with support. Currently there are 60 people in the borough waiting for supported living placements including 40 people with mental health needs; this is expected to increase to 112 by 2025. The ratio of people aged 25-65 with a learning and/or physical disability in residential care homes in relation to supported living in Croydon is 55:45. Improving this to 50:50 by 2025 would require another 61 units, bringing the total need to 173 units over five years. These figures do not take account of fortuitous vacancies within existing stock. When placing residents with external providers of supported living, the Council's strong preference is that this should only be with partners who are Registered Providers, as this enables 100% of supported exempt accommodation funding to be claimed back.

3.8 The Council published its Homelessness Review in August 2018. Its findings (updated where appropriate) may be summarised as follows:

#### 3.8.1 Levels of homelessness

- **Homelessness demand:** the number of people approaching the Council annually for assistance has been consistently around 3,500, and more approach local advice services and community groups looking for help. In the last couple of years, however, we have changed our approach and put more resources into preventing homelessness, helping more than 1650 people at risk of losing their homes in 2018/19.
- **Causes of homelessness applications:** losing a private rented tenancy is the most common cause of homeless (and has been for a number of years), followed by someone's parents or relatives not being able to continue to accommodate them, and domestic violence.
- **Underlying drivers of homelessness:**
  - **Poverty:** Croydon residents earn less, and are employed in less well paid occupations than other parts of London. Welfare reform has



reduced the support that families and individuals receive to meet their housing and other vital needs. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has fallen far behind market rents. Universal Credit and other welfare reforms are associated with increased homelessness and poverty making it harder for many people to find a home.

- **The housing supply crisis:** Failure to build in sufficient volumes over the past 30 years compounded by the reduction in the government grant for social housing has led to an overall shortage of housing, including affordable housing in Croydon. The government introduced a definition of affordable housing as being up to 80% of market rent, which is not affordable for many people in Croydon
- **Housing affordability:** Average house prices are over 10 times average incomes. Because market rents in Croydon are so high, many people no longer have the option of saving while they rent. Changes to and freezing housing benefit rates until 2020, and the introduction of Universal Credit have made it harder for people to afford private rented homes even with benefit help.
- **Austerity:** Government austerity has impacted on services that help prevent homelessness, such as housing support, hostels, and mental health, drug and alcohol services.
- **Multiple needs:** Most support providers tell us that they are catering to people with more complex needs than before.
- **European Economic Area nationals and other migrants:** Since 2014 non-UK nationals have limited access to benefits and housing. Over 60% of the increase in rough sleeping in London is from non-UK nationals.
- **Temporary accommodation:** The Council has a significant number of people housed in temporary accommodation and emergency accommodation). In 2018/19 1,047 homeless households were in bed and breakfast, of which 52% were families and 48% were vulnerable single people. Most single people are placed in supported rather than general needs housing. On 31 March 2019 there were 653 homeless households in bed and breakfast hotels, including 1,010 children.
- **Rough sleeping:** We have around 15 people sleeping rough in Croydon on a typical night. In 2018/19, we were aware of 274 people sleeping rough in Croydon, of which only 27 had returned to the streets having slept rough previously.

#### **4. National and regional policy**

- 4.1 The Government set a target of increasing housing supply to 300,000 homes a year by 2022 and promised an Accelerated Planning Green Paper in 2019 with proposals to remove planning controls where local authorities fail to meet targets. Since 2010 the amount of government grant for each new social home has been lower, so higher rents must be set to make them viable. Croydon, like most London boroughs, has had to find other ways to fill this gap. The Government allowed more flexibility to fund affordable rented homes, lifted the borrowing cap on the Housing Revenue Account and allowed prudential borrowing, yet the Right to Buy continues to deplete current council stock and threaten the long-term viability of future investment in new council homes. In March 2019 79% of government investment was still devoted to supporting private market or homeownership. The Future Homes Standard, currently under consultation, aims to cut carbon emissions in new homes by almost a third from 2025. This Council is committed to increasing the sustainability of new homes.
- 4.2 Consultation on implementing Hackitt Review recommendations on building regulations and fire safety has concluded. LHA rates fell behind market rents for some years and have been frozen since 2016, making it harder for claimants to rent privately. A green paper proposes resetting the balance of rights and responsibilities between private landlords and tenants.
- 4.3 Government policy on homelessness has increased in priority and prominence in recent years. The Government has allocated £100m to deliver initiatives that will help to stop people becoming homeless in the first place, provide rapid rehousing (including piloting 'Housing First' for entrenched rough sleepers), and provide support to find work and live independently. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed new duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness and provide services to all affected by homelessness, whether or not they are in priority need for housing. Croydon's Gateway approach meant that the Council was prepared to meet this challenge, but the new burdens funding provided by Government is time-limited. There is a lack of consistent funding to support long-term programmes. The national Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018) aims to end rough sleeping entirely by 2027. The extent to which the Government will continue these policies will become clearer after the Queen's Speech, but early indications suggest a greater focus on home ownership rather than affordable housing.
- 4.4 The Mayor's London Housing Strategy aims to address the housing shortage through an intensive use of London's available land, focusing on more genuinely affordable housing and providing help for people feeling the effects of the housing crisis – from private renters to rough sleepers. It has five priorities:
1. building homes for Londoners;
  2. delivering genuinely affordable homes;
  3. high quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods;

4. a fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders; and
5. tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers.

In support of priority 4, the Mayor has published proposals for reforming tenure and rents in the private rented sector. The Mayor's priorities are reflected in the strategic priorities proposed for Croydon's Housing Strategy.

## 5. Our Priorities

- 5.1 Our priorities come under three headings: to create **New Homes** that local people can afford to rent or buy; ensure existing homes are **Good Quality Homes**; and provide **Better Access to Homes and Independent Living**.

### **New Homes within Great Places**

1. Increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes that Croydon residents can afford to rent or buy
  - Develop an evidence-based approach to planning for a range of housing tenures and types that meet the needs of Croydon residents at rents and prices to suit a range of local incomes
  - Work with the Mayor of London to ensure genuinely affordable homes in new developments through planning policy and bidding for extra development funding
  - Brick by Brick, the Council's wholly-owned housing company, is building 2,000 homes on council land by 2022, selling or renting 50% at market prices creating profits to fund homes for shared ownership, intermediate rent or affordable rent. Thereafter it will build 500 homes a year.
  - Pilot community-led housing on small council-owned sites for resident-led schemes to produce 100% affordable homes
  - Develop plans to build additional new council homes to be let at rents that local people can afford.
  - Review options for developing or procuring homes that key workers can afford, and involve partner public sector employers.
2. Plan for new homes within sustainable neighbourhoods, where people want to live, work and socialise
  - Work with partners and the community to ensure there is sufficient social and physical infrastructure in each local area to support the new homes and create sustainable places.
  - Subject to consultation, adopt a revised Local Plan in 2022 to take account of the Mayor of London's new, higher target for new homes and affordable housing in Croydon.
  - Ensure that future development contributes fully to minimising carbon dioxide emissions and seek high standards of sustainable design and construction from new development, conversion and refurbishment

## **Good Quality Homes**

3. Improve council homes in estates and neighbourhoods that residents are proud to call their home

Croydon has 13,475 council homes, including 1,221 sheltered and special sheltered homes. The Council has acquired 254 council homes, to be managed through its charitable partnership Croydon Affordable Homes, and leased 338 homes for homeless households let at LHA rents. In addition, Brick by Brick and the Hub will have completed 412 council homes for affordable rent by 2022. This will bring the total of additional council homes delivered to 998. The Council will:

- Continue to invest in council homes to ensure they comply with safety regulations, are decent and more energy efficient.
- Create new social/affordable homes by converting or extending existing buildings, replacing them if not cost-effective, and building on infill sites
- Consider outdated sheltered/special sheltered (extra care) housing for upgrading or conversion into general needs housing. Invest in new older people's housing and extra care homes that meet modern standards.
- Improve communal spaces, design solutions to anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping, and install full fibre broadband to council homes
- Involve residents of all ages and backgrounds in shaping our housing services
- Develop a disposals and acquisitions policy
- Ensure we achieve value for money and good performance from our contractors.

4. Improve private rented homes

Some 58,500 homes are rented privately (36% of all dwellings in Croydon). 24% have at least one serious home hazard. The number of private renters is rising as this is an important option for people who cannot afford to buy.

- Advise, train and support landlords, running the regular Landlords' Forum and newsletter, and enforce standards where necessary
- Following consultation, seek approval from the Secretary of State to renew the selective licensing scheme in 2020 to improve housing conditions in the private rented sector
- Require owners to seek planning permission from 2020 before converting properties into small houses in multiple occupation
- Support proposals for private rented sector reform including the Mayor of London's blueprint for reforming tenure and rents

5. Help with repairs to private homes for those who need it most

Continue to provide loans for owner occupiers and grants for private tenants to help fund essential repairs and energy efficiency improvements.

6. Bring empty homes back into use
  - Further develop referral arrangements to improve our intelligence and double Council Tax payable for long term empty properties.

### **Better Access to Homes and Independent Living**

7. Make better use of existing social homes
  - Encourage under-occupiers to move to smaller council and housing association homes through grants, practical help and offers of alternative housing that genuinely meets their needs.
  - Research older people's needs to develop suitable homes for people as they age.
  - Review policy on adaptations of under-occupied council homes.
  - Improve processes to speed up the reletting of empty council homes, and better target homes which have existing adaptations to disabled households.
8. Increase the supply of temporary and permanent housing for those without a home
  - Update council temporary accommodation schemes, seek investment and develop a framework to assess opportunities to increase supply
  - Use private investment and receipts from Right to Buy house sales to purchase more new and existing homes for letting at the LHA to low income families, ensuring that they remain affordable and not subject to the Right to Buy by transferring them to charitable limited liability partnerships.
9. Enable people to rent decent homes in the private sector
  - Enable people to rent privately through information and advice, and place more people in private tenancies through Croydon Lettings, the Council's social lettings agency.
  - Publicise to landlords Council accommodation schemes, for example guaranteed rent and support for vulnerable people in rented properties.
  - Offer information, advice, access to training and support to homeowners thinking of letting properties.
10. Enable people to gain and maintain their independence in their home
  - Continue delivering major adaptations across all tenures of property.
  - Continue advising and assisting homeowners and private tenants to keep their homes warm and reduce their fuel bills.
  - Consider investment options to increase the supply of supported housing in Croydon, including the delivery of adaptations and support packages for people in their current homes, in order to progress towards meeting demand for independent living and moving away from over-provision of residential care.

- Review and update planning policy and design guidance for the development of new wheelchair accessible homes.
11. Prevent and relieve homelessness and end entrenched rough sleeping
- Consult on and adopt a homelessness and rough sleeping prevention strategy for Croydon, the priorities of which are set out under 6 below.
  - Embed the council-wide prevention and early intervention ‘Gateway’ approach with partners in all sectors: negotiation with landlords, tackling illegal eviction, family mediation, as well as wrap-around support to help people to help themselves covering debts, budgeting, maximising income, finding employment and services to tackle food poverty.

## 6. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy

6.1 The Council must review, renew and publish a homelessness strategy every five years, as a requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002. Croydon’s [Homelessness Review](#) was published in 2018. It provided information about current levels of homelessness in Croydon, and how they might change over the next 5 years, the causes and underlying drivers of homelessness, and the profile of homelessness. To tackle homelessness and rough sleeping effectively requires taking wide-ranging actions, best organised through a strategic partnership approach. Some of the actions required cannot be taken forward at a local authority level, and we will need the support, and additional resources from central Government and the Mayor of London. The Review found that there appears to be little opposition to tackling homelessness judging by the engagement carried out so far. Differences of opinion seem to emerge around: how/whether we should prioritise support; how we enforce around begging/vagrancy; and, how Croydon will continue to support government funded projects once the current funding comes to an end. Following the completion of consultation on the Review in late 2018, the Council now proposes to commence consultation on a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy, including the key aims as listed at 6.2. This report seeks authority to consult with key partners and external stakeholders, and submit to full Council for adoption.

6.2 The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy has the following priorities:

**6.2.1 Deliver early intervention services across the borough:** We want more people to know about and use Croydon’s public and voluntary sector services to help them avoid crisis. To provide support earlier we need to work in communities, delivering trusted services where they are needed most, based on local evidence and intelligence. We will build coordinated early identification networks and effective referral services linked to existing commissioned preventative services. More services in areas of high need will be delivered with

or by community projects. New adult social care customers will benefit from the Council's 'Gateway' service, which responds to a whole household's needs concerning income, employment, skills and training, as well as housing. The aim of this collaborative, holistic approach is to increase resilience and independence. We will train and share information with commissioned services and voluntary groups providing services to people in need, to build their capacity and improve collaboration.

- 6.2.2 Prevent homelessness:** We will continue to develop a more proactive, locally delivered, evidence-based prevention service. This will include more effective prevention of the three main causes of homelessness: the loss of private tenancies; exclusion by parents, relatives and friends; and domestic violence. We will promote housing advice and options services; work jointly with public authorities such as prisons, probation and health services; and extend the Gateway approach into more areas of high need through Community Connect/Food Stop projects to ensure that people at risk of homelessness approach the Council for advice as early as possible and understand how we can help them find alternative accommodation.
- 6.2.3 End entrenched rough sleeping and end core homelessness by 2030.** We will employ an effective 'No First Night Out' approach to tackle rough sleeping early, establishing rapid rehousing pathways from the street and opening a short stay centre to assess complex needs and develop swift person-centred solutions for rough sleepers and individuals at immediate risk of street homelessness. We will extend the Housing First approach to get the most vulnerable people off the streets and into their own home with support. Other actions include joint work with Police and local businesses to arrange support and reduce anti-social behaviour associated with some rough sleepers and sleeping sites. We will relieve homelessness among European Economic Area nationals and other migrants with no access to welfare benefits.
- 6.2.4 End youth homelessness in Croydon:** This priority covers services for young people aged 16-25 without dependents. It will include improving joint work between housing and children's services on housing and support for young people and care leavers. We will co-design housing advice and information with young people; develop a youth homelessness prevention peer education programme and a young persons 'tenancy ready' programme; and identify young people at risk of tenancy failure through eviction or abandonment. We will develop alternative emergency accommodation for young people and end the use of B&B hotels.
- 6.2.5 Ensure sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households:** This priority includes housing strategy actions set out at 5.1 (8) above to provide homes needed to discharge the Council's housing duty and provide housing options for moving on from supported accommodation. It will ensure sufficient supply for specific groups such as over-65s with complex

needs and young people; and enable the Council to reduce the use of B&B hotels with shared facilities as emergency accommodation.

**6.2.6 Support our residents through localised support services based on local need:** This will include support to enable vulnerable tenants to sustain their tenancies, reviewing the provision of health services for homeless households; and providing opportunities for volunteers to meet need in their local area.

**6.2.7 Enter into a collaborative partnership with Crisis to develop and implement a ten year strategy to end core homelessness in Croydon.**  
Ending core homelessness means: no one sleeping rough; no one forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation such as tents or squats; no one living in emergency accommodation such as shelters and hostels without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation; no one homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as prison or the care system; and everyone at immediate risk of homelessness getting the help that prevents it happening. Working with Crisis, the national homelessness charity and campaigning organisation, we will test innovative and effective ways of reducing homelessness and rough-sleeping in the borough, and lobby for further funding and research towards this end.

## **7. Action Plan**

**7.1** In line with the three key overarching themes set out above, and following engagement with Cabinet Members, relevant officers and key stakeholders, we have delineated a number of initial workstreams which will ensure progress against the 11 key priorities for Croydon's Housing Strategy. These are not exhaustive, but are the areas of immediate focus underneath the priorities outlined above, in addition to work already underway as described. As part of the action plan, the Council will take the opportunity to review all relevant policies to ensure they are fit for purpose and match the expectations of the strategy.

## **7.2 New Homes in Great Places**

### **7.2.1 Updated borough-wide housing needs assessment to inform the Local Plan Review**

As noted in the October 2019 Cabinet paper setting out the proposals and timeline for the review of the Croydon Local Plan (2018), a revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been produced by GL Hearn for the Council. A working group of relevant officers across the Council are reviewing the SHMA research to ensure that the findings accurately reflect current and projected population trends, and associated housing needs borough-wide. This



is prompting proposals for planning policy changes in order to best meet the borough's housing needs, which will be captured in any relevant amendments to the Croydon Local Plan as part of the current Local Plan Review process.

### **7.2.2 Affordable housing pipeline and engagement with Registered Providers**

Building on the established relationships between Croydon's Spatial Planning team and Registered Providers (RPs), we will develop more regular and streamlined reporting and monitoring of new affordable housing supply/development in the borough, in order to better plan for the new homes being developed for a range of affordable tenures in Croydon. This will include improved engagement with developers and RPs focused on new homes developed for disabled households, in order to better specify for and target these homes at individuals and families with relevant needs.

### **7.2.3 Investment criteria and housing supply briefs for the Council's capital investment in new homes and for partners developing affordable housing in the borough**

Building on the overarching governance route for asset disposals and acquisitions via an Assets Board the Council will develop clear procedural guidance for the consideration of asset/investment opportunities, including viability testing and legal and financial due diligence. Most importantly this will enable the Council to prioritise options for asset investment, procurement or development as assessed against agreed strategic objectives for planning and housing supply.

Informed by the SHMA and broader review of housing needs in the borough, we will develop a series of housing supply briefs for different types of housing, (e.g. extra care) in order to inform investment decisions, embed good design quality and ensure operational efficiency.

In particular, we will develop a proposal for a programme of investment into new homes for supported living for adults with learning and physical disabilities, as existing analysis of projected needs and supply indicates a requirement for 35 new units (including rooms in shared properties with shared communal facilities) a year for this cohort up to 2025. As noted above, we will set out how we can move closer to the national best practice ratio of 25:75% for residential care : supported living for individuals with disabilities. By investing directly in the provision of new homes for supported living, the Council would be able to recover the Supported Exempt Accommodation costs that are currently paid to landlords that are not registered providers to top up Housing Benefit to cover extra expenses for supported living. The Council would also encourage non-registered providers to register so that Supported Exempt Accommodation costs can be recovered this way also.

## **7.3 Good Quality Homes**

### **7.3.1 Encouraging downsizing**

Developing on previous research and policy development work undertaken by Croydon's housing solutions team, we will undertake a research and engagement project to capture any potential improvements to the Council's approach to households significantly under-occupying family homes, both in our own council homes and in the private sector. We need to strike an appropriate balance between helping our residents stay settled in neighbourhoods where they have local community links and support networks, whilst releasing family homes for occupation by larger households. This work may further inform the development of relevant housing supply briefs as set out in 7.2.3 above.

### **7.3.2 Accessible homes policy review**

As part of the housing needs analysis summarised above, and aligned to the Local Plan Review process, we will analyse the existing 'waiting list' for wheelchair accessible and adapted homes on the Council's housing register. This will inform potential amendments to planning policy in relation to wheelchair design and specification requirements, and tenure mix as part of new developments. We will also work with developers and RPs to agree a wheelchair allocations and lettings protocol for new accessible and adapted homes, so that these are appropriately fitted out for the specific needs of such households, and the process of letting is as streamlined as possible.

## **7.4 Better Access to Homes and Independent Living**

### **7.4.1 Housing and income dashboard and a borough-wide housing supply review**

We are developing a dashboard to better map our current general needs housing register and homelessness applications against allocations and lettings activities, and monitor income for the Council's housing stock. In parallel, the Council has commissioned a strategic review of the private rented sector and the Council's emergency and temporary accommodation portfolio assessing exposure, risk and opportunity against demand and market profile. This will drive proposals for future investment, incentives and/or partnerships with private providers in order to best meet our need for emergency and temporary housing.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

## **8.1 Previous consultation on Homelessness Review**

The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy is being developed following significant input from community organisations, homelessness charities and housing providers in the borough, amongst other contributors. The Homelessness Review document was made available on the Council's website for 3 months, and relevant organisations and partners were invited to review and provide feedback. The document was also available for review by the general public.

## **8.2 Future consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy**

The Council proposes to publish the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy for comment and feedback on our website for 6 weeks prior to final review and publication. During this period key local and national stakeholders will be invited to review and comment on the draft document, and where appropriate changes will be made to improve the strategy. Focus groups are planned with local housing providers and charities working with homeless households and rough sleepers, to ensure that the views of our key partners are reflected in the final strategy.

## **8.3 Future consultation on Housing Strategic Priorities and Action Plan**

The Council will publish a more detailed version of the strategic priorities for housing, and the accompanying action plan (including relevant case studies and links) on our website for review and comment over a 12 week period. Individual workstreams set out as part of the Action Plan will require more detailed and specific engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders and organisations, and communications and engagement plans will be prepared for approval by the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services prior to commencement. For example on the workstream relating to the design and letting of homes for wheelchair users, we would anticipate engaging with local organisations such as the Disability Croydon, alongside local NHS partners, housing associations and housing developers.

## **8.4 Scrutiny and Overview Committee**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee will review and scrutinise the draft Housing Strategy and the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Committee's recommendations will inform the completion of the strategies before the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services recommends the updated strategies to full Council for adoption.

## **9 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. As the proposals are developed, any requiring capital investment or with implications for the Council's revenue budgets will need to be reviewed and approved via the appropriate approval route ahead of implementation.

### **2 The effect of the decision**

The decision to agree the strategies has no direct financial impact for the Council. The implementation of the strategies will have financial implications and these will have to be reviewed and approved to ensure the funding is available.

### **3 Risks**

There is no risk associated with the development of the strategies. There could be a risk about affordability to deliver but at this stage this is unknown.

### **4 Options**

None.

### **5 Future savings/efficiencies**

At this stage these are unknown.

### **6 (Approved by: Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance, Investment and Risk (Interim S151 Officer))**

## **10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that under the Homelessness Act 2002 as amended, all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness within their district. Failure to produce an up-to-date strategy will leave the Council open to legal challenge.
- 10.2 In relation to the Housing Strategy and Action Plan beyond the statutory and national policy context set out within the report there are no specific legal considerations to note at this stage. Any specific proposals set out in the proposed Housing Strategy and Action Plan will need to be the subject of a separate authorisation process upon which advice can be given at the time.
- 10.3 As a public authority, the Council must always take account of the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and not act in a way which is incompatible with a Convention right. Under Article 8, any interference with the right to respect for a person's private and family life and home must be proportionate and Article 14 requires that there must be no unjustified discrimination within the scope of human rights on any grounds, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion,

political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status.

10.4 In discharging its functions the Council must also have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

10.5 Section 149(1) provides that, in exercising its functions, a public authority must have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10.6 The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

10.7 Section 149(3) provides that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

10.8 *Approved by* Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

11.1 There are no direct human resources impacts arising from the recommendations of this report.

11.2 (Approved by: Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources)

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

12.1 An Equality Analysis has been carried out to ascertain the impact of the proposed change on groups that share a protected characteristic. The key findings were that there is no potential negative impact on protected groups.

Maintaining sufficient supply of housing for the borough and improving the standards of existing homes will have a greater impact on the most vulnerable members of Croydon's communities, who are generally less able to afford higher quality, more secure housing. We are proposing specific improvements targets at sectors of our population covered by 'protected characteristics', in particular older people and residents with physical or learning disabilities. Opportunities to advance equality have been taken, so no change to the strategy priorities and initial action plan is suggested. The Equality Analysis will be reviewed alongside the strategy action plan to examine outcome of actions listed in section 12.4 below.

12.2 In developing the strategic priorities for a future housing strategy, regard has been had to the Council's Corporate Plan and its equality objectives contained in the Opportunity and Fairness Plan 2016-20.

12.3 The Council's equality objectives, adopted at Cabinet in April 2016, were developed on the basis of the findings of Croydon's Opportunity and Fairness Commission which provide a qualitative evidence base relating to the equality and inclusion issues in Croydon. Equality analysis of geographic inequality and that related to people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not is embedded in the Borough Profile that was published by the Council in December 2018. The equality objectives are:

- To increase the rate of employment for disabled people, young people, over 50s and lone parents who are furthest away from the job market
- To increase the support offered to people who find themselves in a position where they are accepted as homeless especially those from BME backgrounds and women
- To reduce the rate of child poverty especially in the six most deprived wards
- To improve attainment levels for white working class and Black Caribbean heritages, those in receipt of Free School Meals and Looked After Children, particularly at Key Stage 2 including those living in six most deprived wards
- To increase the percentage of domestic violence sanctions
- To increase the reporting and detection of the child sexual offences monitored
- To reduce the number of young people who enter the youth justice system
- To reduce social isolation among disabled people and older people
- Improve the proportion of people from different backgrounds who get on well together
- To reduce differences in life expectancy between communities

#### **The equality profile of homelessness**

12.4 Homelessness is most likely to affect those individuals and families that are in low paid, insecure employment, or are out of work, or who struggle to secure employment due to caring/parental responsibilities. It also affects those whose

vulnerabilities make it more difficult for them to provide for themselves including market employment and housing. The key points are:

- **Gender:** More than 6 out of ten of homeless applicants are single women or many of whom are single parents
- **Children:** More than 8 out of ten households applying as homeless have dependent children.
- **Age:** Homeless households tend to be younger than the general population, with more than half of applicants being aged between 25 and 44.
- **Ethnicity:** Black households tend to be overrepresented among homeless households. In Croydon, 46% of homeless households are of Black ethnic background (compared to 20.2% of the general population on census day 2011).
- **Rough sleepers gender/ age:** Rough sleepers tend to be male (more than 7 out of 10), but younger than the general population.
- **Additional needs:** Most rough sleepers (6 out of 10) have additional needs (including substance misuse or mental health problems).
- **Institutional history:** More than half of rough sleepers have an institutional history, having spent time in care, prison or in the armed forces.

### **Housing strategy priorities and equality**

12.5 A number of housing strategy priorities and workstreams will have a positive impact on aims of the Equality Act and address the Council's equality objectives and are set out below:

#### **Age**

The Council intends to develop proposals for investment in and procurement of housing both for older people (including sheltered housing and extra care) and young people leaving Care. Our focus on increasing the supply of new homes for affordable temporary and settled accommodation will also have a positive impact on the lives of children currently living in poor or inappropriate housing, waiting for a new home.

#### **Disability.**

The strategy proposes a number of activities that would have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities living in Croydon:

- Investment into extra care and supported living to enable people with learning or physical disabilities to live independently, reducing our proportion of placements into residential care
- Potential amendment of planning policy to increase the proportion of new build affordable wheelchair accessible/adapted homes
- improved engagement with developers and RPs focused on new homes developed for disabled households, in order to better specify for and target these homes at individuals and families with relevant needs

- Continuation of the existing funding and support for adaptations to homes for residents with disabilities living in the private sector and in Council properties

### **Gender**

Although there are no proposals within the draft Housing Strategy which are gender specific, it is noted that increasing the housing supply in Croydon, particularly of affordable temporary and permanent housing for homeless households and those on our Council housing register would positively impact households headed by a single female applicant, who are the majority of homeless applicants in Croydon (over 60% in 2017-18).

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy, which forms part of this work, will also focus partly on targeted housing and support for female rough sleepers, as Croydon has the highest percentage of female rough sleepers amongst our statistical outer borough neighbours.

### **Religion and belief.**

The strategy does not specify any proposals or policy changes in relation to religion or belief, although a series of 'housing supply briefs' will be developed which may reference the inclusion of design guidance relevant to particular faith communities.

### **Race**

Although there are no proposals within the main Housing Strategy which are specific to particular ethnic groups, it is noted that increasing the housing supply in Croydon, particularly of affordable temporary and permanent housing for homeless households and those on our Council housing register would positively impact BME households who are the majority of homeless applicants in Croydon (over 60% in 2017-18).

As noted above, the development of 'housing supply briefs' may reference the inclusion of design guidance relevant to particular ethnic groups.

### **Pregnancy and maternity.**

The strategy does not specify any proposals or policy changes in relation to pregnancy or maternity, although as noted above increasing the supply of affordable housing and temporary housing for homeless households would disproportionately affect the majority of applicants who are lone parents (overwhelmingly women).

12.6 (Approved by: Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager)

## **13. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**



13.1 The priorities and actions set out in this report have a limited positive direct environmental impact. Specifically the priorities and proposals relating to increasing the supply of new housing and improvements and adaptations to existing housing stock (both the Council's own housing and financial support for changes to private housing) would have a positive environmental impact. This would include the development of new sustainable, energy efficient homes, and making environmental improvements to existing housing.

#### **14. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

14.1 The priorities and actions set out in this report have no direct implications for the reduction/prevention of crime and disorder.

#### **15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

The report seeks delegated authority for the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services to approve the publication of final versions of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy in order to set the Council's approach to housing in all its forms and the prevention of homelessness.

#### **16. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

As stated above, there is no current housing strategy for Croydon, and it was considered that the borough could continue without this strategic direction for housing. However, given the significant current and varied housing need in Croydon, as summarized above, and the need to coordinate a number of existing and emerging workstreams to ensure sufficient housing supply, range and quality for our residents, it was deemed appropriate to develop a new housing strategy.

As noted above, the publication of a homelessness strategy is a statutory requirement as set out by the Homelessness Act 2002.

#### **17. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

**17.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

NO

**HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN**

## **COMPLETED?**

The Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions comments that a DIA was not completed as no personal data was used to prepare the Strategy. Detailed anonymised data from the Council's housing register and other sources may be used to progress the actions under the strategy, and DPIAs will be completed for individual projects as they are scoped and progressed.

*(Approved by: Yvonne Murray on behalf of the Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions)*

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## **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Caroline Toogood Head of Strategic Projects (Growth and Housing) Ext. 63837  
John Montes, Senior Strategy Officer, Ext. 61613

## ***APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT* None**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

# Decent Homes, Affordable To All



# Executive Summary

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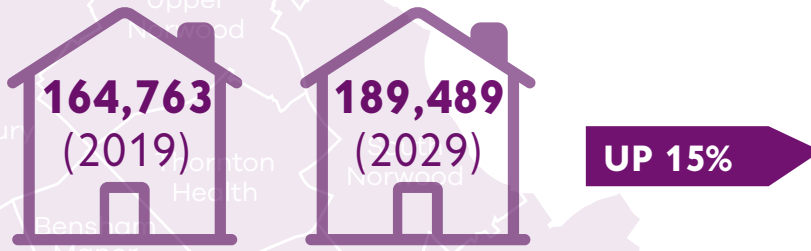
We are determined to do everything required so that all in Croydon have the chance of a decent home they can call their own.

Council and housing association homes make up just one in seven of all housing in Croydon. This is fewer than in many London boroughs, even though Croydon is the second largest borough in London, and is not enough to meet the local need for affordable housing either now or in the future. But we are working with our partners to create **New Homes in Great Places** that local people can afford to rent or buy, ensure existing social and private homes become **Good Quality Homes**, and provide **Better Access to Homes and Independent Living**.

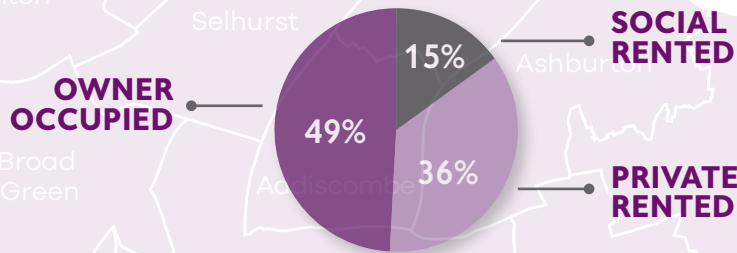
This document sets out Croydon Council's current actions and targets to meet local need.

We are in the process of developing a housing strategy to develop our plans for the future. After a process of consultation and engagement, the strategy will be published in 2020.

## ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS IN CROYDON

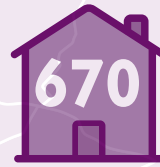


## CROYDON TENURE PROFILE



On 31 MARCH 2019

**5,468** housing applicants



**670**

social homes became available in 2018/19



**3,500** households a year ask for help because they are at risk of homelessness



**1,047** homeless households placed in bed and breakfast during 2018/19



## AVERAGE HOUSE PRICES IN CROYDON (2018)

Median house prices are **11.1 times** median incomes

## AVERAGE PRIVATE RENTS IN CROYDON



Median private rents were between

**£116 and £262**

per month more than the maximum that Housing Benefit paid (July 2018 to June 2019)

## **New Homes in Great Places - we will:**

1. Increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes that Croydon residents can afford to rent or buy
  2. Plan for new homes within sustainable neighbourhoods, where people want to live, work and socialise
- 

## **Good Quality Homes - we will:**

3. Improve council homes in estates and neighbourhoods that residents are proud to call their home
  4. Improve private rented homes
  5. Help with repairs to private homes for those who need it most
  6. Bring empty homes back into use
- 

## **Better Access to Homes and Independent Living - we will:**

7. Make better use of existing social (council and housing association) homes
8. Increase the supply of temporary and permanent housing for those without a home
9. Enable people to rent decent homes in the private sector
10. Enable people to gain and maintain their independence in their home
11. Prevent and relieve homelessness, and reduce rough sleeping in Croydon

## Housing need in Croydon

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Many local people cannot afford to buy or rent a home in Croydon. 5,468 households are on our housing list, many more than we can house. Some 3,500 households a year ask us for help because they are facing homelessness. We also know that many thousands in housing need due to overcrowding do not meet the threshold for our housing list.

Croydon's population is growing. In 2019 there are an estimated 164,673 households in the borough. By 2029 this will increase to 189,489. People are living longer. More people are living on their own. We have the most schoolchildren in London – they will need homes in future, as well as young people ready to leave home now. The council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment has concluded that Croydon needs 46,040 new homes by 2036 to meet the borough's housing need. However, given the planning constraints at the time it was adopted, the current Local Plan only plans for 32,890 homes up to 2036. A **Local Plan Review** is under way that aims to meet the need for new homes.

The number of people with complex health and social care needs, such as people with physical or learning disabilities and people recovering from a mental health problem, is increasing. Many people living in residential care homes could be living in modern supported living accommodation. People with physical and learning disabilities are living with ageing parents and will need adapted accommodation with support. 60 people are waiting for supported living placements; we expect this to rise to 112 by 2025. The ratio of people age 25-65 with a learning or physical disability in residential care homes in relation to supported living is 55:45. Improving this to 50:50 by 2025 would require another 61 units.

Since 2010 the amount of government grant for each new social home is lower, so higher rents must be charged to make them viable. Croydon, like most London boroughs, has had to find other ways to fill this gap. Welfare benefit levels have been capped and frozen, making it harder for some to afford private rents and increasing their vulnerability to debt and homelessness.



# New Homes in Great Places

## 1. Increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes that Croydon residents can afford to rent or buy.

Brick by Brick, the council’s wholly-owned housing company, provides us with a commercial and adaptable way to build new affordable housing ourselves on council owned land. By selling 50% of homes at market prices we are able to use the profits from the sales to fund homes for people to part-buy or rent at affordable rents. Local people are given priority to buy or rent all of these homes as they become available.

We are piloting the development of community-led housing (CLH) in Croydon by offering two small council-owned sites for resident-led schemes that produce 100% affordable housing. **Crystal Palace Community Land Trust** has been chosen to develop homes on the first site with support from Brick by Brick. We will review other potential types of CLH.

### We will:

- work with the Mayor of London to ensure affordable housing in new developments through planning policy and bidding for extra development funding
- build 2000 homes through Brick by Brick by 2022, and 500 a year thereafter; 50% will be affordable.



Shared ownership and affordable rent homes planned for Flora Court, Thornton Heath





# New Homes in Great Places

## 2. Plan for new homes within sustainable neighbourhoods where people want to live, work and socialise

Croydon's **Local Plan 2018** provides for 32,890 new homes to be built by 2036. We want all in Croydon to have the chance of a decent home, whatever their income or level of need. All new homes should meet the needs of residents over a lifetime and 10% of new homes will be designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adapted for wheelchair users. Some will be homes to buy and rent on the open market. We will work with developers and housing associations to seek that 40% of all new homes developed over the plan period (2016-2036) provide options to suit people with lower incomes:

- 25% of all new homes to be let to people on the housing register at a social rent or an affordable rent (up to 80% of market rents); and
- 15% of all new homes to be intermediate affordable housing for letting at a higher rent but still below market rent levels or offered at prices below market levels as a starter home or to part-buy as low cost shared ownership.

The affordable housing options above are likely to broaden with the adoption of the draft new London Plan in 2020, for example London Affordable Rent. A **Local Plan Review** is under way that will take

into account targets set for Croydon in the London Plan and aim to meet a need for 46,040 new homes that has been identified by Croydon's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

### It's not just about new homes, but better places too.

We facilitate, primarily through the Local Plan, the development of places where residents can live, work and socialise. We cannot meet the growing need for homes without planning for a higher number of homes on certain sites. We consult residents on the Local Plan and planning applications received. We engage with residents and our partners on plans for the social and physical infrastructure to support the homes, for example **in New Addington**. Our infrastructure planning includes new schools, health and wellbeing centres, reactivating empty shops, new workspaces, better community and leisure facilities and green and open spaces. We are also working with TfL and the Mayor of London to improve local transport. We do all this to mitigate the impact of the growth needed and being asked of the borough.



Proposed Wellbeing Centre for New Addington



### CASE STUDY: KENLEY

With support from the Mayor of London’s Good Growth Fund, the Council is working to carry out extensive engagement with all those who work, live or spend time in Kenley. Between May and September 2019 a number of engagement events and activities were held to help shape the vision for the future of the neighbourhood.

Based on the outcomes of this engagement, a community plan will be created to guide the way that Kenley evolves and prioritise what the community needs. More information is available [here](#).

A second stage bid to the Mayor’s Good Growth fund will be submitted in Autumn 2019, based on the priorities identified through the community plan process.

- We will:**
- adopt a revised Local Plan in 2022, subject to consultation, to take account of the Mayor of London’s new, higher target for new homes and affordable housing in Croydon
  - provide 15 Place Profiles by 2020 to form the basis of plans for each local area that will be developed over time with partners and the community according to the needs and priorities of each place.

### Top targets: New Homes in Great Places

<p>Our current Croydon Plan 2018 will deliver 32,890 new homes from 2016 to 2036 (1,645 a year). Our strategic target is that 40% will be affordable<sup>1</sup>.</p>	<p>Revised Croydon Local Plan adopted in 2022</p>	<p>15 Place Profiles provided by 2020 to form the basis of future plans for each local area</p>	<p>A total of 2,000 new homes built by Brick by Brick by 2022</p>	<p>50% of new homes built by Brick by Brick by 2022 will be affordable, including for affordable rent and to part-buy</p>
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1 The draft new London Plan, to be adopted in 2020, includes a **housing target of 2,949** a year from 2019 to 2029 which Croydon must plan for in its **Local Plan Review**.



# Good Quality Homes

## 3. Improve council homes in estates and neighbourhoods that residents are proud to call their home

Croydon has 13,475 council homes, including 1,221 sheltered and special sheltered homes, fewer than many other London boroughs. There are also 2,400 leaseholders, who bought their homes through the Right to Buy. At least 99% of council homes meet the Decent Homes Standard at any one time. This is a technical standard for social housing: homes must meet the statutory minimum standard for housing, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services, and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Croydon's council homes have an average energy rating of 68.77, better than the national average of 65.6 points, so they cost less to keep warm. All 25 of our tower blocks of 10 or more storeys now have sprinklers, 1,252 homes in all.

We have developed a Housing Asset Management Plan 2019-2028 to ensure that we:

- **Provide compliant, decent and energy efficient homes.** We will invest around £39m a year in repairs maintenance and improvements to ensure our estates continue to comply with safety regulations and our homes meet the decent homes standard and are more energy efficient. We will use new technologies, such as ground source heat pumps, to improve energy efficiency and install external wall insulation on 72 council homes. We will improve standards by establishing a 'Croydon Standard' based on resident priorities and contractor knowledge, to deliver benefits for residents, more standardised components and efficiencies, and bring every home up to this standard.
- **Provide homes in places where people want to live, work and socialise.** We will create new social and affordable homes through converting and extending existing buildings, replacing homes that are not cost effective and building on infill sites. We will provide light, clean and safe communal spaces, designing solutions for anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping hotspots. We will review communal spaces in special sheltered and sheltered blocks with a view to improving their quality, improve the use of assistive technology, and work with local partners to ensure that residents are better engaged with their local community. Full fibre broadband will be installed for use in council homes.
- **Involve residents of all ages and backgrounds in shaping services.** We want tenants to be proud of their homes and feel that they are heard. We will train 'expert' residents to help us improve services. We will refresh the Resident Participation Framework and use digital technology to make it easier to give feedback.
- **Provide affordable and cost effective homes.** We will develop plans for homes that are not cost effective to maintain, develop a disposals and acquisitions policy and ensure we achieve value for money and good performance from our contractors.



## Good Quality Homes

### CASE STUDY: ESTATE IMPROVEMENT AT COLLEGE GREEN, UPPER NORWOOD

98-176 College Green is an 11 storey block of 38 sheltered flats. The tower and grounds are being refurbished to improve facilities and increase the number of flats for older residents.

Ground floor space will be enclosed to create two new one bedroom flats. There will be new communal facilities, with a kitchenette and toilet, and a new laundry room. These facilities will free up two first floor flats which will be returned to residential use. New insulated rain screen cladding will be fitted. The roof and all windows will be replaced. There will be new, fire rated lifts and lobbies. The flats have already had a sprinkler system installed as part of the council's £10m programme that will protect all homes in blocks of 10 or more storeys by 2019.

The grounds around the building will be landscaped and a security railing and lockable gate installed. A new patio seating area will be accessible from the internal community room through glazed double doors. New pathways will connect to the new communal main entrance and fire escape door. Secure parking will be provided for six mobility scooters; the existing garages will be demolished and replaced by off-street parking bays.

The refurbishment will be completed in 2020.





# Good Quality Homes

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## 4. Improve private rented homes

We estimate that 58,500 homes in Croydon are rented from private landlords (36% of all homes in the borough). Most landlords provide decent housing. However, some tenants rent homes that are overcrowded, cold, damp, or put them at risk of tripping or falling. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are some of the poorest quality housing, with greater health and safety risks for tenants. There may be up to 3,000 HMOs in Croydon. Currently owners can convert multi-bedroom properties to small HMOs under permitted development, which means they do not need planning consent.

We work to improve standards in the private rented sector through advice and training for private landlords. Where necessary we respond to tenants' complaints and require landlords to bring properties up to standard. We work closely with London Fire Brigade and require landlords to resolve the most serious fire hazards within 24 hours.

Overall, in 2018/19 we served 232 enforcement notices and 21 prohibition orders on landlords and imposed 16 financial penalties. Category 1 hazards (that pose a serious and immediate risk to the occupier's health and safety) were removed from 51 private rented homes as a direct result of action by the council.

Some landlords were repeatedly complained about, so we introduced a landlord licensing scheme in 2015. Landlords must get a licence costing up to £750 for each property they let anywhere in Croydon. The majority of landlords pay £350, the discounted fee during the 'early bird' application period and the fee for a first time letting – be it new build, conversion or just first use. This is the best way to enforce standards, as we can inspect properties proactively and target known rogue landlords and areas showing a lower than expected number of licensed properties and rogue landlords cannot move their activities to wards not covered by the scheme. We use the licence income to raise standards in the sector. As of August 2019, 35,500 licences had been issued under the scheme.



# Good Quality Homes

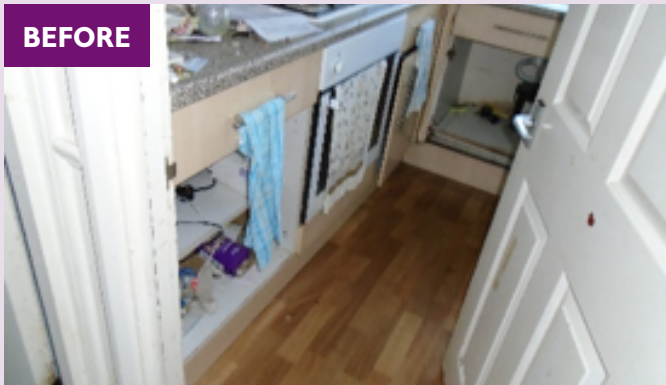
## CASE STUDY: IMPROVEMENT TO A PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY

A single mother with a 9 year old daughter and 23 year old son was renting a flat above a shop. It was in serious disrepair, but the landlord refused outright to carry out any repairs.

On investigating the tenant's complaint, the council officer identified defects that posed a serious and immediate risk to the family's health and safety. There was a defective gas boiler, defective bathroom floor, leaking WC pan and wash hand basin in the bathroom, damaging the kitchen ceiling and units below, and an inadequate smoke detector. The flat also had condensation and mould.

The council served statutory notices on the landlord to bring it up to standard. After he failed to comply, the council served a notice of intention to enter to carry out works within 7 days. It then carried out works to the value of approximately £15,000 to reduce or remove all hazards. Once they were completed, it invoiced the owner to recover its costs.

### BEFORE



### AFTER



### We will:

- increase the percentage of homes that are licensed and seek approval from the Government to renew the landlord licensing scheme by October 2020
- use **planning powers (Article 4)** from 2020 to require owners to seek planning permission before converting properties into small HMOs.



# Good Quality Homes

## 5. Help with repairs to private homes for those who need it most

Our **home investment loans** help qualifying homeowners carry out essential repairs to remove hazards from their homes. The loans are means tested to ensure that those in the most need get the most help. The loan results in a local land charge being registered to the property which remains in force until the loan is repaid. **Home Repair Loans** help qualifying homeowners with small scale repair or improvement works. **Croydon Energy Loans** help them to improve their home's energy efficiency and assist vulnerable people who may be in fuel poverty. Altogether 134 owner-occupied and 67 private rented homes were improved through grants and loans in 2018/19.

We will continue to provide loans to enable home owners and private tenants who need it most to repair and improve their homes and reduce fuel poverty.





# Good Quality Homes

## 6. Bring empty homes back into use

We are aware of 2,070 homes in Croydon that have been empty for more than six months (as of 20 May 2019). Some properties are vacant for valid reasons, but many are a wasted housing resource that could provide a much needed home for residents in need. We encourage people to report empty properties online. We are working on a case load of 800 properties. Where possible we work with owners to return empty homes to use. We can offer **grants and loans** to repair and renovate them to make them suitable for occupation. If appropriate we use enforcement powers. A condition of grant assistance is for the council to nominate future tenants for five years. We use these nominations to house homeless people, saving over £6,700 per year for each household that no longer needs emergency accommodation. Here is an **interview** with a homeless person who was rehoused in an empty home.



### CASE STUDY: EMPTY HOME RETURNED TO USE

A large Victorian house had been abandoned by the owner who, it is believed, moved overseas leaving no contact details. The lack of maintenance accelerated the decline of the property, which developed structural issues, potentially affecting other properties, and became an eyesore. Residents complained.

The council's Empty Property Team stepped in to protect the adjacent dwellings and return the house to use as family accommodation. The team tried in vain to trace the owner of this property. Enforcement action was therefore taken against him in his absence. The council obtained approval to purchase the property compulsorily. The process requires us to pay compensation to the previous owner, when he comes forward, and permits us to sell the property at auction to ensure it returns to use quickly.

The purchaser was an experienced local developer. The team are working with him to oversee the conversion and refurbishment of the property as three family sized flats, subject to planning permission. We plan to use them to house three families at affordable rents.





**We will:**

- develop referral arrangements to improve our intelligence and double Council Tax payable for all properties empty for two or more years to incentivise owners to return their properties to use
- bring at least 100 private sector empty homes back into use every year.



**Top targets: Good Quality Homes**

At least 99% of all council homes will meet the Decent Homes Standard	Average energy rating of council homes will be 68 points, above the national average of 65.6 (Oct 2018)	95% of residents will be satisfied following improvement works to council homes	We will renew our landlord licensing scheme in 2020 to maintain standards in the private rented sector	From 2020 we will require owners to seek planning permission before converting properties into small HMOs	At least 100 empty private homes back in use every year
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# Better Access to Homes and Independent Living

## 7. Make better use of existing social homes

Council and housing association homes make up just 15% of all housing in the borough. This is not enough to meet the need for affordable housing in Croydon. Only 670 of these social homes became available in 2018/19, of which 320 were offered to non-homeless applicants. Yet we had 5,468 people on our housing register in March 2019, vastly more than we can help. We must therefore make best use of social homes. Through **Croydon Choice** people on the housing register can choose where they want to live and what type of home is suitable. Properties are advertised and users can express an interest in them. Existing social housing tenants can move to a home that suits them better through a mutual exchange with another tenant. Many tenants whose children have grown up are left in properties which are larger than they need. We pay **grants** to encourage under-occupying tenants to move to smaller homes, freeing up their homes for families. We offer practical help with moving if needed.

### We will:

- move 50 under-occupying tenants a year to smaller homes, freeing up their homes for families
- reduce the average time taken to re-let empty council homes to new tenants from 32 days in 2018/19 to 20 days in 2019/20.

### CASE STUDY: OLDER TENANT MOVING TO A SMALLER HOME

Mrs D rented a three bedroom council house for 36 years. Her children moved out and started their own families. It became difficult for her to maintain her home and manage the stairs.

The council's Under-Occupation Officer contacted every tenant who had applied to move to a smaller property to see how she could assist them. Mrs D did not know how to bid for an available property that she would like to move to, so the officer visited her at home to explain the Croydon Choice scheme and discuss her requirements. Four weeks later Mrs D was offered a one bedroom ground floor flat in one of her preferred areas. She has since moved in and a new family has moved into the house.

Mrs D's daughter wrote: *I have been so impressed with how helpful Croydon Council housing department have been with assisting my mother's move to a smaller property. Two lovely ladies reassured mum about her move and explained all the forms to her. The council provided removals free of charge as she is downsizing, which has been a huge worry lifted for us! They are even paying an amount per bedroom given up, which means we have enough to make it lovely for her. There were speedy replies to my email enquiries too. Thank you everyone for your help!*



# Better Access to Homes and Independent Living

## 8. Increase the supply of temporary and permanent housing for those without a home

In March 2019 the council was housing 2,074 homeless households in emergency and temporary accommodation. We spend over £4m a year on properties obtained from a range of providers and schemes for this purpose. Rising rent levels, the capping and freezing of benefit levels as well as competition for properties from other councils mean that it is increasingly costly to source these homes. We must meet demand for emergency and temporary accommodation while controlling costs. Capital Letters is a not-for-profit organisation that will procure homes for homeless households on behalf of London councils, which own it collectively. Supported by £37.8m of government funding, its aim is to reduce competition between councils and increase their efficiency in securing accommodation.

We work with vulnerable single homeless people, ex-offenders, young people and care leavers, and people experiencing domestic violence or street homelessness. We provide access to 493 short-term units of supported housing and other support services in the home to enable vulnerable people to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Between 2015 and 2018 there was a 123% increase in referrals, with significant growth in referrals for young people with various support needs. However,

in some services more residents are staying for longer than planned. We will work with providers to ensure supported housing services meet rising and developing needs, provide more floating support and increase the rate at which people move on to independent housing.

The more we spend on permanent homes the less we will have to devote to expensive and less suitable temporary accommodation. We have developed a scheme to provide affordable longer-term housing for homeless families, enabling us to discharge our housing duty to them. We set up charitable partnerships that use private investment and our receipts from council homes sold under the Right to Buy to buy new and existing homes for local families. These are let at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rent levels so that people on welfare benefits can afford them. As these tenants will not have the Right to Buy these homes, we will be able to build up the number of homes we can let at affordable rents to local families. Legal & General has invested £44.6m for 167 new homes for homeless families to be leased by the council for 40 years before they become council property. This has saved the council £20m in borrowing costs.





## CASE STUDY: CROYDON AFFORDABLE HOMES

Placing homeless families in temporary accommodation is costly for the council and unaffordable for families. Croydon Affordable Homes (CAH), a charity set up by the council, moves families out of B&B hotels and into genuinely affordable local homes. CAH is using council right to buy receipts to buy 250 two and three bedroom homes. The council keeps the freehold and receives income from CAH. Homes are let for up to three years at rents that families on housing benefit can afford. This promotes family stability, benefitting children in education and parents seeking employment.

The I family benefited from one of these homes in South Croydon. They moved into temporary accommodation after their private landlord told them to leave because they did not want children living there. They now have a large, refurbished two-bedroom flat with a garden and new kitchen.

Mr I said: *“It was like a dream but it was reality... It is the nicest place I’ve lived; I love the garden..., and it’s high-quality and big as well.”* Mrs I said *it helped her daughter. She said: “It’s making a difference... as she is improving in her school.*

### We will:

- rationalise and update our temporary accommodation schemes for current needs and market conditions, reducing costs, and develop a framework to assess opportunities to increase supply
- engage with all service providers and partners on arranging supported housing services which meet the future demand and range of needs of single vulnerable homeless people in Croydon
- buy 250 properties by 2020 for letting through CAH at rents affordable to those on the lowest incomes



# Better Access to Homes and Independent Living

## 9. Enable people to rent decent homes in the private sector

As there are not enough social homes to meet housing need, renting privately is an important alternative option, yet some landlords are reluctant to let to people on welfare benefits and other rents are unaffordable. Private renting is a way for people to avoid homelessness. It is also an important option for homeless people in emergency or temporary housing to make a fresh start.

We help people find a home more suitable to their needs and budget through **advice and information**. We also offer information, advice and support to homeowners who are thinking of letting their properties.

We support people to maximise their income, manage their budgets and debts, train them how to manage their tenancy, negotiate with landlords, and help them move into long term affordable privately rented homes. In 2018/19 we secured settled homes for 220 homeless households to rent privately, discharging our housing duty. **Croydon Lettings**, our lettings agency, placed 47 households in private tenancies at LHA rents in its first year, with a support package for landlords. In some cases we are able to provide extra help, such as the deposit, rent in advance or essential items needed to make a house a home.

### We will:

- continue to enable people to rent privately through information and advice, and place people in private tenancies through Croydon Lettings.

### CASE STUDY: ACCESS TO THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

As a result of a house fire that had destroyed her furniture and possessions, Ms R became homeless and was placed in temporary accommodation by the council. She was pregnant at the time and had recently had to stop working for health reasons. Having always been employed, she was unfamiliar with the benefits system so, although she wanted to search for private rented accommodation, she was unsure if she could afford the rent.

Ms R was helped to claim benefits and the council officer was able to estimate what she would get. After searching for a home, and several unsuccessful viewings, Ms R was able to move into a suitable property. The council officer negotiated with the agent and paid the deposit and rent in advance on her behalf. The council also arranged a fridge, cooker and carpets for her.



# Better Access to Homes and Independent Living

## 10. Enable people to gain and maintain their independence in their home

As our population ages and more people have restricted mobility, we must ensure that people are able to live independently and in comfort in their own homes for as long as possible.

Our **Staying Put Service** helps older, disabled and other vulnerable people who need advice and assistance to carry out repairs or adaptations to their homes. **Disabled Facilities Grants** are available for adaptations to private or housing association properties that will help a disabled person remain in their home. We also adapt council homes, when necessary, for council tenants who have a disability.

There have been significant reductions in national funding schemes to tackle fuel poverty over the last decade. Government statistics for 2017 indicate that over 17,000 Croydon households risk being in fuel poverty. They may struggle to afford to heat their homes adequately due to high heating costs and low income. Through our **Croydon Healthy Homes** scheme, qualified energy assessors help homeowners and private tenants with advice on heating their homes and reducing their fuel bills, fit free energy saving measures and help them to access grants for energy efficiency works. This enables them to afford to live healthy and independent lives in their current homes. **SHINE London** offers council and housing association tenants advice and access to help to reduce their energy bills.

Croydon has 500 care leavers who are placed in the private rented sector including shared houses. Support is provided. We also enable vulnerable people with support needs (people with mental health needs, a physical or learning disability) to access housing for supported living. This provides more intensive housing management and support services to residents, enabling them to live there safely and develop the skills they need to live fully independently in their homes. We have 441 units of short-term supported housing in Croydon where people live between 1 and 5 years. 207 are buildings like hostels and shared houses; the remainder are homes with floating support for 234 people. Our ambition is for as many people with complex health and care needs as possible to have access to supported living in modern, good quality housing. We want to create supported living environments that enable people to maximise their independence and well-being and move away from over-provision of traditional residential care in Croydon.

### We will:

- deliver 250 major adaptations a year across all tenures of property
- help 700 homeowners and private tenants over three years with advice on keeping their homes warm and reducing their fuel bills
- consider investment options to increase the supply of supported housing in Croydon to progress towards meeting demand for independent living and moving away from over-provision of residential care
- consider the housing needs of people with physical and learning disabilities who may need adapted accommodation with support.

## CASE STUDY: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

A client in her 60s had a range of medical conditions, including arthritis. As a result she had difficulty in using the bath and had to resort to strip washing. She also needed to use a mobility scooter to go to the local shops, but had stepped access from her home to the pavement which made it difficult and dangerous for her to use the scooter.

A referral was made to Croydon Council and an assessment was carried out by an occupational therapist. The assessment recommended a level access shower to replace the bath, and a ramp to replace the steps. The Staying Put Team made an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant, on her behalf.

Plans were drawn up by the surveyor and tenders obtained. The work was carried out and this has now enabled the client to shower independently, which has made a significant difference to her health. The steps were replaced with a ramp which now allows her to use her mobility scooter safely, go out and be part of the community. This work has improved both her health and wellbeing.





# Better Access to Homes and Independent Living

## 11. Prevent and relieve homelessness, and reduce rough sleeping in Croydon

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed a new duty on local authorities to provide people at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days with advice and support to prevent them from becoming homeless. However, the council was well placed to implement it. In 2018/19 council Gateway Services helped 1,181 families avoid homelessness through support, saving almost £8m in costs that would have been incurred had they become homeless.

Our Gateway service is a council-wide prevention and early intervention approach that works with partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors to improve people's futures. We prevent homelessness through negotiating with landlords, stopping illegal evictions, and family mediation. We help people help themselves by providing wrap around support for the whole household on issues such as budgeting, maximising income and getting a job. People are referred to Community Connect/ Food Stop, a combined welfare and food club, for help to tackle food poverty. These **interventions** enable tenants to regain control, improve their financial independence and outlook, and pay their rent once more. This **video** is about a council tenant in debt and arrears whose homelessness was prevented. Increasingly these services will be delivered with partners closer to the people who need them. Where we cannot prevent homelessness we relieve it by helping people look for another home as described above.

### CASE STUDY: PRIVATE TENANT SUPPORTED TO KEEP HER TENANCY

Ms B rents a two bedroom flat privately with her three year old daughter and sisters aged 12 and 14. She receives a bursary for her midwifery degree, Child Benefit and Housing Benefit. When her benefit was capped, she could no longer afford her rent.

An officer used a budget planner, suggesting ways of saving money and increasing her income through part-time work and claiming Discretionary Housing Payments. The officer discovered that her benefit was capped by too much, so this was reversed, increasing her monthly income by £200. A Credit Union loan paid off a substantial credit card debt. High interest had prevented her from reducing the debt. Now she saves £10 a month.

*"It was more personal; it wasn't about "this is what you're entitled to". It was about looking at what is going on, and working out how can she help me... She sorted everything out before it even got to the next rent payment... Just having someone to sit down with you and just rethink it a little bit. It's really good, having that support.... there's no need to have the problems get to an eviction, if you can prevent it beforehand."*





We commission **Croydon Reach** to contact people who are sleeping rough and help them off the streets. Where people qualify for housing in Croydon we will usually arrange supported housing, such as a hostel. Sometimes we will use a Housing First approach which provides a stable, independent home, intensive personalised support and case management to homeless people with multiple and complex needs. 20 people who are street homeless will be housed through Housing First by 2020. Other services we commission for rough sleepers include an outreach community mental health service, support for those with no recourse to public funds and Turning Point drug and alcohol service. Voluntary and faith based services, such as Crisis Skylight Centre, Salvation Army Well and Croydon Churches Floating Shelter, work alongside services we commission, to engage with and support street homeless people to improve their wellbeing.

The council has secured £622,000 of government funding to provide a rapid route off the streets including a **24-hour, 365-day hub** for up to 15 people with an average stay of 72 hours. The hub will provide instant respite for people who are street homeless or who are at risk of sleeping on the street that night, together with a comprehensive assessment and a personal pathway off the streets. Support services will be available at the hub.

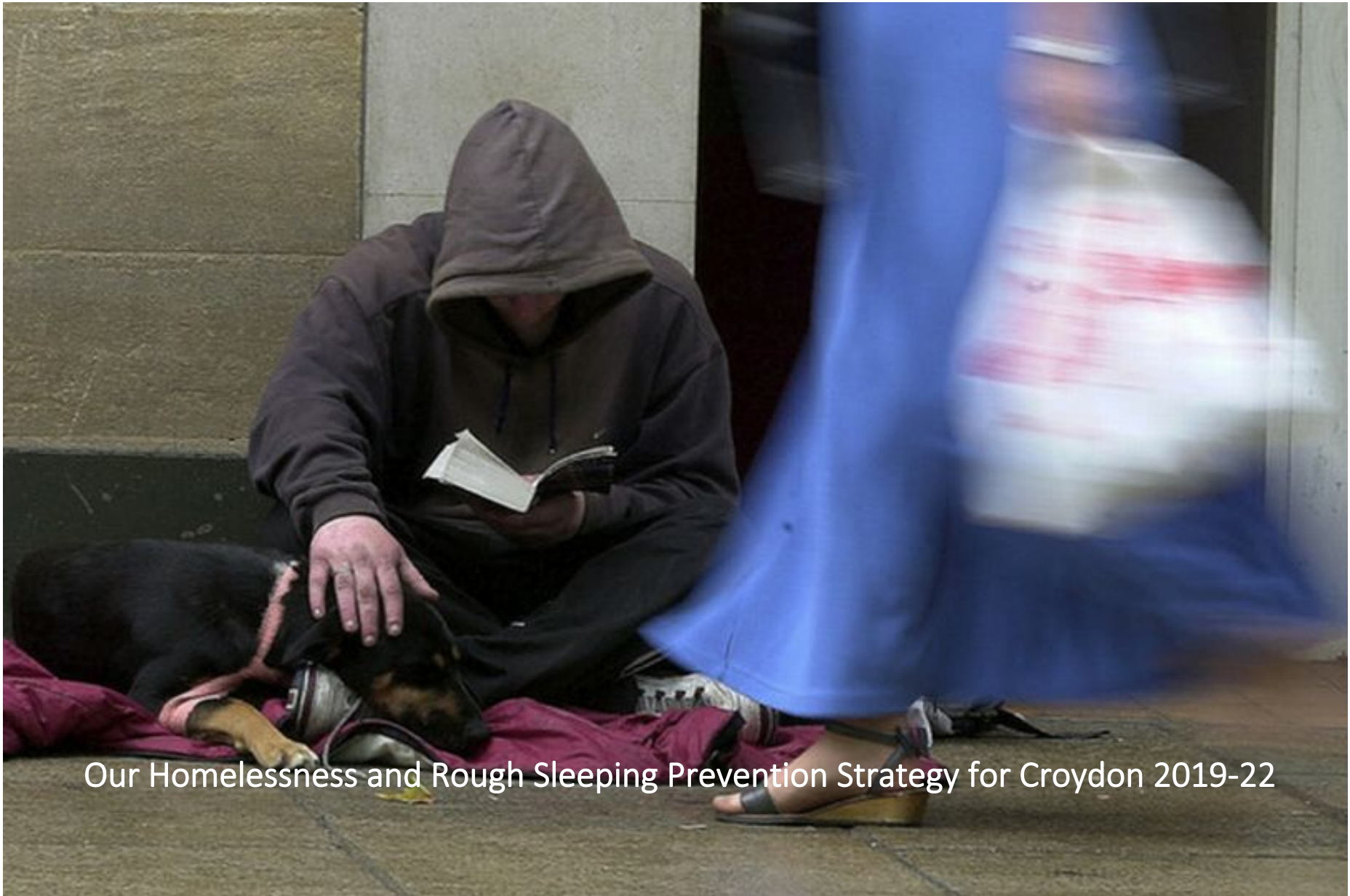
“Navigators” will work intensively with people with the most complex needs from assessment until they are settled into suitable accommodation, and will improve access to private sector accommodation with resettlement support.

**We will:**

- prevent 1,185 households from becoming homeless through early intervention each year, avoiding £8m in costs for the council of dealing with their homelessness
- help 3,000 residents with financial support and 1,000 residents with personal budgeting
- use a Housing First approach to get another 20 of the most vulnerable people off the streets and into their own home with support by March 2020
- work with partners and re-commission services to ensure engagement, assessment and support services are available for all people sleeping on the streets of Croydon and works with those who are reluctant to access it. Our longer term ambition is to end rough sleeping in Croydon.

Top targets: Better Access to Homes and Independent Living					
50 under-occupying social housing tenants moved to smaller homes	250 homes bought by 2020 to let at rents affordable to those on the lowest incomes	250 major adaptations a year enable older and vulnerable people with mobility problems to remain in their homes.	700 households over three years helped to reduce their fuel bills	1,185 households prevented from becoming homeless through early intervention each year	Engagement and support services are available for all people sleeping on the streets of Croydon and work with those who are reluctant to access it





Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy for Croydon 2019-22

Foreword: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration<sup>1</sup>

DRAFT

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<sup>1</sup> [https://issuu.com/martinhuxley/docs/croydon\\_manifesto - full version\\_pa](https://issuu.com/martinhuxley/docs/croydon_manifesto_-_full_version_pa)

We have set out our ambitions for Croydon over the next two years, and key amongst them is creating a borough that is a place to call home. We have worked hard to make this true for as many people in Croydon as possible by: setting up Brick by Brick that will deliver more than 2,000 truly affordable homes in Croydon; setting up the boroughs first Landlord Licensing Scheme to protect private tenants; bringing 379 empty homes back into use; creating the Gateway Service; securing £1.4m in government funding to tackle rough sleeping; and introducing Choice Based Lettings.

We believe a place to call home is a fundamental right, but for many an affordable, safe and secure home is beyond their reach.

The government recognises our housing market is broken, that the supply of new homes does not meet demand, and that consequently house prices and rents are too high. They have woken up to the part that local authorities can play to mend it by lifting the borrowing cap, but we feel they have acted too late for many, and levels of homelessness in the borough show that.

We have around 2000 families and individuals living in temporary housing waiting to start their lives again having been made homeless. There are around 15 people sleeping rough on Croydon's streets every night, and we know that this this is unacceptable in the UK today. Croydon is developing a partnership with Crisis to prove that, with the right reforms and resources, homelessness can be brought to an end in Croydon in 10 years.

**Alignment to our other strategies and plans**

This is a short term strategy that will lay the foundations for our future 10 year ambitions that we will develop with Crisis. It sets out our priorities for preventing homelessness over the next three years (2019-2022) to make a real change in Croydon. Over the next three years we will:

- Build 2,000 homes for Croydon residents
- Extend the Landlord Licensing Scheme after first 5 years
- Buy 250 homes for families in need to be let at truly affordable rents
  - Develop a strategic partnership with Crisis to develop our 10 year strategy to end homelessness
    - Pilot a Housing First approach to get our most vulnerable rough sleepers off the streets
    - Build on our Social Lettings Agency pilot to deliver a full

**Cllr Alison Butler**  
**Deputy Leader and**  
**Cabinet Member for Homes**  
**and Gateway Services**

service



Local authorities are required to publish a homelessness prevention strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002. A new strategy should be published every five years. Local authorities are required to engage with public and local

authorities, voluntary organisations and other people and organisations considered appropriate when adopting or modifying their homelessness strategy.

When developing a new homelessness strategy, the local authority should carry out a review of homelessness in its district. The purpose of the review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the services currently being provided. We carried out a review in the autumn of 2018, and a summary of the findings is provided in the next section of the strategy.

There is also a requirement (under the Localism Act) to make sure the Council's existing Tenancy Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy do not contradict any new Homelessness Strategy. Our new Homelessness Strategy has been designed to align with our current Housing Allocations scheme, and our intention to amend our Tenancy Strategy to reinstate the use of lifetime secure tenancies for council homes.

The strategy has also been developed to align with and support Croydon's wider strategies and plans, including Croydon's Community Strategy which is the overarching strategy for the borough, Ambitious for Croydon and our Corporate Plan.



## Delivery and partnerships

### Early intervention and prevention

A theme running through this strategy is a desire to explore how we can do things differently, gain a better understanding of the factors that put people at risk of homelessness, and intervene as early as possible.

We have also embedded an early intervention, preventative and collaborative approach throughout this strategy to ensure our services are in line with the supportive, enabling and advisory model set out in Croydon's Corporate Plan.

### Evidence based and locally designed

Fundamental to this early intervention approach is using evidence to target services to the localities where they are needed most. Equally as important is working with local organisations ('assets') that our residents trust to ensure there is ready 'take-up' of the services offered, and no stigma about

hand-outs or charity. The focus of these services is to enable residents to sustain their accommodation, employment, maintain their caring responsibilities, and provide a reasonable family life.

**Co-designed services**

Public services are often designed and commissioned in a way that meets the bureaucratic needs of organisations, and not the people that use them. Very often, these services can be improved by asking for the input of people with experience of the kinds of disadvantage that led them to require the service in the first place – often called co-design. We will make sure our residents influence the design and delivery of our services, that they are focused on what needs to be achieved, and that they build trust and positive relationships between our residents and our local services.

**Collaborative governance**

We need to work together effectively to prevent homelessness in Croydon. The economic and housing market factors that contribute to homelessness, place a strain on family and other relationships, and act on individual issues (in many cases multiple and complex issues including mental and physical health and addiction. Strained relationships are more vulnerable to crisis and breakdown, and for many to the loss of accommodation. There is also the issue of domestic violence, families being hostile to LGBT members of the

family as well as the additional vulnerability of people who are care leavers.

We want to make sure that rather than services being delivered from ‘siloes’, they are delivered through a collaborative multi-agency approach with different partnerships championing and driving forward specific aspects of the strategy. Croydon’s Health and Wellbeing Board will take the lead on the many health related impacts of homelessness that are within its existing strategic priorities. The Health and Wellbeing Board will receive a report on a regular basis reporting on progress and have the opportunity to be involved in an evolving homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

We will explore developing a homelessness reduction board, to bolster local accountability arrangements. Croydon has excellent examples of collaborative working and integrated approaches, but the local delivery landscape is complex, with a number of agencies and bodies with different priorities and funding constraints operating under a variety of accountability arrangements.



## Key statistics 2017/2018 (infographic)

<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Market factors</b>	<b>Impacts</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Croydon has 2 <sup>nd</sup> largest borough population in London	Croydon has only 12 <sup>th</sup> largest council housing stock in London	Croydon makes on average 2,000 homeless decisions every year.	2,400 households prevented from becoming homeless
2,164 new households forming per year over next 20 years	1,368 additional dwellings per year on average have been added to the overall housing stock over last 10 years	In 2017/18 Croydon prevented 2,155 families and individuals from becoming homeless.	15,000 people have received budgeting support
Croydon has youngest population in London	Average house prices are over 10 times average salaries in Croydon	2005 homeless households	4,700 people improved digital skills
Croydon has 41 LSOAs in the 20% most deprived areas in England	Average rents between £80 and £223 per month higher than LHA rates	31 People sleep rough in Croydon on a typical night (2017)	33 volunteers from LBC and external and 4 outreach workers completed Statutory rough Sleeping count from midnight – 5am
1 in 5 households living in poverty (DWP)	(ASHE) 2017 shows median earnings for people working full time living in Croydon IS £33,821	5,052 households are registered on Croydon's Housing Waiting List	Cost of emergency accommodation reduced by £2m



Key statistics 2018/2019(latest figures post statutory review)

<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Market factors</b>	<b>Impacts</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Croydon has 2 <sup>nd</sup> largest borough population in London	Croydon has only 12 <sup>th</sup> largest council housing stock in London	Croydon makes on average 2,000 homeless decisions every year.	2,400 households prevented from becoming homeless
2,164 new households forming per year over next 20 years	1,368 additional dwellings per year on average have been added to the overall housing stock over last 10 years	In 2018/19 Croydon prevented 3049 families and individuals from becoming homeless.	14,685 people have received budgeting support
Croydon has youngest population in London	Average house prices are over 10 times average salaries in Croydon	3100 homeless households	4,900 people improved digital skills
Croydon has 41 LSOAs in the 20% most deprived areas in England	Average rents between £80 and £223 per month higher than LHA rates	15 People sleep rough in Croydon on a typical night (2018)	35 volunteers from LBC and external and 5 outreach workers completed Statutory rough Sleeping count from midnight – 4am
1 in 5 households living in poverty (DWP)	(ASHE) 2017 shows median earnings for people working full time living in Croydon IS £33,821	5,871 households are registered on Croydon’s Housing Waiting List	Cost of emergency accommodation reduced by £2m

## How do we define homelessness

### Defining homelessness

In drafting this strategy, a number of reports have been particularly informative and helpful. The first being The Homelessness Monitor commissioned and funded by Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>2</sup>. The other is the UK Housing Review published by the Chartered Institute of Housing<sup>3</sup>. Both reports have helped shape our recent homelessness review and suggested areas of investigation. We have deliberately used a wide definition of homelessness similar to that used in the Homelessness Monitor which includes:

- People sleeping rough
- Single homeless people living in shelters, hostels, and supported accommodation
- Statutory homeless households
- People that can be described as "hidden homelessness" (i.e. people who are squatting, living in severely overcrowded accommodation and concealed households).

### Core homelessness

Crisis have also produced a definition of what it means by "ending [core] homelessness" in its plan "Everybody in – How

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ukhousingreview.org.uk/>

to end Homelessness in Great Britain"<sup>4</sup> which will also help shape the priorities to be set out in our new strategy. The definition of ending homelessness is:

- No one sleeping rough
- No one forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation, such as tents, squats and non-residential buildings
- No one living in emergency accommodation such as shelters and hostels without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation
- No one homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as a prison or the care system
- Everyone at immediate risk of homelessness gets the help that prevents it happening

Another related issue this strategy seeks to address is the availability of suitable emergency accommodation, or settled accommodation for residents once they have completed a period of treatment, care, or a residential stay in supported accommodation or an institution (such as a prison or hospital). We want to prevent vital health and care being blocked' for the want of effective, coordinated 'move-on provision

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/the-plan-to-end-homelessness-full-version/executive-summary/>

## Our Homelessness Review findings

### Levels of homelessness

Our homelessness review has provided a wealth of information about levels of homelessness, and where they might be over the next 5 years. In summary the key issues points of the review are:

**Homelessness demand:** the number of people approaching the council for assistance has been consistently at around 4,000, and more approach local advice services and community groups looking for help. In the last couple of years, however, we have changed our approach and put more resources into preventing homelessness, helping more than 2,000 people at risk of losing their homes in 2017/18 and 2,100 in 2018/2019. We need to work more closely together to identify households that are starting to experience problems, before they deteriorate into crisis

**Causes of homelessness:** losing a private rented tenancy is the most common cause of homeless (and has been for a number of years), followed by someone's parents or relatives not being able to continue to accommodate them, and domestic violence.

**Temporary accommodation:** The Council has reduced the number of people housed in temporary accommodation, and significantly those in housed emergency accommodation), however, there are still over 3,000 homeless children living in temporary accommodation in Croydon and there is much more to do.

**Rough sleeping:** In 2018/19, we were aware of 274 people sleeping rough in Croydon, of which only 27 had returned to the streets having slept rough previously. The annual statutory count identified that we had 15 people sleeping rough in Croydon on a typical night (November 2018).

### Underlying drivers of homelessness

The underlying factors driving homelessness and rough sleeping include:

**Poverty:** Croydon residents earn less, and are employed in less well paid occupations than other parts of London<sup>5</sup>. Welfare reform has reduced the support families and individuals receive to meet their housing and other vital needs. Residents experiencing financial difficulties in and out of work has been increasing leading to additional demands being placed on foodbanks. Local Housing allowance has fallen far behind market rents. Universal Credit and other welfare reforms are associated with homelessness and poverty, and it hampers finding sustainable solutions. London's share of Discretionary Housing Payment has reduced<sup>6</sup>. Young people are significantly disadvantaged by welfare reform and housing benefit provision.

**The housing supply crisis:** Croydon's population is the largest in London and is growing. A growing population increases housing demand and need. There will be nearly 2,500 new households forming in the borough each year over the next 20 years. The draft London Plan expects Croydon to

<sup>5</sup> Further details in the review and ASHE, NOMIS data, IMD 2015

<sup>6</sup> See Joseph Rowntree Foundation

meet an annual housing target of more than 2,900 new homes per year. Housing supply will need to double to keep up with demand. The failure to build in sufficient volumes over the past 30 years has led to an overall shortage of housing, including affordable housing in Croydon.

**Housing affordability:** Average house prices are over 10 times average incomes. Changes to and freezing housing benefit rates until 2020, and the introduction of Universal Credit have made it harder for people to afford private rented homes even with benefit help. Young people are particularly disadvantaged.

**Austerity:** Deficit reduction and the government's austerity policies have had an impact on public services generally, and in particular on the community services that help prevent homelessness. In particular this has affected housing support, hostels, specialist provision including mental health and drug and alcohol services, floating support.

**Multiple needs:** Increasingly complex needs presented by vulnerable people accessing housing support. Most support providers tell us that they are catering to people with more complex and multiple needs than previously.

**EEA and other migrants:** The complex rules affecting non UK nationals that are homeless or sleeping rough, and the limits to how public services can assist. Over 60% of the increase in rough sleeping in London is from non UK nationals. Since 2014 this group have limited access to public services including benefits and housing and many EEA/other

migrants have multiple needs further adding to the complexity of finding solutions for this group.

### **A profile of homelessness**

Unsurprisingly homelessness is most likely to affect those individuals and families that are in low paid, insecure employment, or are out of work, or who struggle to secure employment due to caring/parental responsibilities. It also affects those whose vulnerabilities make it difficult/impossible for them to provide for themselves through market employment and housing. The key points are:

- **Gender:** More than 6 out of ten of homeless applicants are single females
- **Children:** More than 8 out of ten households applying as homeless have dependent children
- **Age:** Homeless households also tend to be younger than the general population, with more than half of applicants being aged between 25 and 44
- **Ethnicity:** Black households tend to be overrepresented among homeless households. In Croydon, 46% of homeless households are of Black ethnic background (compared to 20.2% of the general population on census day 2011)
- **Rough sleepers gender/age:** In contrast rough sleepers tend to be male (more than 7 out of 10), but again younger than the general population

- **Additional needs:** The majority of rough sleepers (6 out of 10) have additional needs (including substance misuse or mental health problems)
- **Institutional history:** More than half of rough sleepers have an institutional history, having spent time in care, prison or in the armed forces)

## National and regional homelessness policy

**Government policy** on homelessness has increased in priority and prominence in recent years. The government published its national Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2018 which aims to end rough sleeping entirely by 2027. The Homelessness Reduction Act also came into force 01/04/2018, and introduced two new duties - the Prevention duty and the Relief duty - to the existing homelessness legislation further raising the Homelessness agenda.

The Government pledged to allocate £100m by 2027 to deliver initiatives that will help to stop people becoming homeless, provide rapid rehousing, and provide support to help people find work and live independently. Croydon secured funding from the Homelessness 'Trailblazers' Prevention Programme, the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund and Rapid Rehousing Pathway.

Using this funding we have prevented people from becoming homeless through developing targeted approaches and reduced rough sleeping in Croydon. Croydon will continue to prevent residents from becoming homeless using targeted early intervention and prevention techniques. It will develop a 24/7 direct access hub for rough sleepers in the borough, and

support CRZero to achieve its aim of ending entrenched rough sleeping.

**In London** the Mayor has set out a range of 'asks' of central government to expand and improve the currently inadequate provision to tackle rough sleeping in the capital effectively. These include additional resources for improved outreach, monitoring and recording through CHAIN, accommodation and support services.

**Crisis** recently published a long term plan to end homelessness in Great Britain. It sets out the costs and policy changes required to achieve this outcome. They advocate a swift process for identifying people sleeping rough, and providing short-term help for those that can be moved into secure decent housing (such as assistance with a deposit and rent in advance) and longer-term support for more vulnerable people with complex needs through approaches such as Housing First. The plan also makes a number of policy recommendations including: calling for over 100,000 new social homes per year; imposing a wider duty on public bodies across Great Britain to prevent homelessness (not just refer); and, enabling everyone to access help and abolishing 'priority need' in England and Wales. Croydon will over the next year partner with Crisis to drive forward a joint plan to end core homelessness

### What do we want to achieve

We want to end core homelessness in Croydon by 2029

### What we are going to do:

We will make a commitment to end homelessness

- The Council will actively support the government's policy objectives to end homelessness and rough sleeping and lobby to maintain appropriate levels of funding
- The Council will support the Mayor and others in their calls for additional funding for prevention, accommodation and support services in London
- The Council will partner with Crisis to deliver a long-term plan to end core homelessness in Croydon

**Key measures of success**

- Reduced numbers of people sleeping rough in Croydon
- Reduced numbers of people living in shelters, hostels and emergency accommodation

## Engagement and early intervention

### What do we want to achieve

We want more people to know about, use and rely on Croydon's public and voluntary sector services to help them avoid crisis.

### What is happening now?

We know that people's journeys into homelessness are different, and that they provide different opportunities to intervene. Public and voluntary sector services collect a lot of data, and know a lot about individuals and families that could be at risk of homelessness (e.g. the Council, DWP, advice services, and the voluntary sector). However, at the moment these different services operate in isolation, are often unaware of the work others are engaged in, duplicate each other, and fail to coordinate and target services to those that need it most. The council also commissions housing advice and mediation services to help prevent homelessness and resolve issues before they reach crisis.

**Gateway and Welfare:** The welfare reforms introduced in 2013, and the roll-out of Universal Credit forced Croydon to adopt a different approach to assist the 16,000 residents affected. Our Gateway and Welfare service is designed to respond to whole family needs including income, employment, skills/training and housing needs. It enables families and individuals to find sustainable solutions, collaborates across services to avoid duplication, and supports residents to take control and overcome the challenges they face.

It uses business intelligence to target areas with high levels of debt, Universal Credit claimants and deprivation, identifies areas isolated from the Town Centre, and provides services that respond to specific local needs.

A key part of Gateway's prevention approach is providing opportunities to access employment. Croydon has incredible potential for growth given its location and connectivity. We need to ensure our local working population possesses the required skills and qualifications that employers in higher value sectors require. Delivering our plans for growth and regeneration are therefore a key part of our Homeless Prevention Strategy, as are encouraging small businesses and social enterprises, and harnessing the potential of public sector commissioning to deliver social value.

#### Gateway Achievements – 2018/2019

**Helped more than 2,400 families avoid homelessness**

**Given budgeting support to over 14,900 people**

**Supported over 4,700 people on Universal Credit to improve their digital skills**

**Seen a 15% reduction in the number of people applying as homeless**

**Cut the cost of giving people emergency accommodation by £2m**

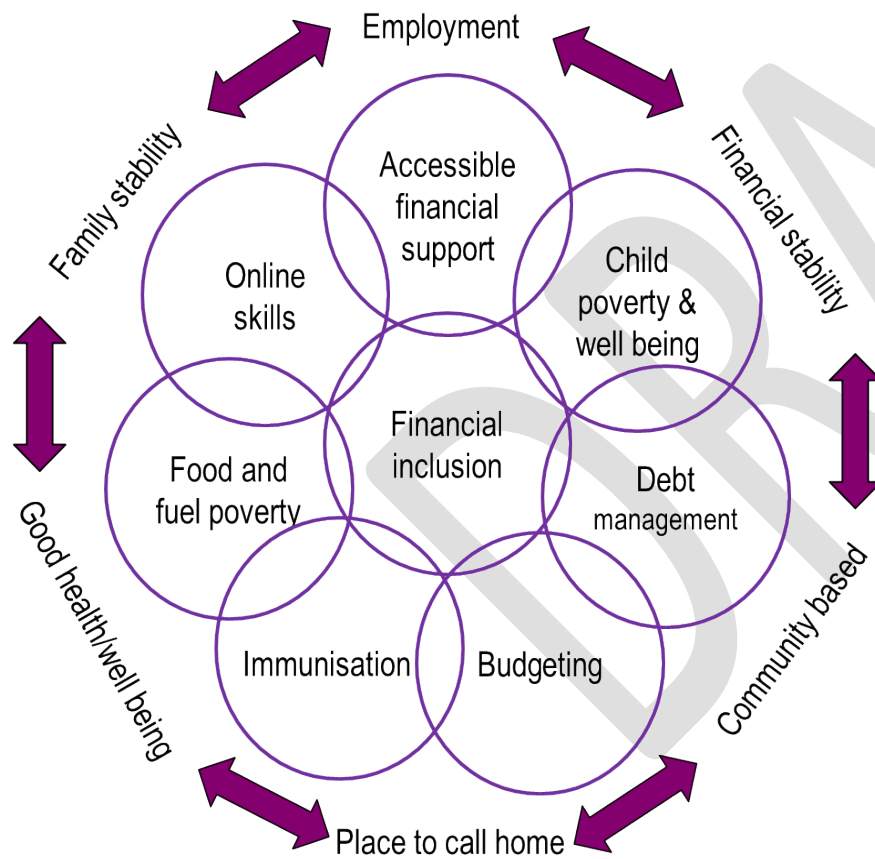
**Increased the homeless prevention rate from 25% to 58%**

**Reduced the numbers in emergency accommodation from 824 to 667**

**Supported 587 residents into employment.**

**Gateway Phase 1 is saving the Council £2.5m per year**

## Gateway and Welfare services – joint working



## Gateway and Welfare

*Gateway used data to identify those residents most at risk of homelessness so that intervention can be specific and targeted to individual needs. A single woman was registered onto Community Connect Food Stop after being contacted as part of the targeted intervention work and immediately began working closely with her Gateway Officer. She had had Council Tax arrears of £3,112.68 and had a total of £1,525.55 in rent arrears. She had a direct payment from her universal credit for her rent plus an additional £50.45 each month to pay towards the rent arrears set up on her rent account. However this meant that ultimately she was left with just £140 per month to cover all other bills and food shopping. A Discretionary Housing Payment was paid to support with the rent arrears and the monthly rent shortfall. She was also referred to the Food Stop shop at Parchmore, which is helping to reduce her food shopping bills. She was also supported to make an affordable agreement with debt collectors for her council tax. In addition, her Gateway Officer has supported her with non-dependents on her Council Tax Support (CTS) claim. As there were no income details noted for Miss X on the system, this meant that a full non-dependent deduction was being taken from her entitlement and this has helped to reduce the Council Tax arrears.*



### What we are going to do:

We need to provide support earlier and to do that we need to be working in communities, delivering trusted services, based on local evidence and intelligence.

Our Gateway approach has shown that early identification intervention to help people stabilise their situation, and wrap-around holistic support works. Our approach will continue to focus on stabilising people's housing, employment and caring arrangements. We also know that the Gateway principles and approach are effective, and can be applied more widely across different services and localities. We are therefore going to:

- Build coordinated early identification networks and effective referral services that work well together. These will be linked to our existing commissioned independent preventative services – e.g. housing advice and community mediation services
- Develop more locally delivered, evidence based services, tailored to local need, and delivered with/by community assets - starting with extending the Gateway approach into new localities through our new Community Connect/Food Stop projects in New Addington, Thornton Heath, Monks Hill and Coulsdon
- Provide regular training and information sharing sessions for commissioned and voluntary groups providing services to people in need, to build capacity, develop collaboration, commitment to shared priorities

- Extend the holistic Gateway approach to all new adult social care customers



approaching the council – increasing independence and resilience

- Develop a co-designed monitoring and evaluation framework to produce evidence of the effectiveness of our activity to reduce poverty, increase resilience, and improve skills and employability
- Increase local employment with employers working closely with prevention services. We will also enable our residents to make the most of the opportunities that arise from the borough's regeneration by ensuring Gateway & Welfare employment support works with Croydon Works, Croydon Construction Skills Public Sector delivering social value Small Business Commission SEEK project

### Key measures of success

- Tenancies sustained
- Increased local employment
- Decreased reliance on benefits
- Decreased debt
- Reduced expenditure on food
- Reduced childhood obesity
- Reduced social isolation
- Increased overall health and wellbeing for all residents
- Increased digital skills



**Community Connect**

### Homelessness prevention

#### What do we want to achieve

- A high quality, efficient prevention service
- A high proportion of homeless prevention outcomes
- Shorter stays in temporary accommodation
- We want to end core homelessness in Croydon by 2029

The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, and introduced two new duties - the Prevention duty and the Relief duty - to the existing homelessness legislation (HA 1996, part 7). The key measures in the act are an extension of the period 'threatened with homeless' from 28 to 56 days and a new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applications threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need. It also requires a new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need. Along with this 'a duty to refer' came into effect where public services will need to notify a local authority if they came into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.



#### What is happening now?

Despite an increasing focus on early intervention and prevention, a significant number of people apply to the council as homeless, over 2,000 per year on average over the past 10

years. With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act presentations are now running at over 3,000 p.a. In spite of the high levels of presentations to the council the numbers of households who we owe a full housing duty has remained at between 600- 900 over the last 5 years.

**Prevention and intervention:** The council's approach to prevention focuses in the first instance on resolving the threat of homelessness including negotiating with landlords, engaging tenancy relations in the case of potential illegal eviction, and family mediation (including that provided for young people through a commissioned service). Where prevention is not possible the Relief Team work on an accommodation plan with the applicant, and on other issues such as debts or budgeting, finding employment, or signposting to other services. The Interventions Team follows this work up with families in emergency accommodation holding 'finding a home' events and providing support and encouragement to find alternative accommodation. One of the main barriers to effective prevention and relief is an insufficient supply of accommodation available within current benefit rates. As a result families are spending extended periods living in temporary accommodation.

**Single homeless service (SHS):** The SHS assesses single homeless applications and provides access to supported accommodation. It works with people recovering from mental ill health, care leavers, ex-offenders (some of whom are under MAPPA and / or Jigsaw) people addicted to alcohol and/or drugs, people affected by welfare benefits reform, young people at risk, people escaping domestic abuse, refugees,

people with a physical disability, people with a learning disability and many residents who have a combination of these needs. There is a limited portfolio of supported accommodation and the number of people with multiple and complex needs accessing the SHS is increasing. Affordable move-on accommodation is also limited. SHS also works closely with the street outreach team to identify rough sleepers, access accommodation as quickly as possible and prevent a return to sleeping rough.

#### **Homelessness prevention-in action**

***A single woman who had been in care in the North of England came to London for work. She found a property but fell into arrears when the company she worked for did not pay her salary. She took them to an employment tribunal, but her landlord had already started eviction proceedings. A prevention officer intervened as she had a possession hearing scheduled the following week. Through negotiations with the landlord he agreed that if the arrears were reduced to below 2 months' rent he would ask for a suspended order rather than an outright order. A discretionary housing payment of £1000 was paid and she took out a loan with the credit union for £2500 which was sufficient to halt proceedings. She has agreed an additional amount on her monthly rent to clear the rest of the arrears. She is now working as a supervising social worker, is on a local residents group and has used some lottery money to create a fund with the credit union for local residents to draw on***

### What are we going to do?

We want to continue to shift our approach to a more proactive, preventative approach, and ensure that families and individuals approaching for housing advice or at risk of homelessness understand the support we can provide to help them find alternative accommodation quickly.

- Promote our housing advice and options services, and ensure that vulnerable people are supported to access our online housing advice resources
- Continue to refine and communicate our '*Your Home Your Move*' messages to encourage homeless households to actively engage in finding alternative accommodation
- Review our protocols with Public Authorities (prisons, probation, health, SLaM) to ensure effective joint working with a focus on preventing homelessness crises
- Ensure people applying as homeless spend as short a time as possible in Emergency or Temporary Accommodation
- Develop effective preventative approaches to tackle the main causes of homelessness:
  - Eviction from private rented sector (PRS) accommodation
  - Exclusion by parents, relatives and friends
  - Domestic violence
- All families/individuals in emergency or temporary accommodation have a realistic plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation
- Develop our Social Lettings Agency ; Croydon Lettings to continue to broker accommodation solutions that aligns with prevention and the escalation of crisis and need for statutory services

### Key measures of success

- Number of homelessness preventions acceptances
- Families spend minimum period in bed and breakfast style accommodation
- Minimum expenditure on emergency accommodation
- Emergency or temporary accommodation has adequate facilities for enabling people to work, do homework, cook, live a healthy lifestyle
- Embedding the Social Lettings Agency from a pilot to a full service; reducing the number of households entering into statutory services

### Sustainable accommodation

#### What do we want to achieve

Housing targets are met

New homes meet the needs of our communities

We have an effective long-term temporary accommodation plan

Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households and to provide move-on from supported accommodation

#### What happens now?

Our review shows that homelessness in Croydon is exacerbated by the lack of supply and access to suitable, settled accommodation. Resolving structural housing market factors that impact homelessness requires a focus on housing delivery, including the delivery of truly affordable housing. Croydon has a growing population and housing supply will

need to at least double to keep pace. We will ensure there is an alignment with the homelessness strategy and the housing strategy in order to achieve an effective long-term temporary accommodation plan

Lack of supply in turn leads to increasing housing prices and rents, and welfare reform makes it nearly impossible for those in poverty or on low incomes to access sustainable housing in the current market. It also impacts move-on options people that are ready for independence are effectively trapped in supported accommodation, potentially blocking others in the system from moving on and getting the help they need.

Improving the quality and standards of private rented accommodation contributes to tackling homelessness, and helps reduce the poor housing conditions that affect health and may have long-term implications for income and employment. Croydon set up a borough-wide landlord licensing scheme in 2015 which protects private sector tenants and drives up standards.

Croydon has a smaller social housing stock than many other London boroughs, and consequently relies on private landlords to provide accommodation for homeless households both as temporary accommodation and as a discharge of the homelessness duty. We have a short-term supported housing portfolio of around 500 units, with floating support also provided to vulnerable people in hostels or in emergency accommodation. There are more than 2,000 households in temporary accommodation (including 3,000 children), and the Council has worked hard to reduce the number in B&B style emergency accommodation in recent years with significant

success. Homeless families and single homeless, however, still spend too long 'living in limbo' in temporary accommodation and our focus will be on reducing the average length of stay.

The council offers a range of offers to private landlords and accommodation providers to supply accommodation for homeless households. Empty homes brought back into use with the financial assistance of the council are used as supply for meeting housing need. A significant proportion of council and housing association homes are allocated to homeless households via Croydon's housing allocations scheme.

#### **What we will do**

To drive forward housing delivery - we will:

- Ensure developers recognise Croydon as a borough with an easy to navigate planning framework and an effective proactive enabling function
- Support residential and economic growth with the required infrastructure
- We will deliver 2,000 truly affordable homes through the Brick by Brick housing programme
- We will bring 100 empty homes back into use
- Further develop our Social Lettings Agency; Croydon Lettings

To reduce the use of bed and breakfast style emergency accommodation, and rationalise our temporary accommodation portfolio – we will:

- Produce an accurate up to date forecast of our need for emergency and temporary accommodation
- Develop a long-term emergency and temporary accommodation plan – based on future need , minimising use of emergency accommodation (particularly bed and breakfast style accommodation with shared facilities for 16/17 year olds and families with children)
- Improve offer to large-scale housing providers and smaller private sector landlords and develop an efficient accommodation procurement framework to provide move on accommodation required to discharge our housing duty
- Purchase homes and acquire long term interest in accommodation to provide long-term portfolio of affordable accommodation for households in need
- Explore use of modular housing to increase accommodation supply
- Ensure sufficient supply of accommodation for specific groups – over 65 year old people with complex needs, women with complex needs, young people (Crash Pad), former rough sleepers with chronic and severe ill-health.

#### **Key measures of success**

- Housing supply figures
- Empty homes brought back into use
- Prevention supply achieved
- Number of households in emergency accommodation
- Emergency accommodation expenditure

### **Support outcomes**

#### **What do we want to achieve**

- Aligned messages and approach to independence and resilience
- Localised support services based on local need
- Volunteers enabled to devote time/energy to meet need in their local area

#### **What happens now?**

Croydon is developing a robust housing strategy and action plan that will align with the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

Croydon is fortunate to have wide ranging and active voluntary and community organisations providing support and advice to our residents that helps to build community resilience. The faith sector in particular provides support to homeless households and residents in need through day services, food and companionship, and a night shelter. Croydon also has health services dedicated to supporting rough sleepers and homeless households including the Homeless Health Team at the Rainbow Centre, and NHS walk-in services.

The Crisis Skylight Centre located in Surrey Street provides a wide range of support services including helping rough sleepers, housing coaching, renting ready, tenancy training and much more.

The Family Justice Centre (FJC) is a multi-agency co-located service (in Park Lane, Croydon) which offers support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and their children. The FJC works closely with the Council's Housing Needs and Assessments Service where cases involve victims

threatened with homelessness or needing to move to safe accommodation urgently.

Poor quality and inappropriate housing impacts health services in different ways including repeat visits to the family doctor or Accident and Emergency department, or delays in discharge from hospital due a lack of safe, suitable accommodation to return to. The Council’s Staying Put Team service and Major Adaptations Unit provides support to help people remain independent who would otherwise need to move home.

The support services available in Croydon, however, are oversubscribed and insufficient for current levels of need.

Funding for the SLaM START mental health outreach to rough sleepers expires in 2020, and is only funded on a skeletal basis. There is no outreach primary health care provision meaning that some of the most vulnerable street homeless individuals do not access primary care or dentistry. Some former rough sleepers in hostels have chronic, severe physical and mental health needs that are challenging to provide for and are not accessing mental, primary and personal care services due to lack of specialist provision.

**What we will do**

- Undertake a Health Needs Assessment and mapping exercise in order to review the adequacy of health services to homeless households including access to:

- Primary care provision, walk-in and emergency services for the most vulnerable
  - Mental health services
  - Dentistry
  - Continue to support residents to remain independent through the Staying Put adaptations service
  - Ensure our temporary accommodation provides the facilities and opportunities to live a healthy active lifestyle even in the most difficult circumstances
  - Continue to provide tenancy sustainment services to prevent homelessness
- Support delivery of housing related support to individuals with complex needs through Psychologically Informed Support (PIE)

**Key measures of success**

- Improved access mental, primary and dental health services for rough sleepers with complex needs
  - Networked voluntary and community sector services
- Tenancy sustainment

**Rough sleeping**

**What do we want to achieve**

We want to end entrenched rough sleeping

**Rough sleeping our efforts in action: from rough sleeper to having a place to call home**

***Single Man has multiple and complex needs and a long history of rough sleeping, he was identified as a suitable candidate for the Housing First initiative to help alleviate***

***issues associated with entrenched rough sleeping. He has been supported with signing a tenancy via Croydon Council as a part of the Housing First project.***

***To promote engagement with services and to enable communication, he has been provided with a mobile phone, which is used to contact him when home visits are not required, and equally, he is being actively encouraged to maintain regular contacts his key worker.***

***To address his substance misuse, he has been referred to a local drug service and is being accompanied to regular appointments with healthcare professionals. He is now in the process of addressing his drug addiction and has been supported with accessing appropriate medication***

Croydon has a significant rough sleeping problem with 274 people recorded as sleeping rough in 2018/19, of which around 50 were effectively living on the streets. Bi-monthly counts conducted by our rough sleeping outreach team find a fluctuating figure of between 15 to 35 rough sleepers on any night. Within that number there are a group of destitute European Economic Area (EEA) migrants that cannot claim benefits, and survive hand-to-mouth with the support of local day services.

Rough sleeping has been increasing in outer London as a result of the housing crisis and a lack of affordable housing. Private rented homes are increasingly expensive and insecure, and welfare reform and in particular, benefit sanctions have had a significant impact on vulnerable people. Austerity has reduced the preventative services that would have kept many off the streets, and it has raised the threshold

for eligibility for other services (including mental health and substance misuse services). Homelessness prevention funding is allocated on out of date patterns of need, restricting the ability of outer London boroughs to respond effectively.

Croydon is fortunate to have many residents who volunteer for services for rough sleepers and people in need including a floating winter shelter provided by local churches (Croydon Churches Floating Shelter). In the winter of 2018 local premieriership football team Crystal Palace agreed to help provide severe weather shelter, converting a lounge into a space that could accommodate up to 12 rough sleepers in need of shelter, this was operated by volunteers and outreach staff. We commission an outreach and resettlement service, Croydon Reach. Crisis located one of its Skylight Centres in Croydon a few years ago, delivering vital services to help people off the streets and into accommodation and employment. The Council aims to operate an 'in for good' policy, providing accommodation on a discretionary basis, and has also worked with providers, assisted by the CR Zero campaign to remove barriers to rough sleepers accessing, and remaining in supported accommodation. Our hostel providers have changed their policy regarding using alcohol, accepting dogs, and are to be flexible around couples. We have secured funding for specialist rough sleeping navigators through the Rapid Rehousing Fund, who provide an intensive focus on finding pathways for rough sleepers with complex needs.

While this is more comprehensive provision than many other boroughs, the need in Croydon is demonstrably higher than other outer London boroughs there are still significant gaps in



provision including the frequency and coverage of outreach, sustained funding for mental health outreach, access to primary healthcare and dentistry, immediately available safe emergency accommodation, services for entrenched rough sleepers with multiple needs, resources to engage entrenched EEA migrants with complex needs. Providers report that there are increasing numbers of rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs.

### **What we are going to do:**

The Council was recently very successful in securing Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) funding to enhance service provision. This funding, the CR Zero partnership and our partnership with Crisis to end core homelessness in Croydon provides the framework for tackling rough sleeping over the next two to three years.

We will:

- Develop our Rough Sleepers Alliance to create a network bringing together all service providers, faith groups, and people with lived experience to support new organisations, share good practice, work through issues and improve services.
- Explore the opportunities to develop a Homelessness Reduction Board to enhance accountability of all partners
- Support the work of CRZero to end chronic rough sleeping
- Continue to commission a rough sleeping outreach service

- Provide an effective No First Night Out approach through a 24/7 crash space and rough sleeper assessment centre, providing a swift person-centred solutions for individual rough sleepers
- Maintain Housing First opportunities
- Develop rapid rehousing pathways
- Relieve homelessness amongst EEA and other migrants nationals who are unable to access benefits
- Work with Police, council anti-social behaviour teams, and local businesses to support rough sleepers and reduce the anti-social behaviour associated with some rough sleepers and sleeping sites, participating in forums and implementing targeted approaches.

### **Key measures of success**

- No one living on the street / reduced numbers living on the street
- An accurate picture of rough sleeping based on detailed individual case data

## **Young people**

### **What do we want to achieve**

We want to end youth homelessness in Croydon

### **What is happening now?**

Homeless acceptances of young people over the past ten years has been quite low - the Council has accepted on average 3 applicants aged 16 or 17 per year, and only 4 per year applicants that has formerly been in care. The number of

young people accessing housing advice services at the Turnaround Centre Drop in Zone, however, is quite high (544 in 17/18), and research shows young people will often sofa surf with family or friends before they access support.

Our services have a strong focus on prevention with Croydon Childrens Services working with young people and parents to prevent family breakdown to support young people to remain at home. They take also the lead in applications from 16/17 year olds. The commissioned Drop in Zone service for single 16-21 year olds provides mediation, family therapy, and works with the Youth Offending Service, and Probation. The councils' Leaving Care Team holds a 2 weekly accommodation panel to identify and plan for suitable accommodation for care leavers after age 17 ½ and following the introduction of the Children and Social Work Act, and a Croydon Local Offer has been developed.

There is also a variety of provision of accommodation and support for young people, including; assessment centre and supported accommodation, short and longer term supported lodgings, and shared accommodation with visiting support. The Single Homelessness Service provides a dedicated officer to work with complex need young people who are ready to move on.

Our review and engagement found that there has been an increase in the level of complex needs young people needing accommodation and housing support, particularly those age over 18. Also, there is insufficient supported and suitable emergency accommodation for homeless young people,

resulting in the use of bed and breakfast style emergency accommodation.

### **What we are going to do:**

There are a number of ways we can improve services for young people, increase prevention, and eliminate the use of unsuitable accommodation (B&B in particular) altogether. In order to achieve this we will:

- Review, and relaunch the Croydon Youth homelessness joint protocol ensuring housing and children's services work effectively together to provide the housing options and support young people and care leavers need
- Improve online housing advice and information (co-designed with young people)
- Developing a youth homeless prevention peer education programme
- Create a single integrated YP gateway (with social work support)
- End the use of B&B accommodation and create an alternative Croydon 'crash pad'
- Introduce home visits to all young people who approach as homeless aged 16-24
- Identify a menu of move on options, including effective assessment process
- Work with landlords to increase their confidence in accommodating young people
- Develop a young persons 'tenancy ready' programme
- Identify young people at risk of tenancy failure through eviction or abandonment,
- Explore different accommodation models, such as peer landlord schemes and shared housing with floating support.

**Key measures of success**

Number of young people accommodated in B&B

Number of young people accepted as homeless

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## Action Plan

Outcome	Aim	Key Action	Milestone	Owner
Taking the Gateway approach out into the community	Early intervention and prevention to stabilise households in crisis and prevent homelessness with a holistic approach for our most vulnerable residents through Access Croydon, Contact Centre and localities	<p>Deliver and roll out Community Connect/Food Stop - Community Hub model run by the community for the community delivering services that are responsive to the specific needs of residents</p> <p>Development of the Homelessness Reduction Board to discuss sustainable long term solutions</p>	30/9/2020	Director of Gateway Services
Homelessness prevention	<p>Supporting residents to sustain their tenancies</p> <p>Develop the Social Lettings Agency to become a full service aligned to prevention and the prevention of the escalation of crisis and need for statutory services</p>	Intensive support activity to sustain participation and find long lasting solutions	30/9/2021	Director of Gateway Services
Networked community,	Community Connect Alliance of organisations -	Partnership working across the community, voluntary, faith, private and	Ongoing	Director of Gateway Services

voluntary and faith sectors	multi-agency 'Alliance' approach empowers the local community, builds on existing relationships and forges new connections with stakeholders to strengthen and improve outcomes for local people	public sectors to strengthen and improve outcomes for local people.  Maintain and support the Community Connect Alliance		
Homelessness Prevention				
A high proportion of homelessness prevention outcomes	Fewer homeless households in emergency accommodation	Promote our housing options and advice services	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
A high proportion of homelessness prevention outcomes	Fewer households in emergency accommodation	Review our protocols with Public Authorities (prisons, probation, health, SLaM) to ensure effective joint working with a focus on preventing homelessness crises	Ongoing	Director of Gateway Services/ Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
A high proportion of homelessness prevention outcomes	Fewer households in emergency accommodation	Review our preventative approaches to tackle the main causes of homelessness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eviction from PRS accommodation</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Director of Gateway/ Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion by parents, relatives and friends</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> </ul>		
Shorter stays in temporary accommodation	Homeless families in temporary accommodation actively engage in finding alternative accommodation	Refine and communicate 'Your Home Your Move' messages	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
Shorter stays in temporary accommodation	Homeless families in temporary accommodation actively engage in finding alternative accommodation	All families/individuals in EA/TA have a realistic plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation	30/12/2020	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
<b>Sustainable Accommodation</b>				
Prevention supply achieved	Ensure developers recognise Croydon as a borough with an easy to navigate planning framework and an effective proactive enabling function	Support residential and economic growth with the required infrastructure	30/12/2020	Director of Planning Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
New homes meet the needs of our communities	Ensure housing targets are met	Deliver 2,000 truly affordable homes through the Brick by Brick housing programme	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions

Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households	Ensure housing targets are met	We will bring 100 empty homes back into use		Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
We have an effective long term TA plan	Produce an accurate up to date forecast of our need for EA/TA	Develop a long-term EA/TA plan – based on future need , minimising use of EA (particularly B&B with shared facilities for 16/17 year olds and families with children)	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households and to provide move-on from supported accommodation	Improve offer to and large-scale housing providers and smaller private sector landlords and develop an efficient accommodation procurement framework to provide move on accommodation required to discharge our housing duty	Develop separate offers for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large scale housing providers</li> <li>- Smaller private sector landlords</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
		Delivery of a new procurement framework	30/3/2021	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
		Purchase homes and acquire long term interest in accommodation to provide long-term portfolio of affordable accommodation for households in need	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions
		Ensure sufficient supply of accommodation for specific groups – over 65s with complex needs, women with complex needs, young people (Crash Pad), former rough sleepers with chronic and severe ill-health.	Ongoing	Director of Gateway Services/ Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions/Commissioning and Improvement
<b>Support outcomes</b>				

Localised support services based on local need	Improved access mental, primary and dental health services for rough sleepers with complex needs	Undertake a Health Needs Assessment and mapping exercise in order to review the adequacy of health services to homeless households including access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care provision, walk-in and emergency services for the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Dentistry</li> </ul>	30/12/2020	Director of Public Health
Tenancy sustainment	Psychologically Informed Environments	Delivery of housing related support to individuals with complex needs through Psychologically Informed Support (PIE).	30/12/2021	Director of Gateway Services
Aligned messages and approach to independence and resilience	Volunteers enabled to devote time/energy to meet need in their local area	Alliance of community and voluntary services creating good practice networks, aligned aims and opportunities for volunteers	Ongoing /annual review	Director of Gateway Services
Networked voluntary and community sector services	Localised support services based on local need	Ensure links between residents in temporary accommodation, voluntary, community services and social prescribing networks	Ongoing/annual review	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
<b>Rough sleepers</b>				
An end to entrenched rough sleeping An end to entrenched rough sleeping	An alliance of voluntary and community sector services with a shared goal	Maintain and support the Rough Sleepers Alliance	30/06/2020	Director of Gateway Services



An end to entrenched rough sleeping	Work with CR Zero 2020 to establish an innovation fund for rough sleeping services	Relieve homelessness amongst EEA and other migrants nationals who are unable to access benefits	31/03/2021	Director of Gateway Services
	Provide an effective No First Night Out approach to tackling rough sleeping early	Deliver and monitor outcomes of our Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub - a 24/7 crash space and rough sleeper assessment centre to ensure swift person-centred solutions for individual rough sleepers	1/11/2019	Director of Gateway Services
	Provide an effective Housing First service	Implement Housing First and accommodate 20 entrenched rough sleepers through Housing First intervention and support	31/03/2020	Director of Gateway Services
	Entrenched rough sleepers are given the support they need to leave the streets	Work with Police, council anti-social behaviour teams, and local businesses to support rough sleepers and reduce the anti-social behaviour associated with some rough sleepers and sleeping sites, participating in forums and implementing targeted approaches.	31/09/2020	Director of Gateway Services
<b>Young people</b>				
End youth homelessness in Croydon	Increased homelessness prevention outcomes for young people	Review, and relaunch the Croydon Youth homelessness joint protocol ensuring housing and children's services work effectively together to provide the housing options and support young people and care leavers need	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care

		Develop a single integrated gateway for 16 and 17 year olds	31/12/2019	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Identify young people at risk of tenancy failure through eviction or abandonment	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Introduce home visits for all 16-24 year olds who approach as homeless	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Deliver improved online housing advice and information (co-designed with young people)	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
		Develop a youth homelessness prevention peer education programme	30/06/2020	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
Sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households and to provide move-on from supported accommodation	End the use of B&B accommodation for young people	Create 'crash pad' accommodation.	Ongoing	Director of Gateway and Welfare
	Increased supply of PRS move on accommodation	Work with landlords to increase their confidence in accommodating young people	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
		Research different accommodation models, such as peer landlord schemes and shared housing with floating support and create a delivery plan	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions
	Increased supply of PRS move on accommodation	Develop a young person's tenancy ready programme	Ongoing	Director of Housing Assessments and Solutions

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Increasing supply of new affordable housing	Key worker housing	Neighbourhood infrastructure for homes	Environmental sustainability (new and existing homes)	Council homes and estate investment	Older people's housing needs (including downsizing options)
<p><b>External contributors</b> Registered providers Developers Citizens Advice Bureau Registered Provider Forum</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Develop a Croydon definition of affordable rent, independent of Local Housing Allowance or national definitions. Informed by housing needs analysis, borough income profile, best practice guidance Planning policy review and assessment of impact on planning policy/numbers if Council introduce targets for delivery/ development against this rent level. Potential collaboration between Council, Registered Providers and developers to deliver more affordable homes. Best use of adjacent assets, stock rationalisation</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> CCG (Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group) SLaM (South London and Maudsley NHS Trust) CHS (Croydon Health Services NHS Trust) One Public Estate Key Worker Housing</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Develop evidence base for Council recruitment/ retention issues related to housing supply/costs. Develop key worker planning policy. Develop joint actions with public sector employers re resources, procurement and development.</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> CCG, SLaM, CHS, Developers</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Look at Local Plan Review definition of the physical and social infrastructure needed for successful neighbourhoods Infrastructure Delivery Plan review, Mayor's draft Social Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance Regeneration place profiles and emerging neighbourhood community plans Develop methodology for assessing future infrastructure required</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> Developers</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Develop the 'Croydon Standard' for council homes (cf Housing Asset Management Plan), benchmarking against standards/best practice Performance priorities for residents Lower life-time costs, maintenance and management standards for council homes Consider higher standards for planning/ building control for new housing development and sustainability</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> Tenants and leaseholders panel</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Develop assessment matrix/broad analysis to determine future planning and investment: 'estate plans'. Up to date housing needs information for key 'flagged' estates Feasibility/options appraisal process for estates requiring major investment and/or regeneration Consider opportunities from adjacent land through master planning, housing association and Brick by Brick assets</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> CCG, SLaM One Croydon Alliance Registered Providers Developers Care Providers &amp; groups Age UK Croydon Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Conduct borough-wide housing needs analysis for older people informed by stakeholders and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Research approach to potential downsizers in social housing and update the council's housing offer and incentives. Research options for age-restricted housing. Confirm funding, ownership and management for new housing for older people</p>

Accessible homes policy review	Private (rented) sector improvement and empty homes	Borough-wide housing supply review [for TA/EA]	Access to private rented	Young people	Supported Housing/ Independent Living
<p><b>External contributors</b> Registered Providers (RPs) Care providers? Age UK Croydon Carers groups? Disability Croydon Croydon Disability Forum Developers</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Analyse housing needs for disabled/ wheelchair housing in Croydon Consider good practice disabled/wheelchair housing design guidance to develop Croydon disabled housing design standard or adopt existing guidance. Consult on draft protocol for early notification and adaptations spec with partner RPs/developers Review impact of amending planning policy to prioritise more wheelchair homes for affordable tenures. Review existing policy on Disabled Facilities Grants Consider buying private homes with adaptations no longer needed.</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> Registered Providers Landlord Forum Citizens Advice Bureau</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Align with consultation on Selective Licensing Scheme Update data for existing incentives for Disabled Facilities Grants and Healthy Homes scheme. Potential to increase focus on empty homes and enforcement. As with accessible homes workstream, review existing policy, including potential to refuse adaptations for significantly under-occupied homes Comms/ engagement with PRS tenants and households to seek their view on standards and requirements</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> Registered Providers Developers Landlord Forum</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Review Campbell Tickell housing supply report  Review and update Council's landlord incentives programme  Consider block booking of emergency accommodation.  Develop housing supply brief to procure/develop temporary accommodation, including to address most complex needs.</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> Registered Providers Developers Landlord Forum Citizens Advice Bureau</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Work with landlords and developers in private rented sector (PRS) to improve residents' access to PRS, reviewing support (deposit loans, guarantee schemes) Clarify S106 approach for PRS development and potential to require initial targeting of Croydon residents Seek to collaborate with RPs and developers to create new PRS homes for Croydon residents, meeting a new Croydon affordability definition Monitor PRS homes in new housing pipeline Consider private tenants' priorities re tenure security, spec, flexibility over home adaptations.</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> Turnaround Centre Partners Care providers Providers of supported housing for young people CAYSH Barnardos</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Build on Care leavers local offer to develop an approach to ensure better access to private sector accommodation for young people seeking to live independently, including suitable HMOs, and care leavers accommodation with support</p>	<p><b>External contributors</b> CCG, SLaM One Croydon Alliance Registered Providers Developers Care Providers &amp; groups Age UK Croydon CNCA</p> <p><b>Remit</b> Develop 'housing supply briefs' for extra care, supported living and age-restricted housing, to set a framework for new housing procurement, development and investment decisions.</p>

**For general release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Scrutiny Streets, Environment &amp; Homes Sub-Committee</b>  17 December 2019
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>POLICY FOR COUNCIL COMMUNITY PROPERTIES, RENT SUBSIDY AND RATE RELIEF</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Gavin Handford, Director of Policy &amp; Partnership</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Hamida Ali, Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon &amp; Communities</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Gavin Handford, Director of Policy &amp; Partnership</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

*The Corporate Plan and Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy recognises the importance of working in partnership to deliver the priorities and outcomes we have promised in new and creative ways. This includes working with the voluntary and community sector. This policy will enable the Council to make best use of its premises-related support to the sector.*

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	<b>Request by Councillor Hamida Ali for Scrutiny Committee to input into the development of a policy for the allocation of council community properties and setting rents, and providing rent subsidy and rate relief to Voluntary &amp; Community Sector organisations.</b>
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>To provide comment and inform the development of a policy for the allocation of council community properties and setting rents, and providing rent subsidy and rate relief to Voluntary &amp; Community Sector organisations.</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is a fundamental part of Croydon. It is a key partner in delivering services and support to our residents. We know that the availability of affordable premises and space for events is a major challenge for VCS organisations and groups.
  
- 1.2. The Council supports VCS organisations in respect of premises and associated subsidies in a number of ways, in total worth more than £0.5m a year. We wish

to continue supporting the sector at the same level, but focus this assistance on organisations that support the priority outcomes in our VCS Strategy (adopted in March 2019) and have the biggest community impact and greatest need, and spread the benefit of funding as widely as possible.

- 1.3. The VCS Strategy was developed with the input of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. The Council is now developing a policy for allocating and setting rents in council community properties, and providing rent subsidy and discretionary rate relief to give effect to the pledges made in the VCS strategy relating to premises related support. We want to provide transparency on how support is allocated and offer equality of opportunity to organisations that have not received funding to date, while operating within the Council's budgetary constraints.
- 1.4. This report provides background to the current approach, outlines the proposed approach within the policy and the rationale for this.
- 1.5. Consultation has been undertaken with voluntary and community sector organisations, and a summary of the feedback is provided.

## **2. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR STRATEGY 2019-23**

- 2.1. Our borough benefits from a wonderfully diverse voluntary and community sector (VCS) that makes a vital contribution to Croydon. The VCS is a fundamental part of Croydon. It is a key partner in delivering services and support to our residents.
- 2.2. The Council is a strong contributor to the VCS in Croydon, providing significant funding and staff support through various teams, our commissioning and procurement function and the One Croydon partnership.
- 2.3. In March 2019 the Council adopted a VCS Strategy that provides an open and honest framework for prioritising the Council's support and resources for the VCS while working in partnership with it to deliver for Croydon. A summary of the priority outcomes within the strategy is set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.4. Engagement with VCS organisations during the development of the VCS Strategy highlighted that the availability of affordable premises and space for events was a major challenge for the VCS.
- 2.5. There was a desire for greater transparency and clearer guidelines about how and why organisations are allocated council premises or paid rent subsidy or discretionary relief from national non-domestic rates (commonly known as business rates), when many others do not receive such support. Organisations also said that there should be more monitoring of performance and of usage of allocated premises



2.6. The VCS Strategy therefore includes a number of actions for the Council concerning premises related subsidies:

- Develop clear criteria for allocating properties and rent subsidy, requiring organisations to support our priorities and making the sharing of premises a desirable requirement.
- Allocate properties for a limited term; performance and the level of use of the premises will be monitored regularly.
- Improve transparency by transitioning from peppercorn rents for community properties to market rents, with rent subsidy provided where appropriate.
- Encourage organisations to share available space: we will amend our leases to allow occupiers to sublet to approved organisations and develop proposals in 2019/20 to facilitate the exchange of information on spaces offered and spaces sought by VCS organisations.

2.7. The draft policy for council community properties, Rent Subsidy and Discretionary Business Rate Relief (DRR) seeks to implement these actions.

### **3. CURRENT APPROACH**

3.1. Premises are a critical area of support for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. They are also, however, an expensive resource that is often in short supply. The Council supports voluntary and community sector organisations in respect of premises and associated subsidies in a number of ways, in total worth more than £0.5m a year.

3.2. In order to make council-owned community premises more affordable, many rents are charged at only a peppercorn rent (for 51 premises), or the Council provides Rent Subsidy to support the VCS with premises costs. The Council provides Discretionary Business Rate Relief (DRR) in addition to the 80% mandatory rate relief that may apply. It also provides and fully funds internal and external repairs to its properties, buildings insurance and statutory inspections, a significant subsidy in itself.

3.3. The Council's approach to premises related subsidy and support to the VCS has lacked an integrated approach. There has been no formal adopted policy or procedure for allocating council community properties and setting the rents for such properties, and determining which organisations should benefit from Rent Subsidy and DRR. The draft policy is designed to rectify this.

#### **Rent subsidy**

3.4. The Council is providing £245,000 in Rent Subsidy in 2019/20 for 19 premises. The subsidy benefits a range of organisations including sports clubs, scouts associations, residents associations, youth and community centres as well as larger VCS organisations.

3.5. The budget is fully allocated against historic commitments, and the Council is therefore not able to consider any new applications for Rent Subsidy under current arrangements. No assessment is currently made on the community benefit provided by the organisations receiving funding.

## **Discretionary Business Rate Relief**

- 3.6. Charitable organisations such as registered charities are entitled to 80% mandatory relief for national non-domestic rates ('business rates') wherever they are located. This cost is absorbed by central government.
- 3.7. Discretionary Business Rate Relief (DRR) provides further discount on non-domestic rates. These cost are met by the Council.
- 3.8. In 2019/20 a total of £143,000 was awarded to 47 organisations in respect of 69 properties. While the vast majority of organisations receive a 20% top-up in DRR to their mandatory rate relief, three payments cover 100% discretionary relief where groups did not qualify for mandatory relief.
- 3.9. There are currently three simple eligibility criteria. These are that the organisation is Croydon based, not for profit and meets basic requirements regarding governance, financial management and equalities.
- 3.10. Most of the payments are low value: 51 (74%) of payments are below the average of £2,075, but nearly 50% of the total budget is paid to just seven organisations.
- 3.11. As with Rent Subsidy, the DRR budget is fully allocated, and the Council is unable to consider any new applications for DRR under current arrangements. No assessment is currently made on the community benefit provided by the organisations receiving funding.
- 3.12. The Council operates a separate scheme for providing discretionary rate relief to businesses.

## **4. PRACTICE IN OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

- 4.1. In developing the draft policy, the Council looked at how other local authorities provided premises related support for the VCS.
- 4.2. Many authorities do not offer any rent subsidy at all. Those that do only support organisations in council owned premises and require organisations to provide a community benefit. We are not aware of any authority that offers rent subsidy to VCS organisations renting privately.
- 4.3. The level of rent that is subsidised varies. Some councils require VCS tenants to pay for repairs, insurance and statutory services to council community buildings, reducing the value of the rent subsidy they provide. Some only pay subsidy to community centres.
- 4.4. DRR is provided by more councils than rent subsidy, but by no means all offer this support. Some will only support organisations that qualify for mandatory relief, and pay 20% top-up relief so that organisations pay no business rates at all. Others offer partial relief only, but exclude organisations getting 80% mandatory relief. Generally, organisations must apply annually for DRR.

- 4.5. The analysis demonstrated that Croydon Council continues to provide a strong level of financial support for the VCS, and more than most local authorities.

## **5. DRAFT POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- 5.1. In drafting the policy proposals, the Council is seeking to offer organisations equality of opportunity to access premises and subsidies, ensure value for money and to spread the benefit as widely as possible across the VCS.
- 5.2. A number of objectives have been included in the draft policy, and are aligned to the priorities within the VCS Strategy:
- Focus funding on VCS organisations with biggest community impact and greatest need.  
*This is considered to be those organisations that support VCS Strategy priority outcomes, operate in areas of the greatest deprivation, use their properties as intensively as is practicable and those with the greatest financial need.*
  - Focus funding on VCS organisations occupying council community properties.  
*This is proposed for phase 1 (2021-2024). From 2024/25, subject to a review in early 2023, the policy proposes the option to open the rent subsidy scheme to applications from VCS organisations renting premises in the private sector, thus further widening the number of organisations that would be eligible.*
  - Provide transparency on how rents are charged, subsidies are offered and council community properties are allocated.
  - Spread the benefit of the funding as widely as possible, offering opportunity to organisations that have not received funding to date, while operating within the Council's budgetary constraints.

## **6. DRAFT POLICY: RENT SUBSIDY PROPOSALS**

- 6.1. It is proposed that a new application process be introduced for rent subsidy. In order to provide some stability to VCS organisations, and enable them to plan in the medium to long term, it is intended that rent subsidy will be awarded to successful applicants for a period of 3 years. The scheme will offer rent subsidy up to 100% of the contractual rent.
- 6.2. Whilst rent subsidy funding will be awarded for 3 years, it will be with a requirement for annual monitoring and the ability to amend rent subsidy.
- 6.3. Clear eligibility criteria will be introduced. Organisations will need to be:
- Community led
  - Properly constituted, with good governance

- Capable of sustainably, legally and safely managing an asset and delivering services
  - Compliant with the Equality Act 2010
  - Willing to offer space (if available) and support to smaller groups.
- 6.4. The organisations will also need to provide services that support the Council's VCS strategy (see Appendix 1) and these services must be delivered primarily for the benefit of Croydon residents. At least 75% of beneficiaries must be Croydon residents.
- 6.5. Profit making organisations, faith groups using premises mainly for religious purposes, and organisations providing services to a restrictive membership group will be excluded from receiving rent subsidy.
- 6.6. Where an organisation wholly or mainly sublets the premises to other organisations, then the property may be eligible for rent subsidy on condition that the subtenants are VCS organisations approved by the Council and the amount paid by the subtenant is no more than a charge to cover the organisation's reasonable costs of managing and running the building. The organisation's rent subsidy will only be reduced if it is making a profit from the arrangement.
- 6.7. If an organisation receives rental contributions from other council grants or commissioning, they will not be eligible to apply for rental subsidy. This ensures there is no duplication in funding contribution.

## **Assessment**

- 6.8. Even with the exclusions above, there will be more eligible organisations than there is funding to support. Therefore, an assessment process will be utilised to score and prioritise applicants for rent subsidy.
- 6.9. Priority will be given to organisations that:
- Make greater use of the premises.  
This will encourage organisations to make valuable community assets available throughout the week, offering more services and support to local communities.
  - Share premises with other VCS organisations.  
This will also increase availability of valuable community assets. However, where it is agreed that organisations cannot share premises, they will not be disadvantaged.
  - Deliver services in areas of greater deprivation
  - Are critical for achieving priority outcomes
- 6.10 The Council will seek to develop a web-based system to put VCS organisations and groups that have available space(s) within their premises in touch with other VCS organisations and groups that are looking for premises or space.
- 6.11 A financial assessment will form part of the application, with priority given to organisations with a lower gross annual income. Organisations with higher levels of gross annual income will be expected to demonstrate how they have secured funding from non-council sources. This will target funding where it is

most needed, whilst also encouraging VCS organisations to be less reliant on council funding.

- 6.12 Any organisation with reserves equivalent to more than two years' operating costs will not receive funding.

## **7. DRAFT POLICY: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF PROPOSALS**

- 7.1. It is proposed that a new application process also be introduced for DRR. As the amounts awarded are generally lower, it is considered less critical to provide a multi-year award. Therefore, it is intended that DRR be awarded on an annual basis.

- 7.2. Revised eligibility criteria will be introduced. Organisations will need to:

- Qualify for mandatory 80% business rate relief
- Support priority outcomes of the Council's VCS strategy (see Appendix 1)
- Meet requirements on governance, management and financial competence
- Comply with the Equality Act 2010.

- 7.3. The organisations will also need to provide services that support priority outcomes in the Council's VCS strategy (see Appendix 1) and these services must be delivered primarily for the benefit of Croydon residents. At least 75% of beneficiaries must be Croydon residents.

- 7.4. The following organisations will not be eligible for discretionary rate relief

- charity shops and cafés operated by trading arms of charities
- housing associations
- buildings used mainly for worship or to promote religious belief
- bodies operating a restrictive membership policy, unless they are fulfilling a special need within the community
- profit making organisations
- empty properties
- social clubs.

It should be noted that buildings registered for public religious worship or church halls are exempt from business rates altogether.

### **Assessment**

- 7.5. Applications will open in October each year, with a closing date of 31 October. Assessment of applications would take place in November and December with decisions taken by March at the latest (see 7.10 and 7.11). It is anticipated that the total relief sought by eligible organisations will exceed the budget available.

- 7.6. VCS organisations will be asked to submit an application form, their most recent audited/checked accounts, the amount and purpose of funding currently received

from the Council and other sources and a business plan or budget to allow an assessment of their financial management and viability.

- 7.7. Priority will be given to organisations with lower rateable values. It is proposed that applications will be ranked according to the amount of rate relief applied for, from lowest to highest. Rate relief will be allocated, starting with the lowest amount, until the budget is fully allocated.
- 7.8. Using rateable value is administratively simple, encourages organisations to avoid higher value properties and use buildings with a lower rateable value.
- 7.9. The allocation system prioritises smaller qualifying organisations, although there is no guarantee that an organisation will get relief two years in a row, even if its circumstances have not changed. This is because it will be dependent on the total applications received.
- 7.10. Organisations will be notified in March, once the council budget has been set and central government has notified the Council of the business rate multiplier, usually in February, which is used to calculate the rate demand.
- 7.11. It should be noted that 2021, the first year of a new policy, will be a valuation year, with some rate bills varying considerably. In these circumstances it would be difficult to give indicative notifications with any degree of accuracy in January and impossible to confirm amounts of DRR until late March.

## **8. DRAFT POLICY: ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY PROPERTIES**

- 8.1. The Council works closely with the VCS to identify suitable future uses for vacant space within its community properties portfolio.
- 8.2. These properties will be available to organisations delivering services primarily for the benefit of Croydon residents, and that support the priority outcomes in the VCS Strategy (see Appendix 1). Organisations will need to be properly constituted, capable of managing an asset, willing to offer space to smaller groups and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.3. The supply of council properties is insufficient for all potentially eligible VCS organisations that may need premises. The Council will therefore consider applications according to a number of criteria including:
  - The soundness of the business case for why the building or land is needed
  - The community benefit offered by the organisation
  - Local need for the service
  - Financial management and viability: VCS organisations will be asked to provide their most recent audited/checked accounts, a business plan or budget, and sources of funding.
  - Ability for the organisation to manage an asset and comply with the lease obligations.

## **9. DRAFT POLICY: RENT CHARGING FRAMEWORK**

- 9.1. It is proposed to establish a framework for charging VCS organisations market rents for council community properties, rather than peppercorn rents. Instead, subsidy will be provided through rent subsidy. This approach provides greater transparency.
- 9.2. The market rent will reflect the geographical location, the use, the physical condition and the repair liability applicable to the property. However, a market rent for a D1 (community use) property may be significantly lower than the market rent for other properties classified for alternative commercial use.
- 9.3. Although rents will be individually assessed, given the nature of Croydon's community buildings and their current occupation, it is proposed that a simplified approach be adopted:
  - Basic properties offering community activities that actively support the Council's key policies will give rise to a rental value in the region of £4 per square foot per annum (it is assumed most will fall within this category)
  - Buildings that offer more potential for third party/commercial letting will be valued at £8 per square foot per annum or higher where the property is predominantly used as office space, is in a specific geographical location commanding higher rental values (such as a town centre), or involves a use that generates a significant income.
- 9.4. Any additional income raised by moving from peppercorn rents will be utilised for the continued funding of the VCS sector, such as through rent subsidy, and the provision of council services.
- 9.5. Exceptions to the above framework will include properties such as scout sites, where, due to the restrictive nature of the use, a standard rent of £500 per annum will be applied. There will also be some instances where a volunteer group with no income is undertaking a service on behalf of the Council where it is appropriate to continue to charge a peppercorn. Where a VCS organisation is investing capital to fit out premises, the Council may agree a rent-free period in recognition of this investment.
- 9.6. There will be no change to the current rent charged where there is an existing lease or agreement that sets the rent. There will also be no change to properties that are subject to a Community Asset Transfer.

## **10. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 10.1. In proposing changes to the funding schemes, we are aware that this may have an impact on those organisations currently in receipt of the funding.
- 10.2. The Council has notified these organisations at regular points over the last 2 years of our intentions to review the scheme, and that this could impact on any future funding.

10.3. In addition, it is proposed to implement the changes to the scheme over a longer period, to ensure organisations have sufficient notice of any changes in the funding they receive.

10.4. Therefore, during 2020/21 rent subsidy and rate relief will be payable under current arrangements.

10.5. It is proposed that the policy be reported to the Cabinet meeting on 20 January 2020. If approved, the following timetable is planned.

#### **Rental subsidy**

10 February 2020	New rent subsidy scheme opens for applications
13 March 2020	Deadline for applications for rent subsidy
April 2020	Organisations notified of decisions regarding rent subsidy
1 April 2021	New rent subsidy payments begin

#### **Discretionary rate relief**

1 October 2020	New rate relief scheme opens for applications
31 October 2020	Deadline for applications for discretionary rate relief
March 2021	Organisations notified of decisions regarding discretionary rate relief
1 April 2021	New rate relief payments begin

10.6. The transition from peppercorn rents to market rents would be implemented over time from April 2021: immediately for expired leases, and in other cases, as leases expire or break clauses allow.

10.7. Allocations of council community properties will be made under the new policy from 1 April 2020, commencing with a review of leases that have expired and are holding over.

## **11. CONSULTATION**

11.1. As set out earlier in the report, the Council undertook engagement to inform the VCS Strategy that was adopted in March 2019, which in turn has informed the proposals within the draft policy.

11.2. In addition, consultation on the draft rent setting framework and policies for allocating properties, rent subsidy and rate relief was undertaken between 9 October and 19 November. The consultation included an online survey and engagement event. The consultation was promoted on the Council's Get Involved web portal and via the VCS infrastructure organisations' regular communications channels to VCS organisations across Croydon.

11.3. 21 representatives of VCS organisations and groups attended the engagement event, which was held on 1 November 2019. 63 VCS organisations responded to the online survey. Respondents to the survey included organisations that did not rent their premises from the Council (52%); did not receive rent subsidy (65%) and did not receive DRR (43%). Of those that did rent from the Council,



23% paid nil rent; and 68% did not share their premises with another VCS organisation.

11.4 Responses to the proposals were broadly positive across the board:

- **Overall policy objectives:** 67% agreed or strongly agreed with the policy objectives, and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed
- **Rent setting framework:** 51% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed method for setting rents in council community properties, and 33% neither agreed nor disagreed
- **Rent subsidy:** 70% agreed with the proposed eligibility and assessment criteria for rent subsidy, with 24% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. 57% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed grounds on which rent subsidy might be reduced or withdrawn, with 33% neither agreeing nor disagreeing
- **Renewal of lease:** 77% thought that the Council should renew the lease if a tenant organisation still met the eligibility criteria at the end of the lease
- **Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR):** 57% agreed with the proposed criteria for determining eligibility, assessing priority and awarding DRR, and 28% neither agreed nor disagreed
- **Performance monitoring:** 67% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed arrangements for performance monitoring and other arrangements, and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed
- **Implementation:** 64% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed implementation arrangements, and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

11.5 A summary of the consultation responses is set out in Appendix 2.

## 12. CONCLUSIONS

12.1. The Council is a strong contributor to the VCS in Croydon. The Council has maintained premises related support where many authorities do not offer this support.

12.2. The VCS strategy sets out our commitment to support and work in partnership with the VCS. Premises is a key issue for the sector, and the strategy set out a number of priorities and actions for the Council in relation to premises. These were about creating a more transparent process.

12.3. The Council is therefore developing a policy that provides clear eligibility and assessment criteria for:

- Allocating community properties and setting rent
- Providing rent subsidy and discretionary rate relief

12.4. A number of objectives have been included in the draft policy, and are aligned to the priorities within the VCS Strategy:

- Focus funding on VCS organisations with biggest community impact and greatest need.
- Focus funding on VCS organisations occupying council community properties
- Provide transparency on how rents are charged, subsidies are offered and council community properties are allocated.
- Spread the benefit of the funding as widely as possible, offering opportunity to organisations that have not received funding to date, while operating within the Council's budgetary constraints.

12.5. In drafting the policy proposals, the Council is seeking to offer organisations equality of opportunity to access premises and subsidies, ensure value for money and to spread the benefit as widely as possible across the VCS.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None

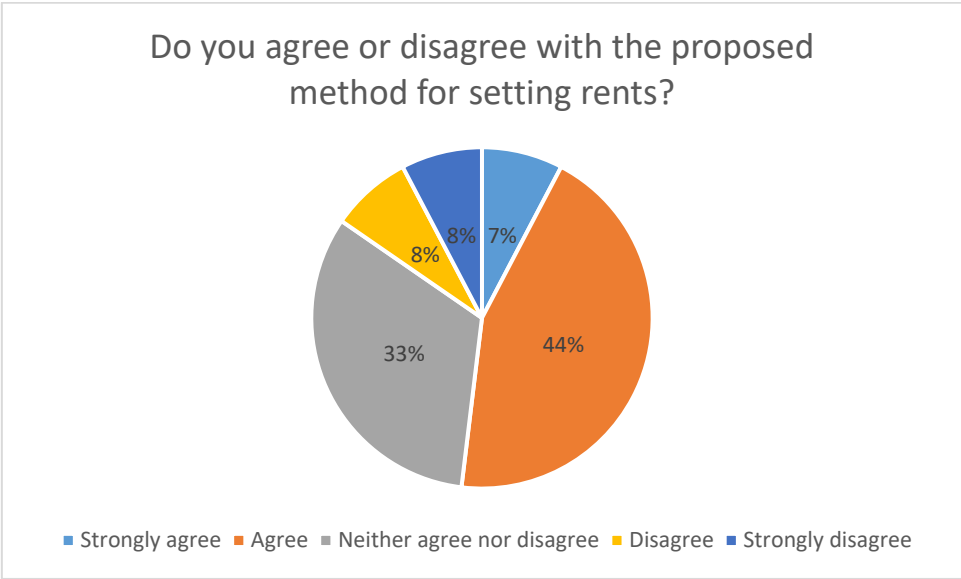
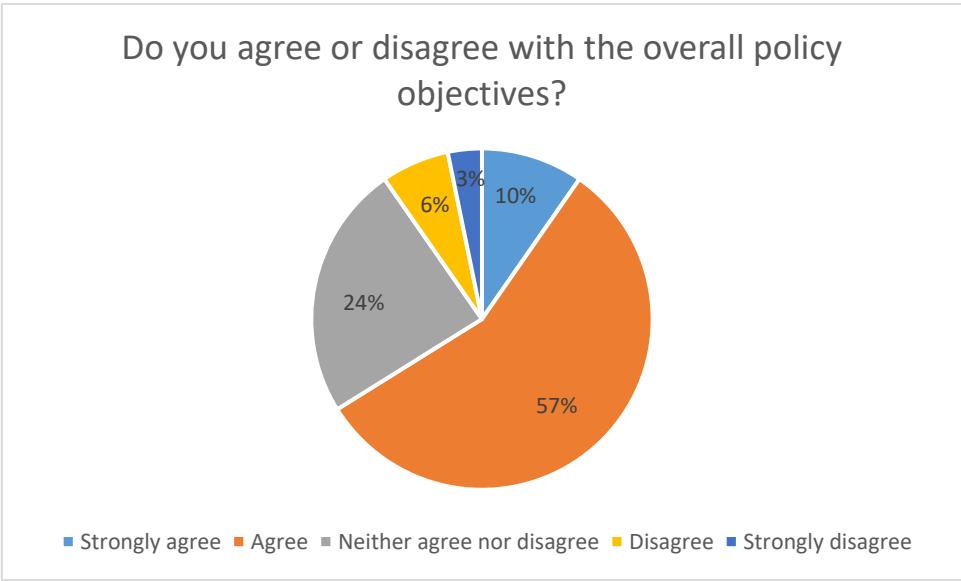
**APPENDICES:** Appendix1: Summary of Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy priorities  
Appendix 2: Summary of consultation responses  
Appendix 3: Draft Policy for allocating council community properties, setting rents and providing rent subsidy and discretionary rate relief to VCS organisations

## Appendix 1: Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy priorities

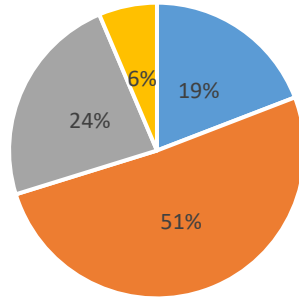
- 1. People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives. We want people to be able to stay well and to manage well. Should they need support or services they will be closer to home.**
  - a. Visible, cohesive and resilient communities
  - b. Croydon becomes a more equal place
  - c. Healthy, happy and independent lives: are lived by as many as possible for as long as possible
  - d. Access to effective health services and care services when needed
  
- 2. Our young people thrive and reach their full potential**
  - a. Children and young people in Croydon and their families are safe, healthy and happy; young people aspire to be the best they can be.
  - b. Every child and young person can access high-quality education and youth facilities
  - c. Getting more young people involved in taking part in local democracy and in tackling the issues that matter most to them
  
- 3. Access to homes and prevention of homelessness: all have the opportunity to access a suitable home and avoid homelessness, with no one forced to sleep on the streets**
  
- 4. Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood, home. We pledge to treat serious youth violence including knife crime as a public health issue**
  - a. Working in partnership to reduce crime; including serious youth violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and hate crime
  - b. Anti-social behaviour and environmental crime are reduced throughout the borough, through work with partners and local community involvement
  
- 5. Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career**
  - a. More residents can develop their skills through apprenticeships, academic and technical courses and access employment opportunities
  
- 6. We value arts, culture, sports**
  - a. Croydon's cultural offer enhances our town and creates places where people want to live, work and visit
  - b. Good, affordable and accessible sports and leisure facilities enable people to be as active and healthy as they want to be
  - c. Our parks and open spaces are safe, pleasant, thriving places where everyone can exercise and have fun

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Appendix 2: Summary of consultation responses

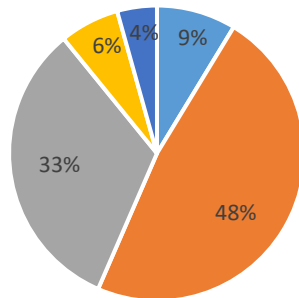


Do you agree or disagree with the proposed eligibility and assessment of criteria for rent subsidy?



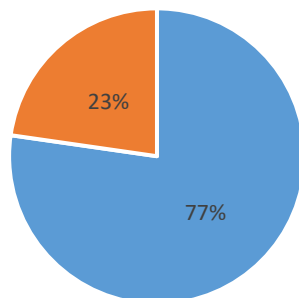
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed grounds on which rent subsidy might be reduced or withdrawn?



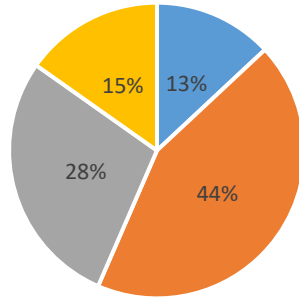
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Should the council automatically renew the lease if the tenant organisation still meets the eligibility criteria?



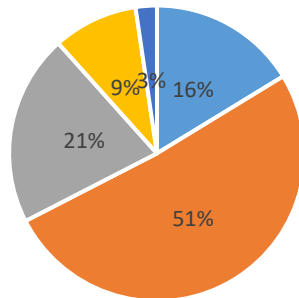
■ Yes ■ No

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed criteria for determining eligibility, assessing priority and awarding DRR?



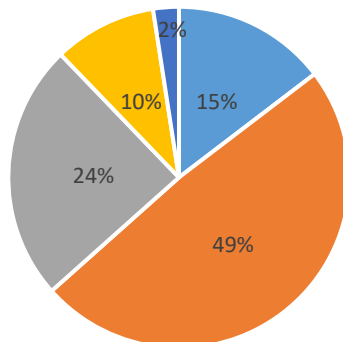
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed arrangements for performance monitoring and other conditions?



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed implementation arrangements?



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

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## Appendix 3: Draft Policy for allocating and setting rents in council community properties, and providing rent subsidy and discretionary rate relief to VCS organisations

**Adopted on DD.MM.YYYY. Review by DD.MM.YYYY**

### 1. Premises and associated subsidies for the VCS in Croydon

- 1.1 Premises are a critical area of support for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. They are also, however, an expensive resource that is often in short supply. Through the policies set out in this document, the council is determined to offer organisations equality of opportunity to access premises and subsidies and to spread the benefit as widely as possible across the VCS.

### 2. VCS STRATEGY 2019-2023

- 2.1 In March 2019 the Council adopted a [VCS Strategy](#) to provide an open and honest framework for prioritising the Council's support and resources for the VCS while working in partnership with it to deliver for Croydon.
- 2.2 This policy gives effect to the pledges in the VCS strategy for making best use of the Council's community properties:
- Develop clear criteria for allocating properties and rent subsidy, requiring organisations to support our priorities and making the sharing of premises a desirable requirement.
  - Allocate properties for a limited term; performance and the level of use of the premises will be monitored regularly.
  - Improve transparency by transitioning from peppercorn rents for community properties to market rents, with rent subsidy provided where appropriate.
  - Encourage organisations to share available space: we will amend our leases to allow occupiers to sublet to approved organisations and develop proposals in 2019/20 to facilitate the exchange of information on spaces offered and spaces sought by VCS organisations.

### 3. Overall objective of proposed policies

- 3.1 The objective of the financial assistance the Council gives to VCS organisations through the level of rent charged and the payment of Rent Subsidy and Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) is to:
- a) Focus funding on VCS organisations with the greatest community impact and need:

- organisations that support VCS Strategy priority outcomes,
  - organisations operating in areas of the greatest deprivation,
  - organisations that use their properties as intensively as is practicable, including sharing with other VCS organisations, and
  - organisations with the greatest financial need
- b) Provide transparency on how rents are charged, subsidies are offered and council community properties are allocated.
- c) Spread the benefit of the funding as widely as possible, offering opportunity to organisations that have not received funding to date, while operating within the Council’s budgetary constraints.
- d) Focus rent subsidy on organisations occupying council community properties and properties leased by the Council and sublet to VCS organisations during phase 1 (2021-2024). This transitional phase will subject existing recipients of rent subsidy to the new policy’s criteria; allow VCS organisations currently paying peppercorn rents to adjust to new market rents and apply for subsidy under the new rent subsidy policy if they are eligible; and enable other organisations currently paying unsubsidised rent for council properties to apply for assistance for the first time, without opening up the rent subsidy budget to wider demand. Subject to a review of the operation of this policy, VCS organisations renting premises from private landlords will be able to apply for rent subsidy from 2024/25 (Phase 2).

## 4. Rent charging framework for council community properties

- 4.1 A rent charging framework will be used to set market rents for council community properties, rather than peppercorn rents, with VCS tenants applying for relief through Rent Subsidy where they qualify for such relief.**
- 4.2 The market rent will reflect the geographical location, the use, the physical condition and the repair liability applicable to the property. It should be noted that a market rent for a D1 (community use) property may be significantly lower than the market rent for other properties classified for alternative commercial use.
- 4.3 Rents will be individually assessed, given the nature of Croydon’s community buildings and their current occupation, using the following approach:
- Basic properties offering community activities that actively support the Council’s key policies will give rise to a rental value in the region of £4 per square foot per annum (it is assumed most will fall within this category)

- Buildings that offer more potential for third party/commercial letting will be valued at £8 per square foot per annum or higher where the property is predominantly used as office space, is in a specific geographical location commanding higher rental values (such as a town centre), or involves a use that generates a significant income
- Exceptions include scout sites, where, due to the restrictive nature of the use, a standard rent of £500 per annum will be applied
- There will also be some instances where a volunteer group with no income is undertaking a service on behalf of the Council (for example, Friends of Shirley Windmill who run a visitors centre) where it is appropriate to charge a peppercorn.
- Where a VCS organisation is investing capital to fit out premises, the Council may agree a rent-free period in recognition of this investment.

4.4 There will be no change to the current rent charged where:

- An unexpired lease sets the rent level or peppercorn rent
- An agreement reached following negotiations between the Council and a VCS organisation includes the term that no rent will be charged (e.g. where an organisation is obliged by the Council to move to alternative premises).
- Properties are subject to a Community Asset Transfer.

4.5 The income raised by moving from peppercorn rents to market rents or other rent levels proposed will be utilised for the continued funding of the VCS sector, such as through rent subsidy, and the provision of council services.

## 5. Rent subsidy

### 5.1 Eligibility Criteria for rent subsidy

5.1.1 To be eligible, organisations should satisfy the following criteria:

a. **Eligible organisations should be:**

- Community-led
- Properly constituted, with good governance
- Capable of sustainably, legally and safely managing an asset and delivering services
- Compliant with the Equality Act 2010
- Willing to offer space (if available) and support to smaller groups.

b. **Services must be delivered primarily for the benefit of Croydon residents (more than 75% of beneficiaries must be Croydon residents)**

c. **Services must support priority outcomes of the Council's VCS Strategy:**

- People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives. We want people to be able to stay well and to manage well. Should they need support or services they will be closer to home.
- Our young people thrive and reach their full potential
- Access to homes and prevention of homelessness: all have the opportunity to access a suitable home and avoid homelessness, with no one forced to sleep on the streets
- Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood, home. We pledge to treat serious youth violence including knife crime as a public health issue
- Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career
- We value arts, culture, sports

See Appendix 1 for full details.

d. **Rent must be payable for properties owned or leased by the Council.**

e. **Where an organisation wholly or mainly sublets the premises to other organisations, the property may be eligible for rent subsidy** on condition that the subtenants are VCS organisations approved by the Council and the amount paid by the subtenant is no more than a reasonable charge to cover the tenant's costs of managing and running the building.

f. **The following organisations will be excluded from receiving Rent Subsidy:**

- Profit-making organisations including commercially run Day Care and Playgroups, as rent reduction would mask the true cost of providing care; private sector or larger organisations using the property for economic benefit (notwithstanding its D1 use class), including pre-schools and play groups (as opposed to volunteer-run mother and toddler groups), will be charged the full open market rental for the property.
- Faith groups using buildings mainly for religious services or to promote religious belief (however, faith groups providing eligible services to the wider community will not be excluded).
- Organisations providing services to a restrictive membership group (such as a social club) therefore providing no wider community benefit, unless they are fulfilling a special need within the community that the Council accepts is essential.
- Organisations whose rent is met through other council funding programmes or as part of a commissioning agreement.

## 5.2 Assessment criteria for Rent Subsidy

- 5.2.1 As the budget for Rent Subsidy will be insufficient to fund all eligible organisations, a points system will be applied to prioritise eligible applications. Additional priority will be given to eligible VCS organisations that make the most intensive use of and share their premises, to critical services, and to smaller organisations, as measured by their annual gross income (see Appendix 2 for details of points to be awarded under each of the following categories):

### Use of the property

- a. **Amount of time the building is used:** a point awarded for every morning, afternoon and evening that the premises are used for community benefit from Monday to Sunday.
- b. **Extent to which premises are shared:** Organisations that share premises with at least one other VCS organisation will be given additional priority.
  - i. Applicants will be asked to provide a list of organisations sharing the premises and evidence of the times that they use the premises.
  - ii. If it is agreed that an organisation cannot share its premises (e.g. because it supports vulnerable people with sensitive or difficult issues where privacy and anonymity are essential) with another organisation, the extra points for sharing will be awarded where appropriate so the application is not disadvantaged.

### Area of need

- c. **Deprivation and social isolation:** Organisations that deliver a service primarily in an area that ranks in the top five Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the borough for multiple deprivation will receive an additional 5 points. The rating will be taken from the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#), the official measure of relative deprivation in England. (See Appendix 3 for a map of top 5 LSOAs)

### Critical services

- d. **Extent to which an organisation is critical for achieving priority outcomes:** VCS organisations considered by the Council to provide critical services will receive additional priority if it assesses that, should the organisation cease to provide a service, a council priority outcome would not be achieved, for example:
  - if the organisation was the only one delivering a service to support a given priority outcome, or

- if the impact of an organisation ceasing to operate would have an unacceptably significant knock-on effect on the achievement of a given priority outcome.

#### Financial assessment and ability to pay

- e. **Income:** Organisations with a lower gross annual income (up to £5,000 and between £5,000 and £50,000) will be given additional priority.
  - f. **Reserves:** organisations with reserves equivalent to more than two years' operating costs will not receive funding
  - g. **Other sources of income:** Organisations with a gross annual income of more than £10,000 will be asked what steps they have taken to obtain more funding from non-council sources and be offered support to do so, if required.
- 5.2.2 VCS organisations will be asked to provide their most recent accounts, a business plan or budget (the level of detail to be proportionate to the size of the organisation), and the amount and purpose of funding currently received from the Council and other sources, to allow an assessment of the financial management and viability of the organisation and the potential impact of state aid rules (see section 9).
- 5.2.3 We want to encourage and enable VCS organisations to become less reliant on council funding. The Council's Communities Team can advise groups on obtaining funding from other sources and increasing their income, for example through crowdfunding and bid writing. In addition, the Council has commissioned VCS infrastructure organisations to provide advice and support on bid writing and fundraising.

### 5.3 Rent Subsidy payable

- 5.3.1 **Rent Subsidy will be awarded to successful applicants for a period of three years.** This offers VCS organisations financial stability.
- 5.3.2 **Rent Subsidy will be paid at a rate equivalent to up to 100% of the contractual rent, unless the subsidy is reduced because of a failure to share or sublet premises when required (see 5.3.4 and 5.3.5 below), to support council priority outcomes, or to perform effectively**
- 5.3.3 **The amount of Rent Subsidy paid will be reduced if the contractual rent is reduced.** However, due to budgetary constraints, there is no guarantee that an increase in rent during the three year period would be covered by the subsidy scheme.

- 5.3.4 Standard clauses will be inserted into leases which will include the requirement for annual monitoring of the tenant's activities and the ability to amend the Rent Subsidy should the VCS organisation not fulfil the scheme criteria. Subject to the written approval of the Council, organisations will be allowed to hire or sublet under-used parts of their premises to a VCS organisation that provides a community benefit to Croydon. This is in addition to standard clauses (already inserted in new leases since 2016) requiring tenants to make premises available free of charge for a number of hours per year to certain qualifying groups nominated by the Council or ward councillors. Refusal could reduce the level of Rent Subsidy.
- 5.3.5 Rent subsidy to organisations subletting to VCS organisations approved by the Council will not be reduced as long as they keep their charges at a level that enables them to recover no more than their reasonable costs of running and managing the building. Rent subsidy will be reduced if organisations are assessed to be making a profit from the arrangement.
- 5.3.6 In the event of the Council deciding to reduce rent subsidy within the three year funding period, the Council will give 6 months' notice of its decision, and give reasons for its decision.
- 5.3.6 VCS organisations considered to be under-utilising premises will be given 9 months to find other appropriate VCS organisation(s) to sublet the vacant or under-used part of premises to or to share the premises with, otherwise the level of rent subsidy may be reduced. The Communities Team can provide assistance in finding a suitable organisation to share with. The Council will seek to develop a web-based system to put VCS organisations and groups that have available space(s) within their premises in touch with other VCS organisations and groups that are looking for premises or space. Authorisation must be obtained from the Estates Team for subletting part of the premises, as the lease may need to be amended.

## 6. Allocation of council community properties

### 6.1 Identification of properties to be allocated

- 6.1.1 The Council's Estates Team will work closely with the VCS to identify suitable future uses for vacant space within its community properties portfolio, the appropriate route for its allocation and the terms of any lease agreement. This may be through Community Asset Transfer (CAT), competitive tender, or through discussion with specific groups identified as suitable occupiers for the space concerned. The Council will publish a list of council community premises and their lessees.
- 6.1.2 The Council will continue to consider CATs on a case by case basis for its properties. CATs transfer the council asset to the occupying VCS organisation on a long lease at a

peppercorn rent. The organisation takes on full responsibility for the cost of running the building (subject to any transitional relief arrangements). A CAT may be appropriate in specific circumstances where a council property asset is surplus to requirements, the Council considers that the VCS organisation is better placed than itself to deliver the service in question (for example, a community hall), and the transfer would enable them to benefit from grant funding available to organisations with longer leases.

## 6.2 Eligibility Criteria for the allocation of a property

6.2.1 To be eligible, organisations should satisfy the following criteria:

a. **Eligible organisations should be:**

- Properly constituted, with good governance
- Capable of sustainably, legally and safely managing an asset and delivering services
- Compliant with the Equality Act 2010
- Willing to offer space (if available) and support to smaller groups.

b. **Services must be delivered primarily for the benefit of Croydon residents**  
(more than 75% of beneficiaries must be Croydon residents)

c. **Services must support priority outcomes of the Council's VCS Strategy:**

- People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives. We want people to be able to stay well and to manage well. Should they need support or services they will be closer to home.
- Our young people thrive and reach their full potential
- Access to homes and prevention of homelessness: all have the opportunity to access a suitable home and avoid homelessness, with no one forced to sleep on the streets
- Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood, home. We pledge to treat serious youth violence including knife crime as a public health issue
- Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career
- We value arts, culture, sports

See Appendix 1 for full details.

## 6.3 Assessment criteria of priority for a property

6.3.1 As the supply of properties is insufficient for all potentially eligible VCS organisations that may need premises, the Council will consider applications according to a number of criteria including:



- The soundness of the business case for why the building or land is needed
- The community benefit offered by the organisation
- Local need for the service
- Financial management and viability: VCS organisations will be asked to provide their most recent audited/checked accounts, a business plan or budget, and sources of funding.
- Ability for the organisation to manage an asset and comply with the lease obligations.

6.3.2 Leases are excluded from the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. This means that tenants do not have an automatic right to renew the lease when it expires. The length of the lease granted by the Council depends on a number of factors including: the length of a commission agreement provided; the financial viability of the organisation; its ability to manage a property and comply with the terms of the lease; the initial investment required by the organisation to refurbish the property; and the Council's medium or long term plans for the property.

6.3.4 When the lease expires, organisations should not assume that the lease will be renewed automatically. The Council will assess whether the tenant organisation continues to meet the eligibility criteria (set out at 6.2.1) and whether it is appropriate for them to remain in occupation under a renewed lease or for the property to be offered to an alternative organisation. In considering whether to renew the lease, the Council will take into account the means by which the lease was originally acquired, for example whether it was subject to a competitive tender, whether the priorities against which eligibility was assessed at the time the property was allocated are still relevant, and the organisation's satisfactory performance, compliance with the lease and regular use of the property for purposes agreed with the Council. The Council will also consider its needs and community needs at the time the decision is made.

6.3.5 If the Council decides to not to renew the lease, it should give the lessee six months' notice.

## 7. Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) for VCS Organisations

### 7.1 Business rates relief

7.1.1 There are a [number of schemes](#) under which organisations may receive relief from national non-domestic rates (NNDR), commonly known as 'business rates'. This policy is for VCS organisations; it does not deal with other types of mandatory or discretionary rate relief, such as small business rate relief and DRR for businesses.

## 7.2 Eligibility criteria for discretionary rate relief for VCS organisations

7.2.1 DRR can be a lifeline for small VCS organisations. This policy is designed to ensure that relief is targeted at organisations that need it most, irrespective of whether they occupy a council-owned property.

7.2.2 DRR will be awarded only to community organisations eligible for mandatory rate relief which is paid at 80% of the national non-domestic rates (NNDR) charge: registered charities, community amateur sports clubs (CASCs) and Charitable Community Benefit Societies. Successful applicants will be awarded 20% top-up DRR to provide 100% relief. The property must be wholly or mainly used for activities that meet the criteria set out under 7.2.3 below.

7.2.3 As with other financial support for the VCS including the Community Fund and Rent Subsidy, organisations applying for DRR must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- a. **The organisation must qualify for mandatory 80% relief from non-domestic rates ('business rates')**
- b. **Services must be delivered for the benefit of Croydon residents (more than 75% of beneficiaries must be Croydon residents)**
- c. **Services must support priority outcomes of the Council's VCS Strategy (see Appendix 1)**
- d. **The organisation must meet requirements on governance, management and financial competence (see 10.1)**
- e. **The organisation must comply with the Equality Act 2010.**

8.2.4 The following organisations are ineligible for DRR:

- charity shops and cafés operated by trading arms of charities
- housing associations
- buildings used mainly for worship or to promote religious belief
- bodies operating a restrictive membership policy, unless they are fulfilling a special need within the community
- profit making organisations
- empty properties
- social clubs.

8.2.5 It should be noted that buildings registered for public religious worship or church halls are exempt from business rates altogether. Where possible, organisations that are not charities will be referred to the Small Business Discretionary Rates Reduction Scheme managed by the Council's Business Rates Team. This council-run,

government funded, scheme provides relief to organisations who demonstrate specific employment and economic benefits for Croydon residents. The scheme will bring in central government funding and free up the Council's DRR budget to support other organisations.

8.2.5 To qualify for the mandatory 80% Business Rates Charity Relief:

1. The ratepayer must be:

- Registered with the Charity Commission; or
- An organisation that is [specifically exempt](#) from registration with the charity commission; or
- A sports club that is registered with The Community Amateur Sports Club scheme (CASC); or
- An academy school

2. The property must be wholly or mainly used for the charitable purposes of that organisation

8.2.6 Guidance on applying for mandatory rate relief for property wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes is available [here](#). To obtain the application form click on <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/business/businessrates/reductions/relief> and scroll to the bottom of the screen for the DOWNLOAD section.

### 8.3 Award limit for discretionary rate relief

8.3.1 As the budget for DRR is limited, it is anticipated that the total relief sought by eligible organisations will exceed the budget available. Priority will be given to applications for DRR from organisations occupying properties with lower rateable values.

8.3.2 Applications from eligible organisations will be ranked according to the amount of DRR applied for (equivalent to 20% of the rateable value of the property), from lowest to highest. DRR will be allocated for properties (starting with the lowest proposed award of DRR on the list) until the budget for that year is used up.

### 8.4 Application and decision process

8.4.1 Applications for DRR will be invited annually in October. Relief will be awarded for one year. Organisations must reapply in October each year for DRR for the following financial year. Retrospective applications for rate relief, e.g. to clear rate arrears, will not be admitted.

8.4.2 VCS organisations will be asked to submit an application form, their most recent

audited/ checked accounts, the amount and purpose of funding currently received from the Council and other sources and a business plan or budget to allow an assessment of their financial management and viability.

- 8.4.3 The maximum amount of DRR paid for a property will vary each year, as it will be dependent on the number of applications received. A decision letter will be sent to the organisation by March. The DRR will be credited to its rate account in April. There will be no appeal and no further applications will be considered until the following October.
- 8.4.4 There is no way of anticipating which organisations will apply or what their rateable value will be, but under this policy eligible organisations with smaller rateable values will be more likely to receive relief than those with relatively higher values.
- 8.4.5 The allocation system prioritises smaller qualifying organisations, although there is no guarantee that an organisation will get relief two years in a row, even if its circumstances have not changed.

## 9. State Aid

- 9.1 Any award of rent subsidy or discretionary rate relief, or use of a council community property for free or at less than market price (such as a peppercorn rent) may count as state aid and must therefore comply with rules on state aid. The Council must therefore consider whether the services provided or goods traded by a VCS organisation applying for assistance under these policies have the potential to be traded across EU member states.
- 9.2 Some financial aid is allowed under the de minimis rules, if the total amount of funding received by an organisation does not cumulatively exceed €200,000 over a rolling three-year period. The application forms for rent subsidy, discretionary rate relief and council community properties will therefore require organisations to confirm all funding received over a three year period to enable the Council to assess any state aid implications.

## 10. Performance monitoring and other conditions

- 10.1 Applicants for rent subsidy, DRR or council community properties are expected to meet requirements on governance (including constitution, terms of reference or other governing document, details of the board/committee, and decision-making processes), management (including policies concerning health and safety, safeguarding, and equal opportunities, public liability insurance and monitoring arrangements) and financial competence (including latest accounts, decision-making processes and monitoring). However, the evidence required will depend on the scheme concerned, following the principle of proportionality. The requirements will

be set out in the respective application forms for rent subsidy, DRR or council community properties.

- 10.2 Continued occupancy of the property and payment of Rent Subsidy and DRR will depend on the ongoing performance of the organisation against the VCS strategy priority outcomes and the level of use of the premises. The organisation must also comply with the terms of the subsidy or relief, remain solvent and not subject to a winding up order. Rent subsidy or discretionary rate relief may be recovered if it is misused or in the event of fraudulent activity. Similarly, usage of a council community property and compliance with the terms of the lease will be monitored; the lease may be terminated in the event of a breach of the terms. Compliance with these conditions will be monitored regularly. The Council will align monitoring arrangements for rent subsidy and discretionary rate relief and where possible with grant performance monitoring.
- 10.3 The Council is committed to reducing fraud in all its forms. An organisation which tries to fraudulently apply for a council community property, rent subsidy or discretionary rate relief by falsely declaring their circumstances, or providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence. Where we suspect that such a fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated in line with the Council's Anti-Fraud Strategy. This may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.
- 10.4 The organisation should obtain user feedback on a regular basis to monitor service provision. Evidence of this will form part of the annual reviewing process and failure to satisfy this may lead to the subsidy being withdrawn.
- 10.5 Voluntary and community organisations in receipt of a Rent Subsidy or DRR will agree a statement with the Council that summarises the use of the premises and the activities linked to the subsidy and how they benefit the service provided to the residents.
- 10.6 The organisation must acknowledge the Council's assistance in literature and publicity about the work of the organisation, should a subsidy or DRR be granted.

## 11. Implementation

### 11.1 Notice of changes:

- 11.1.1 All recipients of Rent Subsidy and of DRR in 2017/18 and 2018/19 have received either emails or letters to alert them to the review of both schemes and warn that the new schemes when implemented will be competitive with no guarantee of funding.

11.1.2 VCS organisations are advised to plan for the reduction or end of any rent subsidy they receive and to treat rent payable as a core cost when applying for any funding.

## 11.2 Implementation arrangements:

11.2.1 It is recommended that allocations of council community properties be made under the new policy from 1 April 2020, commencing with a review of leases that have expired and are holding over.

11.2.2 The new policies for Rent Subsidy and DRR should be implemented from 1 April 2021.

11.2.3 The transition from peppercorn rents to market rents should be implemented over time from 1 April 2021 as leases expire and are renegotiated. When break clauses allow it, leases will be brought to an end in order to renegotiate the terms. Where leases have expired and are being held over, a market rent will be charged from 1 April 2021.

11.2.4 The new Rent Subsidy scheme will be limited for three years to VCS organisations renting properties owned or leased by the Council. This will provide scope for supporting VCS organisations moving from peppercorn rents to market rents and those already paying rent in council properties who have not yet had the opportunity to apply for rent subsidy, as well as those already receiving rent subsidy. The operation of the scheme will be reviewed early in 2022/23. Subject to the outcome of the review, a decision will be taken on whether to open the scheme to organisations renting in the private sector from 2023/4.

## 11.3 Implementation timetable

- VCS organisations had the opportunity to comment on these proposals for 6 weeks from 9 October to 19 November 2019. Consultation responses were considered and the proposals amended accordingly.
- It is proposed to take this to Cabinet for consideration on 20 January 2020.
- If approved on 20 January 2020, the new Rent Subsidy scheme would open on 10 February 2020 for applications for rent subsidy for the three year period (April 2021 to March 2024). Applications would close on 13 March 2020, giving organisations 5 weeks to apply. VCS organisations would be notified of decisions on rent subsidy for 2021/24 in April 2020.
- Council community properties would be allocated under the new policy from 1 April 2020, starting with a review of expired leases that are holding over.
- Applications under the new scheme for DRR for the financial year 2021/22 would be invited in October 2020. Decisions would be announced in March 2021.
- Rent Subsidy would be payable under the new policy from 1 April 2021, giving organisations a full 11 months to prepare for any changes to their funding.

- The transition from peppercorn rents to market rents would be implemented from 1 April 2021: immediately for expired leases, and in other cases, as leases expire or break clauses allow.
- During 2020/21 Rent Subsidy and DRR will be payable under current arrangements.

## Appendix 1: VCS Strategy Priorities

- 7. People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives. We want people to be able to stay well and to manage well. Should they need support or services they will be closer to home.**
  - e. Visible, cohesive and resilient communities
  - f. Croydon becomes a more equal place
  - g. Healthy, happy and independent lives: are lived by as many as possible for as long as possible
  - h. Access to effective health services and care services when needed
  
- 8. Our young people thrive and reach their full potential**
  - d. Children and young people in Croydon and their families are safe, healthy and happy; young people aspire to be the best they can be.
  - e. Every child and young person can access high-quality education and youth facilities
  - f. Getting more young people involved in taking part in local democracy and in tackling the issues that matter most to them
  
- 9. Access to homes and prevention of homelessness: all have the opportunity to access a suitable home and avoid homelessness, with no one forced to sleep on the streets**
  
- 10. Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood, home. We pledge to treat serious youth violence including knife crime as a public health issue**
  - c. Working in partnership to reduce crime; including serious youth violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, and hate crime
  - d. Anti-social behaviour and environmental crime are reduced throughout the borough, through work with partners and local community involvement
  
- 11. Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career**
  - b. More residents can develop their skills through apprenticeships, academic and technical courses and access employment opportunities
  
- 12. We value arts, culture, sports**
  - b. Croydon's cultural offer enhances our town and creates places where people want to live, work and visit
  - c. Good, affordable and accessible sports and leisure facilities enable people to be as active and healthy as they want to be
  - d. Our parks and open spaces are safe, pleasant, thriving places where everyone can exercise and have fun



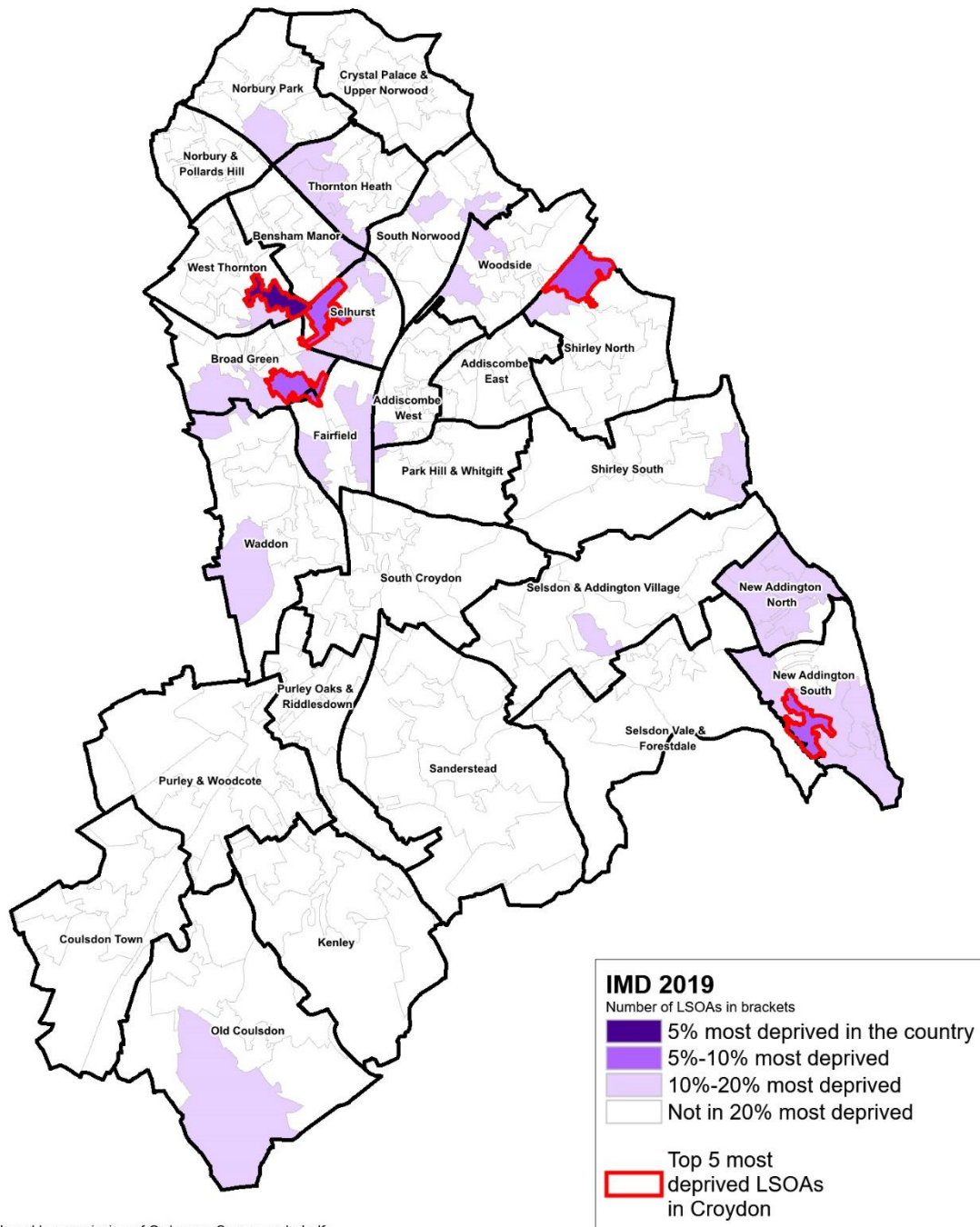
## Appendix 2 Assessment and scoring scheme for Rent Subsidy Assessment (an application form will be developed)

Preliminary Questions			
1	Has the organisation provided all the evidence requested in the application form? Does evidence provided demonstrate that the organisation meets the Council's eligibility criteria? a. Is it community led? b. Is it properly constituted, with good governance? (10.1) c. Is it capable of sustainably, legally and safely managing an asset and delivering services? d. Does it comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010? e. Is it willing to offer space (if available) and support to other groups?	Yes to all questions (carry on to question 2)	No (organisation is not eligible for this support)
2	What proportion of the people benefitting from the organisation's services live in the London Borough of Croydon?	75% or more (carry on to question 3)	0-84% (organisation is not eligible for this support)
3	Do the organisation's services support priority outcomes of the VCS Strategy?	Yes <b>X</b> (carry on to question 4)	No (organisation is not eligible for this support)
4	Does the organisation occupy a council-owned building or a building leased by the Council?	Yes <b>X</b> (carry on to question 5)	No (organisation is not eligible for this support in 2021/24)
5	Has the organisation provided its most recent accounts?	Yes <b>X</b> (carry on to question 6)	No (organisation is not eligible for this support)
6	Has the organisation provided a budget or business plan?	Yes <b>X</b> (carry on to question 7)	No (organisation is not eligible for this support)
7	Is the amount of reserves equal to or greater than two years of the organisation's operating costs? a. Amount of operating costs b. Gross annual income	No (carry on to question 8 a. <b>Amount</b> b. <b>Amount</b> )	Yes (organisation is not eligible for this support)
8	Organisation should list sources of funding to be received over the three years (2021/24) from Croydon Council, stating <b>the amount, funding programme and purpose; and any contracts with the Council, what the contract is for, the term and the value</b>	<b>Amount</b>	Funding programme Purpose
9	Organisation should list the sources of funding to be received over the three years (2021/24) from other	<b>Amount</b>	Funding programme

	sources stating <b>the amount, organisation/ funding programme and purpose.</b>		Purpose
10	If the organisation's gross annual income is £10,000 or more, what steps has the organisation taken to obtain more funding from non-council sources?	Fund raising measures attempted	
11	What is the annual rent?	Amount	
12	How much is the organisation seeking from Rent Subsidy each year?	Amount	
<b>Scored Questions</b>			Score
13	On average, how many mornings a week is the building in use?		(0 – 7)
14	On average, how many afternoons a week is the building in use?		(0 – 7)
15	On average, how many evenings a week is the building in use?		(0 – 7)
16	Does the organisation share any space with other users? (if yes, details are required) (If sharing is not possible, give reasons)		(No = 0, Yes = 5)
17	Is the organisation delivering a service primarily in an area that ranks in the top five Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the borough for multiple deprivation (according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation)?		Yes – 5 No - 0
18	Is the Council satisfied the organisation critical for achieving a council priority outcome? a. Is the organisation the only one delivering a service to support a priority outcome? b. Would the organisation ceasing to operate have an unacceptably significant impact on the achievement of a priority outcome?		Yes – 40 No - 0
19	Organisation's gross annual income: £ Is the gross income low (up to £5k), medium (up to £50k) or high (over £50k)?	Amount	(low = 10, med = 5, high = 0)
<b>Maximum total points awarded</b>			81

## Appendix 3

### Indices of Deprivation 2019 Croydon Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)



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# Policy for council community properties, rent subsidy and rate relief

**Councillor Hamida Ali**

Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities

17 December 2019

# Introducing a fair, open and transparent policy

1. *Context, objectives and drivers*
2. Summary of policy proposals
3. Timetable and next steps
4. Discussion points

## Current context

- Premises are critical for VCS, but expensive
- Suitable, affordable premises in short supply
- Council provides more than £0.5m a year in premises support
- Council committed to maintain support for VCS
- New VCS Strategy adopted in March 2019



# Why change?

- No formal policy or procedure in place
- Funding awarded based on historical decisions
- No opportunity for new organisations to apply
- VCS organisations want transparency, guidelines, criteria



# Objectives

- Focus funding on VCS organisations with
  - most community impact; and
  - greatest need
- Provide transparency
- Spread funding as widely as possible
- Rent subsidy, at least until 2024, available to organisations in council owned properties

1. Context, objectives and drivers
2. *Summary of policy proposals*
3. Timetable and next steps
4. Discussion points

## Rent subsidy: £276k pa

- Introduces open, transparent process, clear criteria
- Gives financial sustainability – 3 year funding
- Open to organisations in council owned properties
  - Option to widen to any property in 2024 (review)
- Exclusions include profit making organisations, faith groups (where mainly used for religious purposes), restrictive memberships

## Rent subsidy: priority criteria

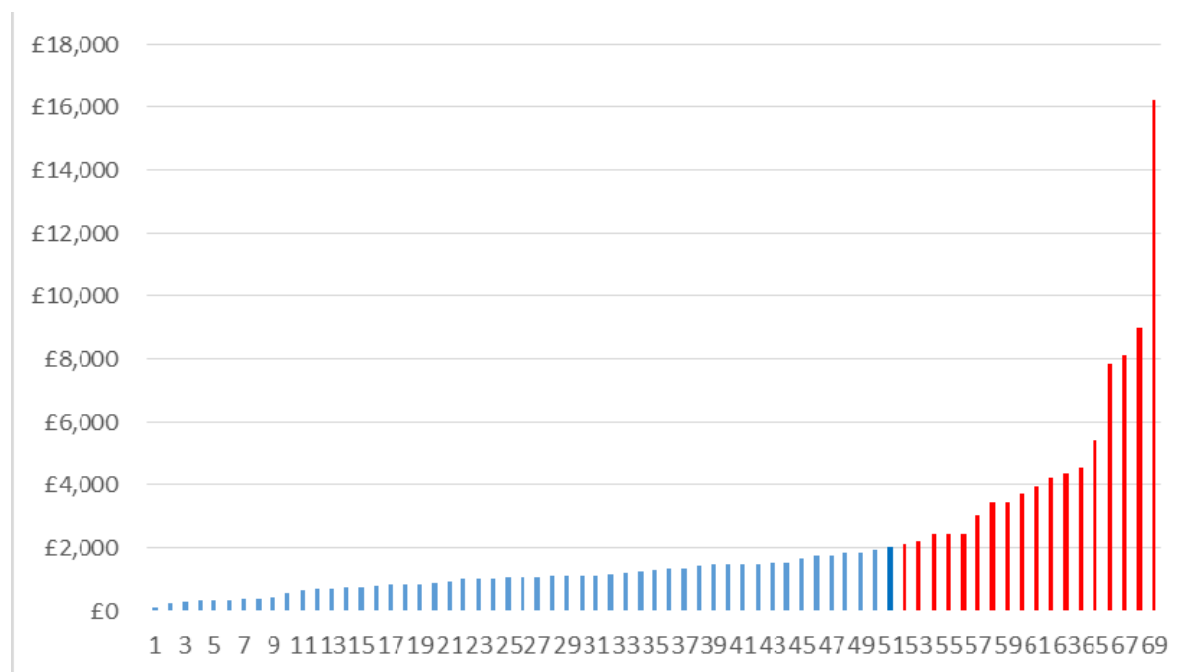
- Targeting funding for buildings / organisations that:
  - Frequently used / shared
  - Delivering against priority outcomes in VCS strategy
  - Delivering in areas of need
  - Delivering critical services
  - Lower levels of funding / reserves

## **Discretionary business rate relief: £157k pa**

- Introducing open, transparent process, clear criteria
  - Annual application
  - Only those eligible for mandatory (80%) relief
  - Croydon based and services benefit of Croydon residents
- 
- Same exclusions as rent subsidy, plus charity trading arms, housing associations, empty properties

# Discretionary rate relief: allocation

- Targeting funding for buildings with lower rateable values (favours smaller organisations)
- Allocate to organisations until budget fully allocated



# Property allocation and rent

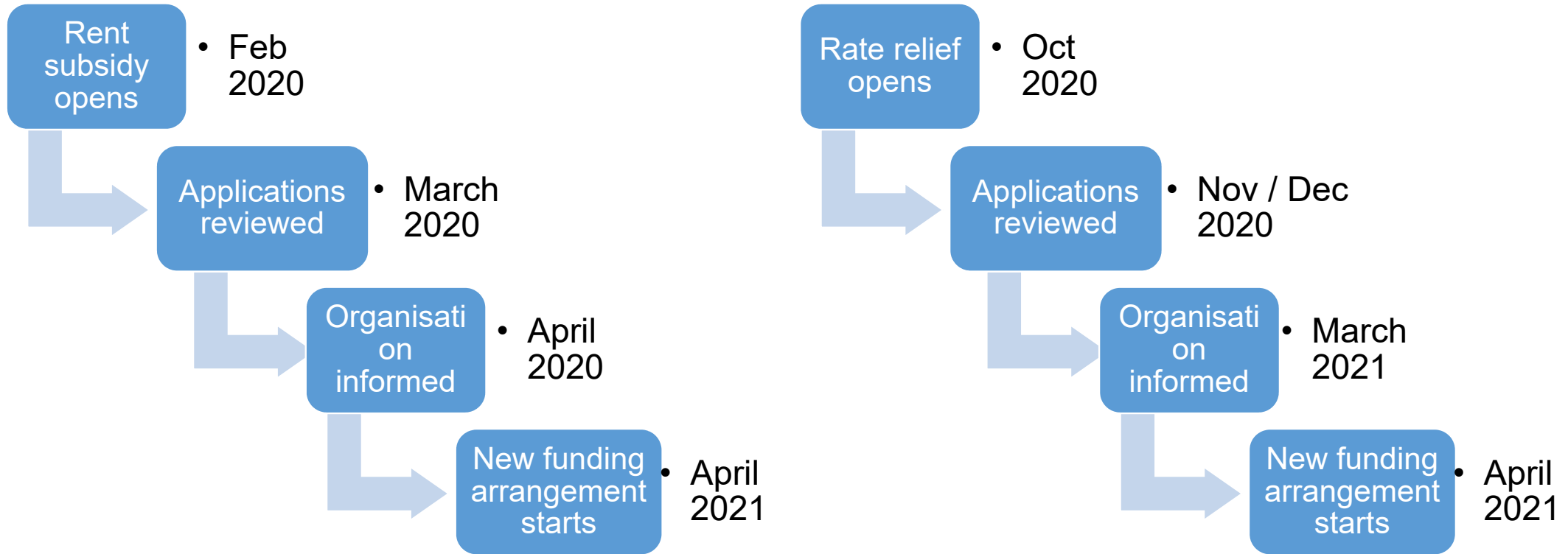
- Clarity on priorities for our building allocations
- Publicise availability
- Invite business cases
- New rent setting framework – fair and consistent
- Income from additional rent will fund VCS rent subsidy – open and transparent
- Criteria for reviewing occupancy at end of lease



1. Context, objectives and drivers
2. Summary of policy proposals
3. *Timetable and next steps*
4. Discussion points

# Proposed timetable

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1. Context, objectives and drivers
2. Summary of policy proposals
3. Timetable and next steps
4. *Discussion points*

Welcome comments, questions on policy, eligibility and criteria

Two areas where feedback is particularly sought.....

# Discretionary business rate relief

- Difficult to give early decision
  - Rates 'multiplier' not set until February
  - Rates subject to revaluation (e.g. in 2021)
- Therefore intend to inform organisations in March
  - Provides definitive decision – but late
- Could take decision based on previous rates bill
  - Earlier decision – but organisation will have to top up

# Eligibility

- **Rent subsidy:** Proposal to exclude profit making organisations
  - This will exclude social enterprises and (profit making) cooperatives
- If allow social enterprise / cooperatives, should there be any exclusions?
- **Rate relief:** only eligible to organisations receiving 80% relief, so social enterprises would be excluded

# Thank you

**Councillor Hamida Ali**

Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities

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# Agenda Item 8

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>STREETS ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE</b> <b>17 December 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Simon Trevaskis, Senior Democratic Service and Governance Officer- Scrutiny</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	The Work Programme is scheduled for consideration at every ordinary meeting of the Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub - Committee.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	To consider any additions, amendments or changes to the agreed work programme for the Committee in 2019/20.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This agenda item details the Committee's work programme for the 2019/20 municipal year.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee has the opportunity to discuss any amendments or additions that it wishes to make to the work programme.

## 2. WORK PROGRAMME

### 2.1 The work programme

The proposed work programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Members are asked to note that the lines of enquiry for some items have yet to be confirmed and that there are opportunities to add further items to the work programme.

### 2.2 Additional Scrutiny Topics

Members of the Sub-Committee are invited to suggest any other items that they consider appropriate for the Work Programme. However, due to the time limitations at Committee meetings, it is suggested that no proposed agenda contain more than two items of substantive business in order to allow effective scrutiny of items already listed.

### 2.3 **Participation in Scrutiny**

Members of the Sub-Committee are also requested to give consideration to any persons that it wishes to attend future meetings to assist in the consideration of agenda items. This may include Cabinet Members, Council or other public agency officers or representatives of relevant communities.

## **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Sub-Committee is recommended to agree the Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20 with any agreed amendments.

3.2 The Sub-Committee is recommended to agree that topic reports be produced for relevant substantive agenda items in the future.

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### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Stephanie Davis  
Democratic Services and Governance  
Officer- Scrutiny  
020 8726 6000 x 84384

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

None

### **APPENDIX 1**

Work Programme 2019/20 for the Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

## Streets, Environment and Homes Sub-Committee

Meeting Date	Item
2 July 2019	1. Update from Rail Service Providers
1 October 2019	1. Question Time: Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon 2. South London Waste Partnership Annual Review 3. Update on the Grounds Maintenance Service To include the outcomes of Service Review
17 December 2019	1. Sustainable Croydon, to include Climate Change and Air Quality 2. Housing and Homeless Strategy 3. Pre-Decision: Policy for Rental subsidy, rate relief and rents for community buildings
4 February 2020	1. Question Time: Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services 2. Annual Review of Brick by Brick 3. Budget options for the Housing Revenue Account 4. Responsive Repairs Contract
17 March 2020	1. Public Realm Improvement & Parks and Place Strategy 2. Review of Local Plan ( Community led neighbourhood plan) 3. Public Realm Masterplan 4. Question Time: Cabinet Members for Environment, Transport & Regeneration 5. Update on Selective Licensing Scheme
28 April 2020	1. Housing ( Topic TBC) 2. Climate Change Emergency 3. Housing strategy – post consultation

Others items to be considered for scheduling in the work programme:

1. Review of Housing Maintenance Contract
2. Affordable Homes Programme
3. Accommodation and Assets Strategy
4. Fire Safety
5. Smart City (Covered under digital Strategy?)
6. Play Strategy

