

Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub- Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Chair)
Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Jamie Audsley, Luke Clancy, Stephen Mann, Vidhi Mohan and
Caragh Skipper

Reserve Members: Jan Buttinger, Robert Canning, Jerry Fitzpatrick,
Karen Jewitt, Michael Neal, Oni Oviri and David Wood

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday, 29 September 2020** at **6.30 pm**. **This meeting will be held remotely.**

Jacqueline Harris Baker
Council Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Stephanie Davis
020 8726 6000 x84384
stephanie.davis@croydon.gov.uk
www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
Monday, 21 September 2020

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020 8726 6000 x84384 as detailed above.

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 (Pages 5 - 20)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 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. Croydon Climate Crisis Commission (Pages 21 - 30)

To receive an update on the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission.

6. Planning for the future: White Paper (Pages 31 - 36)

To discuss the key elements of the governments 'Planning for the Future' White Paper and the planning implications for Croydon.

7. 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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Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 4 February 2020 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

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

Also Present: Councillor Andrew Pelling
Councillor Sean Fitzsimons
Councillor Alison Butler, Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services
Rose Marie Louis, Service Development and Strategic Projects Manager
John Montes, Senior Strategy Officer
Yvonne Murray, Director of Housing
Julia Pitt, Director of Gateway
Lorraine Smout, Head of Responsive Repairs
Caroline Toogood, Head of Strategic Projects and Growth
Felicia Wright, Head of Finance
Saheed Ullah, Head of Capital Delivery for Homes and Schools, Council
Homes, District and Regeneration.

Apologies: Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury sent his apologies, Councillor Andrew Pelling was in attendance in his absence.

PART A

1/20 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

2/20 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

3/20 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

The Chair announced that the running order of business had been changed and the items would be heard in an order different to those published which would be:

1. Cabinet Member Question Time
2. Housing Revenue Account

3. Axis Responsive Contract Review
4. Brick by Brick Business Plan 2020/21

4/20 Cabinet Member Question Time: Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services

The Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services, Councillor Alison Butler gave a presentation, during which the following points were noted:

- The vision for the service was that everyone deserved a decent home.
- There was ongoing work to further reduce the amount of families residing in temporary accommodation with a review of supply conducted for both the private sector and council temporary accommodation.
- As part of the reduction of use of private sector homes, the further purchase/lease of properties had been conducted in the past year in order to increase the supply of council accommodation.
- Extensive work had been carried out on fire safety, with the installation of sprinklers on all taller council blocks as well as sheltered blocks.
- The department was currently working through the implications of the 'Hackett Review', with proposals to be drawn up after consultation.
- There had been reorganisation across council departments which meant the departments now sat across divisions between Adults and Health as well as Place department.

Following the presentation the Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions on the content of the report and the information provided during the presentation.

In response to a Member question about whether the purchase of street properties would help to drive down costs associated with Temporary Accommodation (TA) housing, the Cabinet Member advised that the aim of purchasing the 100 properties was to place people who had been in temporary accommodation. The priority for the department was to increase Council owned properties which would drive down TA costs, as well as provide better security and standards for people approaching the Council as homeless.

A Member commented that there was lack of data in the report on other Local Authorities (LA) that utilised Croydon TA which would be useful for the planning of school places and increased use of amenities and health services. The Cabinet Member advised that when families were placed in Croydon, the information was passed on as a duty of care, but this was not always the case for single homeless placements. The Council was working with London

Councils to mitigate the use of cross borough placements and encourage more use of TA by host boroughs.

It was commented that there had been a significant dip in housing expenditure which had subsequently risen again and it was questioned what the movement in the graphs represented. The Cabinet Member said that the momentum in the graphs represented transfers of costs from one part of the service to another, whilst there may have been a reduction in one area of service, there had also been notable demands in others at different stages. In 2019/20 there had been an increased demand for TA properties which had resulted in the Council attempting to purchase more properties in order to offset costs that would have been spent in the private sector. Increased demand for larger homes had also added to costs.

The Impact of Universal Credit (UC) on costs for TA was questioned, as well as the increasing challenges for the department in mitigating adverse experiences for families. Officers said that there had been cost implications experienced from increased demand which was attributed to a raft of welfare reforms and not limited to UC. Preventative work was being done to target families impacted as they were more likely to require statutory services such as homelessness services.

The importance of targeted work was highlighted by officers, with steps being taken through London Councils to obtain access to data including lobbying for access to Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) held data in order to increase continued intervention work and targeting families locally.

In response to a question on the impact of Article 4 on the need for TA and whether there would be increased risk of homelessness as a result, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council was making sure that they reviewed and assessed the situation on an ongoing basis. Article 4 would not prevent HMO's but smaller HMO's would have to apply for permission through the planning process, with contingency within planning rules to ensure that specified standards were adhered to. The issues with HMO's were mainly in how they were managed.

The Cabinet Member was asked to define affordable housing to which she responded that 80% of market rate was a government definition and not what Croydon would define as affordable. Through the housing strategy the Council had been working to identify what this meant in Croydon as it was clear that affordable housing should be relative to people's incomes and not market rent.

It was envisaged that some properties from the Brick by Brick development, especially those that came through in the first instance and any that sat within the Croydon affordable homes scheme would be priced within 65% of market rate to enable those on benefits to access them without exceeding the local housing allowance.

A further question was raised on the delivery of Brick by Brick homes, specifically how many had been delivered and if the schemes were on target.

The Cabinet Member advised that the projects were on target despite challenges with the economy which had been problematic for private developers. The company was set up in 2016 and had gone through the natural process of setting up, looking for sites and commencing building and had now delivered its first cohort of homes in what was determined to be reasonable timescales.

It was asked what was being done to capture the profile of housing requirements of those in greatest need in light of a situation where the mix of builds on 1/2/3 bedroom properties which were currently in demand. Officers confirmed that a general housing needs dashboard was produced on a regular basis which highlighted current housing needs. One of the work streams identified as part of the Housing Strategy was to work with the Adult and Children's departments on the housing element of their services in order to pull together an overall picture of circumstances. This would better enable predictions and analysis of trends in future housing need, allowing services to better prepare and respond to the changing needs of the borough.

It was asked whether the Council had considered becoming a registered provider in light of Section 106, the Cabinet member informed the Sub-Committee that the Council had and continued to consider this but mainly for supported accommodation and in order to be in a position to secure more appropriate funding for supported accommodation services.

A Member asked what the key risks associated with the Localities model were and if there had been a communications programme to raise awareness. Officers said that the delivery of the service presented the most risk. The first pilot of the scheme was in New Addington and the success of that scheme was the basis of the extension of the model to other parts of the borough. The service had to be mindful to deliver services appropriately by targeting people/families that had been identified through other services as being in greatest or priority need. Additionally input from the local community and voluntary sector was vital to the success of the scheme and both sectors were keen to work with the Council to improve outcomes for local residents.

A Member asked what was being done to improve instances of missed bin collection for Council blocks. The Cabinet Member agreed that that level of missed bin collection for tower blocks had been unsatisfactory and the Head of Tenancy was working extensively with Veolia on immediate improvement measures by reviewing and assessing current practice and processes.

A Member asked what contingency plan was in place in the event that the Council was unable to secure permission from the Secretary of State on the renewal and extension of the Selective Licensing Scheme. The Cabinet Member said that it was hoped that the application would be acceptable and resolved ahead of the expiration of the current scheme. If permission was not granted, the Council would still have responsibly for private rented and could continue with the resources in place, whilst resubmitting an application to the Secretary of State to get the scheme approved.

A Member asked what the Council's response was to the growing list of materials identified as risks and the quality of buildings coming forward. Officers said that extensive work was being carried out and followed up on developments across the borough, with risk assessments carried out on over 50 blocks to date. When conducting risk assessments, the department had to consider the whole construction of the block, not just the list of identified materials that posed a risk but any other contributing factors and hazards.

In response to a further question about the impact of the cost for installing sprinklers in middle housing blocks on the budget would be, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council would want to have sprinklers in middle and lower blocks and have campaigned and lobbied alongside other LA's for funding from the government.

At the conclusion of this item the Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for their attendance at the meeting and their engagement with the Sub-Committee's questions.

In reaching its recommendations, the Sub-Committee came to the following **conclusions**:

1. The Sub-Committee commended the report, particularly the level of detail provided on all the services under the Cabinet Members' portfolio.
2. The Sub-Committee praised the extensive level of evidence gathered on the Council's Landlord Licensing scheme by the Housing Service in developing its submission to the Secretary of State and recognised that there were significant risks should there be a negative outcome of the review.
3. The Sub-Committee endorsed the engagement of the Housing Service with the voluntary sector on the Localities Programme pilots. The support shown from various partners for the Localities Model was also welcomed, with it recognised that there was a strong commitment to successfully work together for the benefit of the most vulnerable residents in the borough.
4. The Sub-Committee warmly welcomed the work by the Housing Service in lobbying the Department of Works and Pensions for access to their data in order to enable the Council to identify vulnerable residents at an early stage and agreed that there was scope for elected Members to add their voices to the lobbying.
5. The department to have sight of the impact to temporary housing stock if there was a sudden increase of street properties purchased under Right to Buy scheme

The Sub-Committee resolved to **recommend** to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services that:-

1. In the event that the Secretary of State refused to extend the Council's Landlord Licencing scheme or decided to reduce the scope of the existing scheme, the Sub-Committee recommends that a contingency plan is prepared for use during the re-submission period to ensure minimal disruption.
2. That the approach used by the Housing Service in engaging with the voluntary and community sector be developed and used as the Localities Programme expands to other areas of the borough.
3. That Cabinet Members lobby the Department of Work and Pensions to provide the Council with access to their data, to support the Council's work with vulnerable residents.

5/20 Axis Responsive Repairs Contract Review

The Head of Responsive Repairs introduced the report and the following was noted:

- The contract with Axis Europe PLC commenced in April 2014 and was current in the sixth year of an initial seven year term.
- As part of the contract review process, performance, costs, resident feedback, service delivery and risks were all being evaluated. Additionally an ongoing joint review of any housing related contracts that were due for extension or re-procurement was taking place.
- Contractor reviews took place on a monthly basis with performance reported on a quarterly basis to the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services.
- The providers KPI performance was benchmarked against other providers and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Customer satisfaction with the repairs service had improved.
- There had been some increase in complaints over the last two years of the contract, but performance on complaints throughout the contract period had been below the challenging targets.
- Missed appointments had been identified as an area of improvement as part of the review process that was taking place.

The Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions on the content of the report.

A Member commented that the 10% figure for follow up inspections appeared to be low and questioned whether this was typical in comparison to other local authorities and whether the information gathered was reliably provided a true reflection of the service. The officer confirmed that to conduct inspections on more than 10% of the 65,000 repairs carried out each year was not feasible with the available resources. The focus of follow up inspections was on

chargeable works and larger repairs. 100% of void properties and roofing works were also inspected. It was noted that the 10% of follow up inspections was an increase on previous years.

In response to a comment that the figure of 65,000 repairs per year appeared to be high, it was highlighted that this figure had decreased from approximately 72000 in previous years. The focus for contractors was to ensure that works were completed to high standards as it was costly for them to conduct repeat visits.

In response to questions on how easily it was for residents to report repairs and waiting times for the completion of works, it was advised that residents were able to log repairs online, via email and also by telephoning the contact centre. There was also an app available which allowed for pictures to be uploaded. The average wait for the completion of a repair was 6 days and for complex work it could be up to 6 weeks. Feedback from residents was that it was important that jobs are not closed out until fully completed and this was continuously fed back to the contractor.

A Member commented on the KPI comparison methods used and asked why client by client comparison was used with specific local authorities and housing associations rather than a cross London approach. The officer advised that this method was preferable as they were able to gain access to a range of social housing data following visits with the LA's mentioned who had similar stock to Croydon. They attended quarterly meetings which allowed for conversations and discussions to take place. They were also trying to align with London Councils to provide further opportunities for more in-depth benchmarking to take place.

It was expressed that the detail contained in the report was very encouraging, with fewer complaints regarding the contractor.

Questions were raised on the extent of sub-contracting by Axis and the extent of monitoring conducted to ensure high standards and good performance. Additionally, whether this was to local businesses and if there was a requirement for the sub-contractors to pay the London Living Wage.

The officer confirmed that Axis sub-contracted a small percentage of its work to local small businesses which were employed due to the level of expertise needed to complete certain jobs. Sub-contractors were routinely monitored and removed from jobs as needed in accordance to complaints received. Axis did expect and require sub-contractors to pay the London Living Wage.

In response to a Member comment that Appendix 4 of the complaints summary showed a reduction in the number of jobs completed but complaints as a percentage of jobs completed had increased, the officer advised that the number of jobs completed fluctuated seasonally and the end of year report did not reflect this. There had been a slight increase in complaints due to gas jobs, which was unusual and as a result a full review had been conducted which highlighted that the complaints were as a result of repeat jobs. The

Council had reviewed the service to ensure that all necessary equipment was now in stock.

At the conclusion of this item the Chair thanked the officers for their attendance at the meeting and their engagement with the Sub-Committee and questions.

In reaching its recommendations, the Sub-Committee came to the following **conclusions**:

1. The information and data provided in the report was very encouraging, with reassurance taken from the reduction in the number of complaints received from some wards in the borough.
2. The Sub-Committee commended the work of officers in analysing the complaints received to identify trends and their work with partners and the contractor to develop and implement solutions to these trends.
3. The Sub-Committee concluded that the contract management of Axis by officers was good. In particular the benchmarking of contractual performance data with that of other local authorities and the well informed analysis provided from this was welcomed.
4. The Sub-Committee hoped to continue to see the service improvement outlined above, when it next reviewed the Responsive Repairs contract.
5. The Sub-Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to be consulted on the procurement options at the review point of Responsive Repairs contract.

The Sub-Committee resolved to **recommend** to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services that consultation with the Sub-Committee be built into the procurement process when the contract was next reviewed.

6/20 Brick by Brick Business Plan 2020/21

The Chief Executive of Brick by Brick presented their business plan, with a summary of the report given, during which the following was noted:

- A working draft of the paper was presented to the Sub-Committee with a number of figures including market analysis which impacted upon forecasting due to be updated prior to presentation of the report at Cabinet.
- Brick by Brick, had been set up to deliver new homes across variety of tenures with a view to returning a profit from development activity which would be returned to the Council on a 100% basis and used to fund other activities in the borough as needed.

- Achievements in 2019/20 included completion of 90 homes across five different sites, 62 of which were reserved for private sales and would achieve a good return despite the current economic climate. There were also 290 homes across 11 sites envisaged to be completed within the next four to six months.
- There were 33 more proposed sites which would deliver between 600-800 homes depending on planning permission.
- The company focus for the 2020/21 business plan was on sustainability, which was different from previous business plans. The company strived to be a leader of the 'one planet living action plan' by adopting its principles as well as working to complete and be audited on set priorities.

The Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions on the content of the report.

A Member enquired about the financial relationship between the Council and Brick by Brick as the Council was a sole lender with an agreement on borrowing which was made up of 75% debt and 25% equity. The officer explained that the Council was a sole lender to Brick by Brick which was deliberate as it enabled all monies generated to be spent solely in the borough. Brick by Brick would pay a high rate on its debt, the equity element would go into shared capital.

It was asked what had prevented the completion of the 414 homes for 2020 as proposed in the 2019/2020 business plan. The officer stated that it had been anticipated that more homes would have been delivered as projected but there had been difficulties with some sites not coming forward as quickly as expected, as a result 90 homes had been delivered with 240 further homes set to complete within the next 4 months.

Clarity was sought on how decisions were made to develop one site over another. The officer said that each site went through a decision making process, with detailed site analysis and access taken into consideration.

It was further asked what community based consultation and engagement was undertaken following site identification, prior to development. Officers said that public consultation was undertaken where appropriate, individual dialogue took place with the community including discussions with Councillors and Ward Members. The board had evaluated suggested sites for possible development, highlighting any identifiable issues many years prior to the commencement of work.

There was concern that often, residents only awareness of development of a site was when they received a letter and it was suggested that Brick by Brick should explore other avenues of engagement. Additionally their approach to consultation and engagement needed to be clear, with feedback from

residents carefully considered. Officers said they were open to and always exploring different ways to improve engagement and that public events as well as the use of social media were utilised to inform the public of site development ahead of letters being sent to residents.

It was asked if details on value for money and individual projects costs could be shared or made public. Officers advised the Sub-Committee that this could not be made public due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information. Information related to the costs of every scheme was provided to the Council in its position as a full shareholder. Information could not be shared beyond this remit as it could impact the Council's business of commercial confidentiality,

Whilst the Sub-Committee acknowledged that information related to costs could not be made public due to the confidential and commercially sensitive nature of the request, Members were not convinced that the information could not be provided to the Sub-Committee. The Chair and the Sub-Committee agreed to explore how this information could be made available to Scrutiny.

A Member questioned how independent in its operations Brick by Brick was from the Council and how much oversight the Council had on procurement and contracts. The officer confirmed that the Council was not involved in the operations of Brick by Brick and the procurement of contracts took place in accordance to Brick by Brick's internal processes which was reported in the business plan.

There was concern highlighted at the level of missing information in the report presented for Scrutiny and that this draft could have included information that would have been available at the time the report was produced.

It was suggested that the Council explore the possibility of publishing the overall RAG monitoring report discussed at monitoring meetings. The Cabinet Member agreed to take the suggestion on board for further discussion with officers.

A Member asked what was being done to build more family houses as market analysis indicated there was significant need. Officers said that they were currently looking at the viability of delivering larger units as part of future programmes. It was further questioned if there was a disparity between what was being built and housing requirements, officers said there was not, as they ensured a mix of units within each development.

It was suggested that officers include in future reports information on programme sales as well as information on the profile of costs to ensure value for money as an assurance that a rigorous quality assurance process took place throughout a scheme. It was agreed that the restoration of public confidence in the benefits of Brick by Brick to the borough was vital.

At the conclusion of this item the Chair thanked the officers for their attendance at the meeting and their engagement with the Sub-Committee and questions.

In reaching its recommendations, the Sub-Committee came to the following **conclusions**:

1. The Sub-Committee was disappointed with the level of information provided in the report and agreed that the Chair would work with officers when Brick by Brick was next reviewed in 2021 to refine the report.
2. As Brick by Brick was only set-up in 2016 the Sub-Committee concluded that it was too early to draw any conclusions on its success in terms of the delivery of new affordable housing or whether it had an effective financial model.
3. The tenure blind design approach was welcomed by a Committee for its promotion of community cohesion.
4. Given the significant number of Brick by Brick properties planned to be acquired by the Housing Revenue Account, the Sub-Committee agreed that an item would be added to its work programme in 2020-21 to assess the effectiveness of the Housing Revenue Account's client role.
5. The Sub-Committee recognised that as Brick by Brick was a commercial organisation, with the Council as its sole shareholder, it was reasonable to expect a high level of public interest and agreed that a greater level of communication and transparency was needed to improve the public's understanding of the relationship between the two organisations.
6. The Sub-Committee welcomed the confirmation that Brick by Brick used feedback from previous developments to refine and improve its approach to community engagement, but reflected that some of the issues incurred previously had impacted upon the public perception of Brick by Brick.
7. The Sub-Committee agreed that a review of Brick by Brick and the Council's engagement strategy for the development of sites would be included in its work programme for 2020-21.
8. The Sub-Committee agreed that further explanation was needed on Brick by Brick's financial model, including the cross-subsidisation between schemes within its development portfolio and as such an item on this would be included in its work programme for 2020-21.
9. The Sub-Committee noted that the lending issues faced by some prospective buyers were a result of the Government's housing regulator issuing new guidance on "housing provider" registration.

Considering the potential impact upon prospective purchasers, the Sub-Committee welcomed the swift action taken to finalise the registration process and requested confirmation once this had been fully resolved.

The Sub-Committee resolved to **recommend** to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services that:

1. In the preparation of the report for the next review of Brick by Brick in 2021 that earlier engagement in the report writing process be undertaken with the Chair of the Sub-Committee to refine the report to the Sub-Committee's specifications.
2. Consideration be given to how to improve public understanding of the relationship between the Council and Brick by Brick, and an update provided on the work undertaken in this area when Brick by Brick was next reviewed by the Sub-Committee in 2021.
3. An update be provided for the Sub-Committee by Brick by Brick once the registration issue had been resolved.
4. The Council develop a 'RAG' monitoring approach for its housing developments, including both pipeline and on site projects and publish the report quarterly in order to further enhance transparency on housing delivery.

7/20 Housing Revenue Account

The Head of Finance (Finance, Investment and Risk) introduced the report and the following was noted:

- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) operated as a single entity managed through various divisions. Primarily, Repairs & Maintenance, Financial Planning & Monitoring as well as Tenancy & Caretaking Services.
- Following a four year rent level reduction that was implemented by Central Government policy, as of 1st April this cap was being lifted and LA's would be able to increase rent levels by CPI plus 1%.
- In 2012, a retention agreement was signed which enabled two thirds of receipt of sales from right to buy schemes to be retained. As a result of the borrowing cap being lifted, the Council had more opportunities to invest in Council homes, which had been included in the Housing Strategy.
- The department operated a 40 year business plan on the budget which was reviewed and updated each year to establish continued financial viability of the ring fenced budget.

- GLA funding was received which was partly utilised on the purchasing of Brick by Brick properties.
- As part of the affordable housing programme, the department explored how to fund additional street property acquisitions. This may be through available right to buy receipts and a proposal would be submitted to Cabinet on options later this year.

The Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions on the content of the report.

In response to a Member question on whether Council officers offered help to residents in securing mortgages to purchase their properties, officers said that residents were encouraged to seek independent advice on obtaining a mortgage. The extent of the information given was purely on the right to buy process as the loss of Council homes through right to buy was detrimental to social housing stock.

A Member commented on a letter that was sent to the Secretary of State which made allegations on the inappropriate use of the funds received from the GLA. The officer made clear that some of the funding received from the GLA was used to part purchase Brick by Brick properties and the remainder of purchases were through HRA borrowing.

It was further asked what was being done to ensure that value for money was received to ensure that the HRA was not overpaying for properties bought. The officer said that as part of their business plan, the asset acquisition team explore all avenues to ensure that purchases were affordable as well as providing value for money. The price agreed for affordable homes was one set price regardless of the size and mix of the property. The officer also agreed to provide a detailed briefing on the impact on HRA of purchasing Brick by Brick properties.

It was asked whether the Council could have taken any other steps to improve the process of the transition to paying water rates directly to Thames Water for its tenants. Officers said that the decision around the change was made by Thames Water and not the Housing service. The department conducted publicity, sent out letter well in advance of the changes with contact details of officers for further information, ran surgeries in sheltered accommodation blocks and supported tenants as best as possible. It was further commented by a Member that there were issues in communication with vulnerable residents that their rent bill was being reduced as a result of the changes.

A Member asked how the Council prioritised property maintenance against the money placed in reserves for fire safety. Officers said that stock condition surveys were conducted and reviewed regularly as well as repairs data which enable prioritisation. It was highlighted that Council's homes continued to meet the decent homes standards.

At the conclusion of this item the Chair thanked the officers for their attendance at the meeting and their engagement with the Sub - Committee and questions.

Information request by the Sub-Committee

- Impact of HRA on purchasing of Brick by Brick properties.
- Provide financial information to reassure the committee HRA getting VfM for the properties it purchases

In reaching its recommendations, the Sub-Committee came to the following **Conclusions**:

1. The Sub-Committee recognised that Housing Grants provided by the Government to the Mayor of London for purchases was cost effective and provided good value for money for the Housing Revenue Account. As such the continued lobbying of the Government to increase the housing grant by the Administration was both welcomed and supported.
2. The Sub-Committee was concerned about the level of transparency on acquisitions of housing stock funded by the Housing Revenue Account and agreed that improvement was needed in this area.
3. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that the provision of temporary accommodation was a significant challenge for the Housing Service, both in terms of resources and the number of households affected.
4. In light of the impact upon the general Council budget the various initiatives undertaken to reduce the cost of temporary housing provision was welcomed.
5. The Sub-Committee agreed that a review of temporary accommodation would be included on its work programme for 2020-21

The Sub-Committee resolved to **recommend** to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services that:

1. That the administration continues to lobby Government to increase housing grants to the Mayor of London.
2. That quarterly reports be published by the Housing Service on transactions relating to the acquisition of housing stock funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

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The Chair confirmed that 17 March 2020 meeting would comprise of two items:

- Cabinet Member Question Time: Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment & Regeneration – Cllrs Scott and King (1 x report & 1 x presentation)
- Place Plan

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the work programme for the remainder of 2019/2020 municipal year.

9/20 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm

Signed:

Date:

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For general release

REPORT TO:	<i>Streets Environment & Homes Sub-Committee 29th September 2020</i>
SUBJECT:	<i>Croydon Climate Crisis Commission</i>
LEAD OFFICER:	<i>Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director of Place</i>
CABINET MEMBER:	<i>Cllr Tony Newman, Leader of the Council All Cabinet</i>
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	<i>TBC</i>

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*
- *Getting more young people involved in taking part in local democracy and in tackling the issues that matter most to them*
- *Croydon’s recycling rate is increased and the use of plastics is reduced*
- *Transport, digital and social infrastructures are effective and support economic growth*
- *Less reliance on cars, more willingness to use public transport, walk and cycle*
- *A truly sustainable Croydon*

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	<i>This has been identified as an item for Scrutiny.</i>
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	<i>To review the purpose, roles responsibilities and receive an update on the work plan of the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission</i>

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.2 This report will cover the purpose of the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission, the key roles and responsibilities, an update on the work plan and how the Commission aims to measure success.

2 CROYDON CLIMATE CRISIS COMMISSION

- 2.1 After declaring the Climate and Ecological emergency in July 2019 and agreeing to become carbon neutral as a Council by 2030, the Leader and Cabinet made the decision to have the Council work with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) to create the independent Croydon Climate Crisis Commission which launched on the 12th March at Croydon College.
- 2.2 This commission will 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 by 2030. This work along with the recommendations from the Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change will form the Climate Action Plan for Croydon.
- 2.3 With the current timeline, the Council aims to bring this plan to Cabinet early next year.
- 2.4 As has been said from the beginning at 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 NEF consulted with stakeholders across the borough (green groups, the voluntary sector, and Citizens' assembly) to draft the terms of reference for the commission
- 2.5 There will also be an engagement period towards the end of this year to ensure that these groups of people are also consulted with on the recommendations from the working groups before the plan goes to Cabinet in the New Year.
- 2.6 At the beginning of this year, Miatta Fahnbulleh, CEO of the New Economics Foundation, was appointed the chair of the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission.
- 2.7 Please see the Terms of Reference in Appendix 1 for further detail.

New Economics Foundation

- 2.8 NEF have been brought on as consultants to support the Commission and ensure that it remains independent from the Council. They are providing continuous support to the Commission and working groups, acting as the secretariat for the Commission, facilitating meetings, supporting the Chairs of the working groups and providing administrative support.
- 2.9 Council officers are part of the working groups to provide expertise and join up with other work streams around the Council where possible.

Engagement

- 2.10 Once the working groups have identified key themes and outcomes to recommend for the Climate Action Plan, the Council will support the Commission to engage with residents, businesses and young people to ensure that they are able to input and have their voices consistently heard throughout this process.

2.11 We are in the process of putting together an engagement plan which will include a timeline and will identify which groups to get in contact with as well as the format of the engagement sessions to ensure they are done in a socially distanced manner. The sessions will likely be done virtually to enable as much engagement as safely possible.

Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic

2.12 There have so far been three main impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- **Context of Commission's recommendations:** The context and challenges in which the Commission is making recommendations has changed as a result of the pandemic. The Commission's focus has shifted slightly to recognise that it is now making recommendations in the context of a recession and is considering how its recommendations can support recovery in a way that moves towards the carbon neutral target.
- **Timeframe:** The Commission launched days before the national lockdown and a short period was needed to review ways of working and identify the best options to continue with the Commission by moving meetings online. This meant that the first Commission meeting took place in May rather than at the end of March as originally intended. As a result the timetable has been extended by one to two months and a higher concentration of work is planned for after the public engagement.
- **Availability of resources:** Prior to the lockdown, the Council had been seeking to recruit to a role to provide additional capacity and administrative and coordination support to the Commission, as agreed with NEF as part of the proposal. A recruitment freeze stopped this and NEF has sought to provide this additional capacity at no additional cost to the Council.

3 WORK PLAN UPDATE

3.1 The first two meetings of the commission have now taken place and five working groups have been set up to identify the outcomes of the climate action plan:

- Housing, Planning and Built Environment
- Adaptation and Resilience
- Jobs and Skills
- Energy & Transport
- Communication & Engagement

2.1 Each working group is chaired and led by members of the Commission. The groups are made up of technical experts, Council officers, citizens' assembly members and other groups who expressed an interest in being involved. Each group is also supported by someone from NEF.

2.2 The working groups are drawing on evidence and technical expertise, the recommendations of the citizens' assembly, best practice and other

experiences to develop recommendations. The Commission will synthesise and prioritise the recommendations from the groups, identifying links and recommending sequencing.

- 2.3 Each working group is aiming to meet two to four times ahead of recommendations going to public engagement. At the time of writing, each group has met at least once and meetings have focused on understanding the problem, challenges and opportunities and identification of possible solutions.

4 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 As mentioned previously, the climate action plan will be created based on the recommendations of the Commission.
- 4.2 The evaluation of the plan will need to be based on the deliverables to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030.
- 4.3 The deliverables have not yet been identified however, we will compare with Other London boroughs to ensure best practice. The Council is also endeavouring to have a baseline completed before the publication of the Climate Action Plan in the New Year to ensure that any outcomes can be measured and performance managed.

CONTACT OFFICER: Yasmin Ahmed, Senior Strategy Officer

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission

Croydon Climate Crisis Commission – Terms of Reference

Background

In June 2019 Croydon Council declared a climate and ecological emergency and undertook to implement a process for acting on this declaration by commissioning a climate citizens' assembly and developing a Climate Crisis Commission. The Council founded an independent Commission that will work in collaboration with the Council and the wider community, involve expert advice, and engage and co-produce with the people of Croydon, with the aim of driving forward radical action to decarbonise the local economy¹ in a just and fair way.

Croydon Council partnered with the New Economics Foundation to set up the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission.

The Commission was launched on 12 March 2020, shortly before the country entered lockdown in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The Commission will meet as the impacts of the pandemic and resulting economic challenges are starting to become clear.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission is to drive rapid reductions in the carbon emissions from activities in the Borough of Croydon, targeting carbon neutral by 2030. Critically, the Commission aims to ensure the transition to zero carbon happens in a fair and just way, providing good quality jobs, improving wellbeing, and reducing inequality. This will be considered in the context of building back an economy that achieves these aims, following the lockdown in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Commission's short term purpose is to produce an action plan, developed with the people of Croydon, to show how the borough of Croydon can become carbon neutral by 2030. This action plan will be delivered to the Council, who will also be considering how to respond to the economic challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In order to produce the action plan the Commission will receive recommendations from a number of themed working groups and will be supported by the Council to run a public engagement process.

In the longer term there is the opportunity for the Commission to transition into an independent body that can support and hold the Council to account for the delivery of the action plan.

Scope

The Croydon Climate Crisis Commission will be an independent body governed by a board of appointed commissioners and members.

The Commission will play a key role in engaging the wider Croydon community and businesses large and small in the transition to net zero and is expected to forge alliances with a diverse range of groups and stakeholders.

As an independent entity, the Commission is not limited in the breadth of its considerations but will be guided by evidence and expertise on how to achieve the carbon neutrality target. The

¹ 'Local economy' relates to the 'lived experience of the local economy'. This is the way in which the local economy functions to shape the lived experience of people within an area. The economy is understood holistically as the system by which resources are generated and transferred between people, as a means to generate wellbeing within environmental limits

Commission will build on the work of the Croydon Citizens' Assembly, which concluded in March 2020.

The Commission will be provided with a baseline assessment of the Borough's carbon emissions, commissioned by the Council. This will be used to prioritise activity and monitor and report progress.

Key functions of the commission include:

- Build on the momentum created by the school climate strikes, Extinction Rebellion, and many other climate campaigners and groups.
- Carry forward the work of Croydon's Citizens' Assembly on climate, and develop an action plan for Croydon to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- Bring experts from the community, business, science and politics together to design and fund new carbon neutral projects.
- Keeping Croydon on track to hit its 2030 carbon neutral target, and engaging with anchor institutions in Croydon and the surrounding area to ensure this is achieved.
- Partnering with other Commissions and groups around the country to lobby for the changes needed from national and regional Government to allow us to achieve our ambitions.

The independent Commission is an evolving organisation which will develop over the next few months. Throughout this time there will be many opportunities for Croydon residents to get involved, within social distancing rules and restrictions.

Membership

The Chair of the Commission is appointed by the Council. The Chair is Miatta Fahnbulleh, CEO of the New Economics Foundation.

The Commission's membership brings together representatives from across the Croydon community. Membership of the Commission is drawn from the following groups:

- Local anchor institutions
- Croydon community representatives
- Technical specialists

The following commissioners have been appointed:

Cllr Nina Degrad	Croydon Council
Cllr Muhammad Ali	Croydon Council
Cllr Simon Hoar	Croydon Council
Michael Burden	Croydon Heath Services NHS Trust
Ann-Christine Harland	Croydon College
Jonathan Sharrock	Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership
Esther Sutton	The Oval Tavern
Peter Underwood	Friends of the Earth
Kim Onyiah	Croydon Citizens' Assembly
Silvia Sanchez	Croydon Citizens' Assembly
Martin Graham	TUC
Russell Smith	Retrofit Works
Candice Howarth	London School of Economics

Ian Morris	Croydon Voluntary Action
TBC	Youth Commissioner

Working groups

The Commission will be advised by working groups that will take an in-depth look at specific areas.

The working groups will be made up of 12-15 people with expertise and experience of the areas being considered. Each working group will be chaired by a member of the Commission. The scope of the groups will be to consider the actions in their area and produce a report to the Commission on their recommended actions. The working groups will review available evidence and hear from subject matter experts as they produce their reports.

The structure and Chairs of the working groups was agreed at the first meeting of the Commission as follow:

- Adaptation and resilience (Candice Howarth)
- Jobs, skills and employment (Jonathan Sharrock)
- Housing, planning and built environment (Russell Smith)
- Transport and energy (Major infrastructure) (Peter Underwood)
- Awareness, Engagement and Communications (Cllr Nina Degrads, Kim Onyiah)

The working groups will draw on the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly and will develop technical action plans that the Commission will synthesise and prioritise. There are important cross-cutting issues that will need to be considered across the groups. The groups will work closely together supported by the Commissioners.

Terms of reference for the working groups are included at Annex 1.

Outputs

The initial output of the Commission will be a set of recommendations in the form of an action plan delivered to Croydon Council that sets out steps to be taken to transition the Borough to its carbon neutral target by 2030 in a just way as part of its recovery from the pandemic. These will consider the immediate term of the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Whilst delivered to the Council, the Commission consider recommendations for anchor institutions, the GLA and national government. The recommendations will be developed as the country is in the initial response and recovery phases of the coronavirus pandemic and a review point will be built in so they can be adjusted as necessary as the context changes.

Process and timescales

The intention is that the work of the Commission as set out in these Terms of Reference will proceed over a nine month period in three phases (N.B. Progress is likely to be impacted by the response to the Coronavirus pandemic, and timings will be revised accordingly):

1. Working groups are established and develop technical action plans that the Commission will synthesise and prioritise.
2. A period of Council-led engagement on a draft action plan and events (subject to government advice on social distancing and events). It is noted that the Commission will not be able to do as much engagement in advance of agreeing its initial recommendations as previously hoped before the coronavirus pandemic.

3. The Commission consider the responses to engagement and present a recommended action plan to the Council.

At a high level we expect this to look like:

Phase	Month	Tasks
1	March:	Launch event 12 th March
	May:	First Commission meeting - to agree terms of reference, timeline and structure of working groups Working groups set up and members invited
	July – September:	Working Groups - use Citizens’ Assembly recommendations and carbon priorities identified through the carbon baseline to develop action plans
	July:	Second Commission meeting - to review progress of the working groups and hear lessons learnt from other place based commissions
	September/ October:	Third Commission meeting - to review and distil technical action plans into recommendations for an action plan
2	September – November:	Put action plan to public through Council-led engagement and events as far as is possible under social distancing measures
3	November:	Forth Commission meeting - to consider feedback on engagement and to discuss institutional questions.
	December:	Fifth Commission meeting - to agree final recommendations, action plans and next steps

Communications

Communication, engagement and education are identified as priorities in addressing the climate change challenge. In addition to establishing a working group to develop recommendations on this, the Commission will also be supported by a communications strategy.

Longer Term

Following delivery of a recommended action plan to the Council, the Commission will consider a transition from its current scope to one of an independent body that can hold the Council to account for delivery. As this stage, the current Commission will develop recommended Terms of Reference for the next stage.

Independent of the structure of the Commission, the recommendations will include a review point at 12 months. This will be an opportunity to reflect on the recommendations and make adjustments to reflect a different economic position, progress made and any changes to national and local policy since the recommendations were agreed. This also reflects that the initial recommendations will be prepared whilst the country is in the initial response and recovery phase from the coronavirus pandemic.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference for Working Groups

Background

In June 2019 Croydon Council declared a climate and ecological emergency and undertook to implement a process for acting on this declaration by commissioning a climate citizens' assembly and developing a Climate Crisis Commission. The Council founded an independent Commission that will work in collaboration with the Council and the wider community, involve expert advice, and engage and co-produce with the people of Croydon, with the aim of driving forward radical action to decarbonise the local economy in a just and fair way. The Commission will be supported and advised by a number of working groups that will focus on particular subjects in detail.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the working groups is to provide the Croydon Climate Crisis Commission with recommendations for actions related to the subject each group is considering to drive rapid reductions in the carbon emissions in the Borough of Croydon, targeting carbon neutral by 2030. These will be considered by the Commission as it prepares an action plan that will be subject to engagement with the people of Croydon and then delivered to the Council.

Scope

Each working group will play a key role in supporting the Commission in engaging the wider Croydon community in the transition to net zero and is expected to forge alliances with a diverse range of groups and stakeholders.

The scope of the groups will be determined by the Chair and will consider the actions in their area and produce a report to the Commission on their recommended actions. The working groups should consider their recommendations against the aims of the Commission, to drive forward action to decarbonise the local economy in a just and fair way. The working groups will review available evidence and hear from subject matter experts as they produce their reports. The working groups will build on the work of the Croydon Citizens' Assembly, which concluded in March 2020. There are important cross-cutting issues that will need to be considered across the groups. The groups will work closely together supported by the Commissioners.

Membership

Each working group will be chaired by a member of the Commission. The working groups will be made up of 12-15 people with expertise and experience of the areas being considered. The Chair will be responsible for determining and confirming the membership of each working group. The membership will be drawn from technical experts, Council advisors, members of the Citizens Assembly and members of the community.

Outputs

Each working group will produce a series of recommendations for the Commission to consider ahead of public engagement. The recommendations should include some short, medium and long term actions for the Council and other stakeholders.

Process and timescales

The intention is that the working groups will provide recommendations to the Commission by the Commission meeting at the end of August (N.B. Progress is likely to be impacted by the response to

the Coronavirus pandemic, and timings will be revised accordingly). The Chair of the working groups will determine the frequency of meetings.

At a high level we expect this to look like:

Month	Tasks
May:	First Commission meeting - to agree terms of reference, timeline and structure of working groups
June – September:	Working groups set up and members invited Working Groups use Citizens' Assembly recommendations and carbon priorities identified through the carbon baseline to develop action plans
July:	Second Commission meeting - to review progress of the working groups and hear lessons learnt from other place based commissions
September/ October:	Third Commission meeting - to review and distil technical action plans into recommendations for an action plan

DRAFT

For general release

REPORT TO:	Scrutiny Streets Environment and Homes Sub-Committee 29 September 2020
SUBJECT:	Planning for the Future – White Paper
LEAD OFFICER:	Shifa Mustapha, Executive Director of Place
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Paul Scott & Councillor Stuart King, Cabinet Member for Environment Transport and Regeneration (Job share)
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Steve Dennington, Head of Spatial Planning, Planning and Strategic Transport

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item has been identified as an item for Scrutiny.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To review the key elements of the governments Planning for the Future- White Paper and its implications for planning in Croydon

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The government on 6th August 2020 published the ‘Planning for the future’ White Paper for 12 weeks consultation up to 29th October 2020. The Council will be submitting a response to the consultation. However, the focus of this report is to set out the key elements of the White Paper, indicate some implications for planning in Croydon and frame a discussion at Scrutiny Committee to inform the Council’s response.

Furthermore, this report sets out the current context for Croydon in terms of housing numbers, with particular regard to the existing Local Plan 2018, the emerging London Plan and current Local Plan Review.

2. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE- WHITE PAPER

2.1 Planning for the future – White Paper - Key Elements

Local plans would be simplified and focus on identifying three categories of land – "growth areas" that are "suitable for substantial development"; "renewal areas" that are "suitable for development"; and "protected areas". In “growth areas”, outline

approval would be automatically granted for forms and types of development specified in the plan. Development in renewal areas would "cover existing built areas where smaller scale development is appropriate" and could include the "gentle densification" of residential areas, development in town centres, and small sites in and around villages. There would be a "statutory presumption in favour of development" specified in the plan. Protected areas, including green belt, conservation areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), would still be subject to "more stringent" development controls and full planning applications would be required for new schemes.

Local plans should be subject to a single and "simplified" statutory "sustainable development" test, replacing the existing "tests of soundness". This new test "would consider whether the plan contributes to achieving sustainable development in accordance with policy issued by the secretary of state", the consultation states.

Instead of general policies for development, the White Paper says, local plans would be required to set out site and area specific requirements for development, alongside locally-produced design codes. Generic policies for development management (such as nature conservation or approach to development in Green Belt) would be set at a national level.

The legal duty to cooperate, which requires local planning authorities to continuously and effectively engage with neighbours on strategic issues such as housing need, "would be removed". However, it adds that "further consideration will be given to the way in which strategic cross-boundary issues, such as major infrastructure or strategic sites, can be adequately planned for, including the scale at which plans are best prepared in areas with significant strategic challenges". There is no mention of the London Plan and regional planning in the White Paper so it is not clear what role the Mayor of London will have in future planning in Croydon if the White Paper proposals are implemented.

The White Paper says its "proposed approach should ensure that enough land is planned for, and with sufficient certainty about its availability for development, to avoid a continuing requirement to be able to demonstrate a five-year supply of land". However, it proposes to "maintain the housing delivery test and the presumption in favour of sustainable development as part of the new system".

The standard housing need method would be changed so that the requirement would be "binding" on local planning authorities who would "have to deliver [it] through their local plans". The new method "would be a means of distributing the national housebuilding target of 300,000 new homes annually". It says the requirement would be focused on areas where affordability pressure is highest and on brownfield land. It would also have regard to the "size of existing urban settlements" in an areas and the "extent of land constraints". Using the most up to date information, the new standard housing need method would result in a need for 2,148 homes per annum for Croydon, compared to the New London Plan figure of 2,076 and the current standard method figure of 2,302¹.

¹ It should be noted that the only reason the new standard method has resulted in a lower housing need in Croydon is because they are based on 2018 Office of National Statistics Household Projections rather than the 2014 projections that the current standard method use. The 2018 Household Projection figures are 64% lower for Croydon compared to the 2014 projections. If it had not been for the significant reduction in the Household

Councils and the Planning Inspectorate would be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable of no more than 30 months for plan preparation (42 months for authorities with a Plan that was adopted less than 3 years prior to the introduction of the proposals) with "sanctions for those who fail to do so".

The need for sustainability appraisals alongside plans would be abolished and instead a "simplified process for assessing the environmental impact of plans, which would continue to satisfy the requirements of UK and international law and treaties".

Local plans would need to be "visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology and supported by a new standard template", the document says.

Under a proposed new "fast-track for beauty", proposals for high-quality developments that reflect local character and preferences would benefit from "automatic permission". New development would be expected to create a "net gain" to areas' appearance.

Design codes, which would be expected to be prepared locally, would be made "more binding" on planning decisions.

Each local planning authority would be required to have a chief officer for design and place-making.

A new 'single infrastructure levy' will replace the existing developer contributions system of section 106 agreements and the community infrastructure levy. The new levy will be a nationally-set, flat rate charge and would be based on the final value (or likely sales value) of a development. The White Paper says it intends the new levy to raise more revenue than under the current system of developer contributions, and deliver "at least as much" affordable housing, and on-site affordable housing, as at present

The new levy could be used to "capture a greater proportion of the land value uplift that occurs through the grant of planning permission, and use this to enhance infrastructure delivery. It is stated such a move "would need to be balanced against risks to development viability".

The scope of the levy "could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights". Such a move "would allow these developments to better contribute to infrastructure delivery and making development acceptable to the community.

Community consultation at the planning application stage is to be "streamlined". Instead, there would be "a new emphasis on engagement at the plan-making stage", the White Paper says.

The determination of planning applications "should be faster and more certain, with firm deadlines". The "well-established time limits of eight or 13 weeks for determining an application from validation to decision should be a firm deadline – not an aspiration which can be got around through extensions of time as routinely happens now".

Projections figures for Croydon then our housing need would have increased under the new standard method, something which has happened for every other London borough except Barking and Dagenham.

Applications should be "shorter and more standardised". There should be just "one key standardised planning statement of no more than 50 pages to justify the development proposals", the paper proposes.

Penalties for councils that fail to determine an application within the statutory time limits could involve "the automatic refund of the planning fee for the application".

Where applications are refused and the decision is overturned at appeal, the White Paper proposes that "applicants will be entitled to an automatic rebate of their planning application fee".

Fees should continue to be set nationally but "cover at least the full cost" of processing applications, "based on clear national benchmarking". It added that this "should involve the greater regulation of discretionary pre-application charging to ensure it is fair and proportionate".

The costs of operating the planning system should be "principally funded" by developer contributions "rather than the national or local taxpayer". Currently, the White Paper says, "the cost of development management activities by local planning authorities is to a large extent covered by planning fees". However, the "cost of preparing local plans and enforcement activities is now largely funded from the local planning authority's own resources".

The government has promised to "develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms". Proposals for "improving the resourcing of planning departments" will be published "later this year", it adds.

The White Paper can be viewed in full via the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

Croydon Housing Targets

Croydon Local Plan 2018

The Croydon Local Plan 2018 is in conformity with the current London Plan and seeks to deliver a minimum of 32,890 homes between 2016-2036. As of 31 March 2020 the borough had accommodated 7,682 homes. Policy SP2.2 Homes setting out this detail can be viewed via the link below.

<https://new.croydon.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning/planning-policy/croydons-development-plan/local-plan-2018>

New London Plan

The New London Plan is in very late stages prior to adoption, following the Examination in Public in mid 2019, receipt of the Planning Inspectors' Panel Report and the Secretary of State's consideration of the Panel Report and Mayor's Intend to Publish New London Plan, and the Secretary of State issuing the Mayor with direction on the amendments necessary to the London Plan before adoption.

Of particular note, the Secretary of State has directed the Mayor of London to amend his London Plan as below.

Change 1, relates to paragraph 0.0.21 of the draft London Plan. The Secretary of State has amended it so that it says "*The Plan provides an appropriate spatial strategy that plans for London's growth in a sustainable way and has been found sound by the*

~~planning inspectors through the examination in public.~~ The housing targets set out for each London Borough are the basis for planning for housing in London. Therefore, boroughs do not need to revisit these figures as part of their local plan development, **unless they have additional evidence that suggests they can achieve delivery of housing above these figures whilst remaining in line with the strategic policies established in this plan.**

Change 2, relates to Policy D3 of the draft London Plan. The Secretary of State has added three new clauses to the policy that say:

- a. **“The design of the development must optimise site capacity. Optimising site capacity means ensuring that development takes the most appropriate form for the site. Higher density developments should be promoted in areas that are well connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling.**
- b. **Where there are existing clusters of high density buildings, expansion of the clusters should be positively considered by Boroughs. This could also include expanding Opportunity Area boundaries where appropriate.**
- c. **Gentle densification should be actively encouraged by Boroughs in low- and mid- density locations to achieve a change in densities in the most appropriate way. This should be interpreted in the context of Policy H2.”**

These changes, coupled with the fact that Policy H2(A)(5) of the draft London Plan sets out minimum targets for development on small sites (sites of less than 0.25ha) for each borough.

Officers understand that Croydon’s housing target for the period 2019 to 2039 would be as follows:

Component	Total
Intend to Publish housing target 2019 – 2029	20,790
Small sites allowance rolled forward 2029 – 2039	6,410
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – total Constrained Capacity	6,296
TOTAL housing required 2019 – 2039	33,496

The housing target from the new London Plan is a minimum target. Therefore, a minimum of 33,496 homes should be built in Croydon between 2019 and 2039.

The table below compares the annual minimum housing target from the Croydon Local Plan 2018 and New London Plan.

Croydon Local Plan 2018 (original minimum annual rate of housing delivery required for whole plan period 2016-2036)	Draft London Plan (minimum annual rate of housing delivery required 2019-2039)
1,635	1,675

Croydon Local Plan Review – Direction of Travel

As a consequence of the New London Plan being at a late stage, the current direction in terms of the borough’s housing target in the Local Plan Review is set out below.

Component of housing supply	Total homes from housing supply (2019-2039)
Homes already completed April – December 2019	1,323
Homes already under construction	4,245
Unimplemented planning permissions	4,668
Large sites outside of Purley Way and Croydon Opportunity Area	3,956
Sites in Croydon Opportunity Area	6,924
Small sites (windfall)	12,820
Total (excluding Purley Way)	33,936

This direction of travel is in line with the 33,496 minimum housing target emerging from the New London Plan. The direction of travel also excludes any potential supply from the Purley Way Masterplan area (given Change 1 outlined above), which is being finalised as part of the Local Plan Review.

The Local Plan Review proposed submission drafted is anticipated to be considered by Cabinet in November and then Council seeking approval to publish for representations and submission to the Secretary of State respectively.

Further detail regarding the Local Plan review can be viewed via the link below.

<https://new.croydon.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning/get-involved-croydons-planning/croydon-local-plan-review>

CONTACT OFFICER: Steve Dennington, Head of Spatial Planning, Planning and Strategic Transport

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

<https://new.croydon.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning/get-involved-croydons-planning/croydon-local-plan-review>

<https://new.croydon.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning/get-involved-croydons-planning/croydon-local-plan-review>

APPENDICES: None