

Scrutiny & Overview Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Rowenna Davis (Chair), Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair), Leila Ben-Hassel (Deputy-Chair), Jade Appleton, Simon Fox and Eunice O'Dame

Reserve Members: Sue Bennett, Louis Carserides, Amy Foster, Gayle Gander, Brigitte Graham and Joseph Lee

A meeting of the **Scrutiny & Overview Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday, 6 June 2023 at 6.30 pm** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**.

Katherine Kerswell
Chief Executive
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Simon Trevaskis
Senior Democratic Services & Governance
Officer - Scrutiny
simon.trevaskis@croydon.gov.uk
www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
Friday, 26 May 2023

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, or you can view the webcast both live and after the meeting has completed at <http://webcasting.croydon.gov.uk>

If you would like to record the meeting, we ask that you read the guidance on the recording of public meetings [here](#) before attending.

The agenda papers for all Council meetings are available on the Council website www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

If you require any assistance, please contact Simon Trevaskis 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 Meetings (Pages 5 - 20)

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 17th and 22 May 2023 as an accurate record.

3. Disclosure of Interests

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and other registrable and non-registrable interests they may have in relation to any item(s) of business on today's agenda.

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. Executive Mayor Update to Scrutiny & Overview Committee (Pages 21 - 52)

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee is asked to receive and review the update provided by the Executive Mayor.

6. Improvement & Assurance Panel

To receive a verbal update from the Croydon Council Chief Executive, Katherine Kerswell, and the Chair of the Improvement & Assurance Panel, Tony McArdle.

7. Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24, including the re-establishment of the Homes Sub-Committee (Pages 53 - 62)

The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to:

1. Agree the underlying principles to guide the work of the Council's Scrutiny function in the forthcoming year.
2. Agree that the remit of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee will be divided through the formation of a separate Homes Sub-Committee until the end of 2024-25 municipal year.

3. Agree that the terms of reference agreed for both the Streets & Environment and the Homes Sub-Committees in October 2022, as outlined in section 5, remain valid and are agreed.
4. Agree to waive the requirement for the seats on the Sub-Committees to be allocated in line with the overall political balance of the Council.
5. Agree the appointments (including regular and reserve members and chairs and vice-chairs) to the Sub-Committees as set out in Appendix 1.
6. Note that Sub-Committee arrangements will revert to three sub-committees (Children & Young People, Health & Social Care and Streets, Environment & Homes) from the start of the 2025-26 municipal year, unless the Scrutiny & Overview Committee resolves otherwise.

8. Scrutiny Recommendations (Pages 63 - 70)

The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to

1. Approve the recommendations made by its Sub-Committee's for submission to the Executive Mayor for his consideration.
2. Review the response provided by Mayor to recommendations made by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.
3. To agree whether to make any formal recommendations arising from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting held on 22 May 2023.

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.”

PART B

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Meeting held on Wednesday, 17 May 2023 at 8.35pm in F9, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Rowenna Davis (Chair), Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair), Leila Ben-Hassel (Deputy-Chair), Simon Fox, Joseph Lee (reserve for Jade Appleton) and Eunice O'Dame

Apologies: Councillor Jade Appleton

PART A

27/23 Appointments to Scrutiny and Overview Sub-Committees

The Committee considered a report in the agenda along with appendix 1 in the supplement, which set out the proposed membership of the three Scrutiny Sub-Committees, namely the Children & Young People Sub-Committee, Health & Social Care Sub-Committee and the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee. The Committee was asked to determine these appointments.

The allocation of the Chair and Vice-Chair roles, as set out in the appendix 1 was queried, with it suggested that there should be a more even allocation of these roles between the Conservative and Labour groups to better reflect the overall political balance of the Council. It was noted that resolving this issue would require further consultation with the political groups and as such could not be resolved at the meeting.

It was agreed that the Committee would resolve the appointments as set out in appendix 1, to not unduly delay the work of the Sub-Committees. This was agreed on the understanding that there would be further discussions on the allocation of Chair and Vice-Chair roles for all Sub-Committees. Any changes required as a result of these discussions would be presented for agreement at the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting on 6 June 2023 meeting, as part of the report to re-establish the Homes Sub-Committee.

Resolved: That the membership for the three Scrutiny Sub-Committees is agreed as set out below.

A. SCRUTINY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUB-COMMITTEE (Membership 13 - 8 Members and 5 Co-optees (1 non-voting))	
Labour Group Members to be appointed: 4	Conservative Group Members to be appointed: 4
1. Maddie Henson (Vice-Chair)	1. Richard Chatterjee (Chair)
2. Mike Bonello	2. Holly Ramsey
3. Manju Shahul-Hameed	3. Mark Johnson
4. Catherine Wilson	4. Helen Redfern

RESERVE MEMBERS	
1. Amy Foster	1. Adele Benson
2. Tamar Barrett	2. Samir Dwesar
3. Patricia Hay-Justice	3. Luke Shortland
	4. Fatima Zaman
CO-OPTES	
1. Voting Governor Rep	(Vacant)
2. Voting Governor Rep	Paul O'Donnell
3. Voting Diocesan Rep	Elaine Jones (Catholic Diocese)
4. Voting Diocesan Rep	(Vacant) (Anglican Diocese)
5. Non-voting Teachers Rep	Josephine Copeland

B. SCRUTINY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SUB-COMMITTEE (Membership 8 - 6 Members and 2 Co-optee (non-voting))	
Labour Group Members to be appointed: 3	Conservative Group Members to be appointed: 3
1. Eunice O'Dame (Chair)	1. Adele Benson
2. Ellily Ponnuthurai (Vice-Chair)	2. Holly Ramsey
3. Patsy Cummings	3. Robert Ward
RESERVE MEMBERS	
1. Sherwan Chowdhury	1. Sue Bennett
2. Sean Fitzsimons	2. Mark Johnson
3. Manju Shahul-Hameed	3. Helen Redfern
CO-OPTEE (non-voting)	
1. Gordon Kay (Healthwatch Croydon)	
2. Yusuf Osman (Social Services Users Representative)	

C. SCRUTINY STREETS, ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SUB-COMMITTEE (Membership 7)	
Labour Group Members to be appointed: 4	Conservative Group Members to be appointed: 3
1. Kola Agboola	1. Danielle Denton
2. Leila Ben Hassel	2. Gayle Gander
3. Louis Carserides	3. Luke Shortland
4. Sherwan Chowdhury	
RESERVE MEMBERS	
1. Nina Degrads	1. Adele Benson
2. Mohammed Islam	2. Samir Dwesar
3. Stella Nabukeera	3. Simon Fox

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Meeting held on Monday, 22 May 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Rowenna Davis (Chair), Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair), Leila Ben-Hassel (Deputy-Chair), Jade Appleton, Simon Fox and Eunice O'Dame

Also Present: Councillors Jason Cummings (Cabinet Member for Finance), Councillor Scott Roche (Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment) and Ria Patel.

PART A

28/23 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

29/23 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were no disclosures of interest made at the meeting.

30/23 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business for the consideration of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee at this meeting.

31/23 **Month 11 Financial Performance Monitoring Report**

The Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the latest budget position up to the end of Period 11. This report was included on the agenda to give the Committee the opportunity to scrutinise the delivery of 2022-23 budget.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, and members of the Corporate Management Team were in attendance at the meeting for this item.

At the start of the item, the Chair noted the Committee's support and appreciation for the earlier publication of Financial Monitoring Reports, but shared concerns that the reports were still not as clear or as timely as they could be. The Chair asked if there was scope to bring forward the publication of the Financial Monitoring Reports or to change the composition of the data in future papers. The Director of Finance explained that time was required for individual departments to conduct their own forecasting, for this to be challenged by Finance, and for commentary and narration on the figures to be added. Members heard that because of this, there would always be some lead-time between the publication of the report and the period it concerned. The Director of Finance highlighted that these reports would now be published as soon as they were ready, instead of following the Cabinet publication schedule, and would be available on a dedicated [page](#) on the Council's website.

The Deputy-Chair asked if reports were still being collated by spreadsheet, or if specialised software was now being used. Members heard that Oracle software was being used to input departmental forecasting, and this data was extracted from Oracle to include in the reports with narration; other specialised software was also used, such as for social care placements, as these required substantial modelling in order to be accurate. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that the Oracle project was still at the scoping stage, and a timetable for this project would likely be reported to Cabinet in July 2023. Members heard that forecasting and getting better reporting from the system directly would be a high priority in terms of improving how budget holders were working with the Finance team.

The Chair explained that timely reports were important to catch issues as soon as they became apparent, and noted that this had been the motivation in moving from quarterly to monthly reporting. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that Financial Monitoring Reports still required oversight from the Executive, but accepted that this did add some degree of delay. The Deputy-Chair queried whether the publication timeline was in line with best practice and the Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that Croydon compared favourably in publishing monthly reports, but accepted that the manual nature of producing reports could mean these were slower to finalise than at other authorities. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that the reports had incorporated previous feedback from scrutiny, and that iterative improvements had been made over the period monthly reports had been produced.

The Chair asked if there would be any changes to the reporting as a result of the increased oversight of the Improvement and Assurance Panel and heard that this would not be the case. The Chair commented on the possible need for further training to better understand and analyse these reports. The Cabinet Member for Finance offered to sit down with any Members to discuss financial reporting. It was also agreed that the Member Learning and Development Panel would be asked to consider the possible need for training on interpreting the Financial Performance reporting for all Members.

The Chair asked if any of the risks outlined in the report were likely to continue into 2023/24. The Director of Finance explained that there were pressures on services and contracted spend, but that there were underspends across staffing areas due to periods of vacancy. There were some areas that had been difficult to recruit into, such as social work and planning, and this was a trend that was likely to continue into 2023/24; pressures would also likely continue on Temporary Accommodation, Social Care Placements and some income areas that had not fully recovered since the pandemic. The Chair asked what the likely impacts of vacancies would be, and heard that statutory functions would need to be prioritised which could pose a risk to planned transformation and improvement work. The Director of Finance explained that agency and project staff would be used to try to relieve these pressures where possible.

The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted that delays with the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) contract for parking enforcement would have an overrun into 2023/24. The Chair queried whether there was a timeline for ANPR cameras to be operational and collecting income. The Corporate Director for Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery (SCRER) acknowledged the delays and explained that contractual negotiations with the contractor were ongoing to resolve this; until these were concluded, it would not be possible to provide a timeline, which was why the risk had been highlighted in the report. The Deputy-Chair asked how this delay was affecting 2023/24 income targets, and heard that improved modelling on traffic income had made the impact easier to estimate and that remedies in the contract would be used to cover losses where possible. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that there was a risk to the income budget from the delays for ANPR, but that contractual negotiations would need to be concluded before this could be fully quantified, and that this risk was separate to modelling and the previous budget correction.

The Vice-Chair asked about the timeline for improvements within the Temporary and Emergency Accommodation service and heard from the Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer that she would ask the Corporate Director of Housing to write to the Committee. The Chair suggested

that this could be addressed through the new Homes Sub-Committee that would be set up at the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting in June 2023.

Members asked about progress on the Transformation Programme and heard that this would be included in future Financial Monitoring reports to provide a monthly update on progress. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that the Transformation team was being established, with an acting Director of Transformation whilst the permanent role was out to recruitment. The Transformation Programme was being reshaped to ensure that this was more targeted, with all the project plans being uploaded into 'Verto' for monitoring. The number of transformation projects had been pared down to ensure that these were more manageable and easier to track. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that a number of projects were already underway and beginning to identify savings. The Committee were reminded that the majority of Transformation Programme savings were due to be delivered in 2024/25, not 2023/24, and heard that projects were making good progress. Members heard that the Transformation Board was meeting monthly, and that projects were being reviewed at the Mayor's Advisory Board. The Committee asked if it would be possible to see copies of Transformation Board agendas, or to do a deep dive on transformation governance structures; the Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer agreed that a deep dive on this would be valuable to the Committee and suggested that this included a demonstration of the Verto software.

The Deputy-Chair asked about the knock on effect of not being able to put the anticipated contribution into the Council's reserves. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that this had been the position since the autumn, and would not have a knock on effect for the 2023/24 budget. It was highlighted that this decision had been taken due to the unexpected inflationary pressures felt during 2022/23, and it had not been seen as appropriate to increase borrowing, but to instead not contribute additional funds to the reserves. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer agreed and explained that reserve levels were adequate and there were no plans to increase reserves in the current financial year. The Deputy-Chair commented on past low reserve levels and the contribution that this had made to the financial difficulties of the Council. The Chair highlighted that some of the planned savings for 2022/23 had not been made, and asked if the Council was sufficiently resilient should that be the case in 2023/24. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that inflationary pressures and non-delivery of savings were well provided for in the base 2023/24 budget, and that reserves were only used in a worst-case scenario. The Director of Finance explained that significant allowances had been made in the budget for budgetary pressures, inflation and tomography. The Cabinet

Member for Finance explained that previously this had not been the case, alongside lower reserves, and that now this was in place the Council was in a stronger position to deal with future challenges. It was highlighted that no reserves had been used during 2022/23 to cover the non-delivery of savings.

The Chair asked about the three years of outstanding accounts. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that the current timeline saw them signing off the 2019/20 accounts in June 2023, pending adjustments relating to account for the treatment of Croydon Affordable Homes and infrastructure assets. These would then need to be signed off by the Council's external auditor, and it was expected that they would be received by the Audit Committee in July 2023. Members heard that the timeline for the 2020/21 accounts to be signed off was October 2023, and March 2024 for the 21/22 accounts. It was expected that accounts for 2022/23 would be signed off in June 2024.

Actions arising from the meeting

Following the discussion of the item at the meeting, the Committee agreed the following actions that would be followed up after the meeting:

1. That a deep dive is arranged for the members of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on the governance arrangements of the Council's transformation programme (add verito).
2. The Streets & Environment Sub-Committee will be asked to review the progress made with acquiring new ANPR cameras and the financial impact from the delay in acquiring the equipment needed for enforcement.
3. The Homes Sub-Committee will be asked to review the Council's persistence overspends for emergency and temporary accomodation.
4. Social Care related sub-committees to explore the impact of high vacancy rates on services, staff workload, transformation and agency costs.
5. A briefing will be arranged for the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on the Oracle Project.

6. A meeting would be arranged for members of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to discuss the format of the Financial Performance Monitoring reports.
7. A recommendation be made to the Member Learning and Development Panel to provide financial performance monitoring training for all Members.

Conclusions

Following its discussion of the report, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reached the following conclusions:

1. The Committee welcomed the streamlined process for publishing Financial Performance Monitoring reports, as well as providing a dedicated page on the Council's websites for the reports, as it would help to improve transparency.
2. The Committee was concerned that given the precarious nature of the Council's finances, the three month delay between month end and publishing financial performance monitoring report would make it challenging to identify issues affecting budget delivery at an early enough stage. However, it was noted that the current timeframe for financial reporting was not out of keeping with other local authorities.
3. The Committee raised its concern about the accessibility of the financial performance monitoring reports and welcomed the invitation of the Cabinet Member of Finance to meet to discuss the report.

Recommendations

Following its discussion of the report, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee reached the following recommendations:

1. Given the precarious nature of the Council's finances, the Committee recommends that the process for publishing monthly Financial Performance Monitoring report is sped up, with the aim of achieving a maximum turnaround of eight week to finalise checks and go through the sign-off process before publication.

The Committee considered a report that provided the Annual Asset Disposal Plan 2023/24 report due to be considered by the Mayor at the Cabinet meeting on 24 May 2023. This report was included on the agenda as it was identified by the Committee as an item for pre-decision scrutiny.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, and members of the Corporate Management Team were in attendance at the meeting for this item.

The Chair asked what the rationale was for the £50 million figure, and asked why these assets had been selected for disposal. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that this figure had been chosen as a target for the first year as it was thought to be achievable, but it was highlighted that this was the minimum that should be achieved. The list was considered to be assets that were 'excess to requirements' and that the Council was in a position to dispose of. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that there had been over £50 million of Capital Receipts achieved in 2022/23, and that this was the second tranche of £50 million; it was expected that at least £50 million of Capital Receipts would be achieved in 2024/25 and 2025/26 respectively.

The Deputy-Chair asked what percentage of the Council's total asset base were included in the report. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that the total useable asset base was valued at around £300 million; currently all properties thought to be excess to requirements were on the asset disposal list, and this would be kept under review to ensure assets were added when appropriate. The Deputy-Chair asked how £50 million of Capital Receipts could also be generated in 2024/25 and it was explained that some assets needed more work, or were currently being used to deliver services, and so could not be added to the asset disposal list at this time but would be added in the future once these issues were resolved. The Chair queried the definition of 'excess to requirements' and heard that this was any asset the Council could sell while continuing to deliver its statutory responsibilities. The Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital explained that there was a rolling list of assets that could be defined as surplus, but that each asset required forensic analysis through the lens of service need. As a result of this, deciding if an asset was surplus needed to be carried out through the Transformation Programme to look at service need and demand and the locality of service need. Members heard that heat maps of assets were used to bring forward comprehensive plans that embraced supporting the Voluntary

and Community Sector in developing Family and Community Hubs to deliver services in localities. The Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital stated that additional resources were being used, alongside operational leads of the Council, to augment the process of producing heat maps that would accelerate the process of identifying surplus properties to repurpose or dispose of. It was expected that an updated asset disposal list would be submitted to Cabinet in November 2023.

Members asked if there was a forward plan for the redesign of services whose delivery would be affected by asset disposals. The Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital explained that a Disposals and Transformation Property Board would be set up to coordinate service reviews, and to engage with the voluntary sector where appropriate. This would assist the Council in identifying which assets should be retained or repurposed and which could be classified as surplus as part of an integrated approach through the Transformation Programme. Members asked for reassurance that statutory services would not be affected, and heard that this was the case. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the Council would always meet its statutory responsibilities, and should it find itself in a position where it could not, then this would be escalated to national Government. The Committee heard that where asset disposals were linked to the cessation of a service, this could be brought forward relatively quickly; assets that were likely to be added to the list at a later date would be those that would require the relocation or redesign of services.

In response to Member questions about who would be on the Disposals and Transformation Property Board, the Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital explained that this was an officer board that they would chair, but that it would consult external organisations where appropriate. Members requested that they be kept up to date with the establishment and work of the Disposals and Transformation Property Board, and the Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital agreed that they would do so. The Deputy-Chair asked for reassurance that the team working on asset disposals was adequately resourced to ensure the best for value money could be achieved for each asset. The Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital explained that each building category would be approached differently, with a disposal category for each that varied in its approach to the market and methodology of disposal, in collaboration with external expertise and advice. The Chair asked if the Town Hall was included in the Asset Disposal Plan, and the Cabinet Member for Finance stated that this was not the case at this moment in time.

The Chair asked for clarification on what delegated powers were being sought for the Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer. The Corporate

Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that it had been found that that Council had not been as quick as it could have been in commercial negotiations, and it was felt that this delegation would assist in concluding these at a greater pace. It was clarified that the delegation only applied to assets on the Asset Disposal Plan that had been approved at Cabinet. In response to questions about recommendation 2.3, it was clarified that 'in consultation with' could be taken to mean 'in agreement with'.

Members asked if Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) reports were being produced for the individual assets for disposal. The Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital stated that an EqIA had been produced for the report and was available in the agenda pack. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that all the properties on the current list were vacant, and so disposal would have a limited impact, as reflected in the Cabinet Report; any asset disposals that required service redesign would be subject to an EqIA as a part of this process.

The Deputy-Chair thanked the Head of Estates, Asset Management & Facilities for their informal engagement and asked about consultation with Ward Councillors in relation to asset disposals. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that this could be difficult due to the pace of disposals, but that Ward Councillors would be notified of property disposals but were unlikely to be consulted as part of the decision-making process. The Deputy-Chair highlighted the strong local knowledge of Ward Councillors and advised that they should be utilised as a valuable resource to help manage potential local concern about a property disposal.

The Chair asked about the role of the Improvement and Assurance Panel in development of the Asset Disposal Plan. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that the Panel had taken interest in the disposal programme, and had oversight of the paper as they did with all Cabinet reports; the Panel were not involved in choosing assets for disposal. The Cabinet Member for Finance commented on the need for Croydon to do as much as it could to fix its own problems, especially when it was asking for government intervention.

The Deputy-Chair explained that previous a Scrutiny & Overview Committee had recommended that each asset disposal have its own business case and consultation process, if it affected a particular community, and asked if this approach had been implemented for this report. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that at the point an asset was added to the disposal plan and was considered 'excess to requirements' it was not considered that a consultation was necessary as there would be no service impact. Members heard that any consultation would take place as a part of a service change or

redesign; however, a business case would be developed for any asset that had an associated income stream that looked at the offset between any potential ongoing income and future capital investment needed for maintenance against the impact of reduced borrowing. The Chair requested that rental streams be provided so that they could be compared with asset sale values, and the Cabinet Member for Finance stated that this could be provided, upon request, for any assets on the disposal list with current rental income.

The Chair asked about public and tenant consultation, and highlighted the example of 'Snuggles Pre-school' who were due to have the freehold sold on their premises, and had only been informed in the previous week. The Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital explained that their lease would protect this business as the terms and conditions would transfer to any new freeholder. The Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer stated that the Council did sometimes sell asset freeholds that had a current leaseholder, but that the lease would remain in place and the leaseholder would not be unduly affected. The Chair asked if it would be possible to give leaseholders longer notice should they be affected by disposals, and the Interim Director of Commercial Investment & Capital explained that, as Cabinet had not yet approved the report, it would not yet be appropriate to contact leaseholders. Members heard that once the paper was approved, tenants would be contacted to explain the decision and any possible impacts it may have on them.

The Chair confirmed that there would be an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) for any asset disposals that resulted in changes to service delivery. The Chair asked which asset disposals were likely to be the most controversial and the Corporate Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer explained that significant efforts had been made to ensure the assets in the report were not controversial. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that any assets being added to the disposal plan that currently delivered services would have already gone through the process of service redesign to ensure they were surplus to requirements, in order to minimise the impact of disposal.

The Chair asked if there was the opportunity for community groups to make compelling offers for any assets on the disposal plan that could generate enough income to warrant their retention. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that this would be possible, but that these discussions would need to happen at pace given the Council's financial position.

This item and the meeting concluded prematurely at 7.45 pm due to the evacuation of the Town Hall.

33/23 **Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Waste & Street Cleansing Commissioning**

Due to the evacuation of the Town Hall, this item was not discussed.

34/23 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This item was not required.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Scrutiny & Overview Committee	
DATE OF DECISION	6 June 2023	
REPORT TITLE:	Executive Mayor's Update to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR	Katherine Kerswell Chief Executive	
LEAD OFFICER:	David Courcoux Head of Strategy & Policy	
LEAD MEMBER:	Executive Mayor Jason Perry	
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	This item is scheduled annually within the work programme of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee	
KEY DECISION?	No	
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION? <i>(* See guidance)</i>	No	
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1. EXECUTIVE MAYOR UPDATE TO SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

- 1.1. At its first meeting of the municipal year, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee invites the Executive Mayor, Jason Perry, to attend and provide an update covering the key achievements of the Administration over the previous year and the priorities for the Mayor's Administration in the year ahead. The report also provides an update on the Council's relationship with the Improvement and Assurance Panel.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee is asked to: -

1. Receive and review the update provided by the Executive Mayor

CONTACT OFFICER:

Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer – Scrutiny

Email: Simon.trevaskis@croydon.gov.uk

Appendix: Executive Mayor Update to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.



Executive Mayor's Update to Scrutiny and Overview Committee

May 2023

Since my election as Croydon's first Executive Mayor in May 2022, my Administration and I have worked to make progress on the key issues residents elected me to deliver.

This update sets out a high-level summary of the key areas of progress made during my first year as Croydon's Executive Mayor.

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee's request this update covers three key themes:

- A summary of my Administration's key achievements over our first year in office.
- My Administration's priorities for the year ahead.
- The Council's relationship with the Improvement and Assurance Panel.

Key achievements

Early on in my Administration I developed the Mayor's Business Plan (Appendix 1) reflecting my manifesto commitments which provide a guiding corporate strategy document for the Council.

The Business Plan sets out my five core Outcomes for the Council. These are:

- The Council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services.
- Croydon is a place of opportunity for business, earning and learning.
- Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential.
- Croydon is a cleaner, safer and healthier place, a borough we're proud to call home.
- People can lead healthier and independent lives for longer.

Priority actions were developed to support the delivery of each of the Outcomes as set out in the Business Plan.

Over my first year in office the Council has made significant progress delivering the Mayor's Business Plan, a summary of the key achievements is set out below against each of the Business Plan Outcomes.

Outcome One: The council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services.

- Completed a forensic review of the Council's finances through the Opening the Books review uncovering £161m of historic financial failures and £49m of unresolved ongoing accounting issues.
- Forecasting a balanced outturn position for 2022/23 having delivered over £41m in savings compared with 2021/22.
- Set a balanced Budget for 2023/24.

- Secured £224m in additional Capitalisation Direction.
- Begun discussions with Government about a long-term solution to Croydon's toxic level of £1.6bn debt.
- Introduced new procurement processes to improve governance and efficiency.
- Developed a new Asset sales programme to deliver at least £50m in 23/24
- Introduced Mayor's Question time events and attended regular community events and Q&As to increase visibility and accountability of the Mayoralty.
- Successful roll out of new telephony system.
- Scrutiny chaired by Opposition.
- Successfully introduction of the new Executive Mayoral Governance model.

Outcome two: Croydon is a place of opportunity for business, earning and learning.

- Begun process of delivering a new swimming pool and leisure facilities in Purley.
- Secured £2.5m from the Shared Prosperity Fund to transform our district centres.
- Distributed over £17m in Government energy rebates through Council Tax to residents.
- The Council continues to be a Living Wage employer and encourages contractors to pay London Living Wage.
- Over £10m of funding for culture in the borough has been raised, including six key Croydon culture organisations being successful in securing National Portfolio Organisation Status. This represents a significant increase in funding for culture and arts in Croydon from the Arts Council, National Lottery Heritage fund and other key funding organisations.
- Launched a successful London Borough of Culture:
 - Over 1,000 attendees at the launch event, Oratorio of Hope
 - Secured positive press coverage nationally and regionally, including BBC News, ITV, The Times, Evening Standard – projecting Croydon's reputation for creative and cultural excellence.
 - Over 40 funded events planned for the year, ranging from dance to theatre to music and visual arts and events for all age ranges.
 - Building a legacy of growth and investment in Croydon to last beyond the London Borough of Culture.
 - Funded the programme from external funding and ringfenced grants, without drawing on any council General Fund.

Outcome three: Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential.

- Invested £1.8m in youth provision over school holidays after securing Government HAF funding.
- Negotiated £27m Safety Valve funding from the DFE to support plans for more children with SEND to attend Croydon schools.
- Secured £5m development funding for the Family Hub and Start for Life programme focused on early intervention and holistic care to join-up services centred on families' needs.
- Preparing for upcoming Ofsted and other inspections.
- Brought four children's centres back in house after the previous administration failed to attract willing providers.
- Secured £329k from DFE to refurbish a council-owned property and establish a small 4-bed children's home to stabilise and assess young people with complex needs.
- Invested £200,000 in youth projects in response to safety concerns.
- Developing a new Youth Safety Delivery Plan to make Croydon safer for young people on our streets.

Outcome four: Croydon is a cleaner, safer and healthier place, a borough we're proud to call home.

Streets and Environment

- Introduced new graffiti removal team.
- Reinstated grass cutting to effective levels.
- Met with Veolia at a senior level to secure service improvements.
- Secured Forestry Commission and GLA funding to plant almost 500 new trees.
- Begun the process of procuring a new waste contract.
- Invested in improvements to Whitehorse Rec using £85k of Levelling Up Parks funding.

Community Safety

- Reintroduced the lapsed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Croydon Town Centre.
- Begun the process to introduce a new PSPO in Thornton Heath.
- Held community safety walkabouts with police to identify and act on crime and ASB issues.
- Reviewed and strengthened the Community Safety Partnership, and worked with residents and community groups to improve how we listen and work with our communities to make Croydon safer.
- Convened a community engagement summit on tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and agreed a statement of intent committing us to produce the borough's first VAWG delivery plan.

Housing

- Adopted the Residents Charter designed by local tenants.
- Agreed and delivering a new Housing Transformation Plan
- Making significant progress improving conditions at Regina Road:
 - Programme to address current issues.
 - Regeneration consultation completed.
 - Successful ballot with 88% of those voting in favour of our regeneration proposal.
- Agreed and mobilising a new Housing Repairs Contract including insourcing the call centre function.
- Built a strong and collaborative relationship with the independent Housing Improvement Board
- HRA Business Plan updated and improvement plan established.
- Developing a new Homelessness Strategy.

Planning and Town Centre Regeneration

- Revoked the SPD2 Design Guide.
- Reviewing the Local Plan to ensure developments respect local character.
- Reduced Planning applications backlog by 50% and introduced a Planning service transformation programme.
- Established a Mayoral Town Centre Advisory Board with key partners.
- Served Notice on CLP to secure £4m of improvements to North End and associated asset management initiatives to the Whitgift Centre.
- In senior-level discussions with Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield to bring forward a new masterplan for the town centre.
- Submitted Levelling Up Fund bid for Town Centre improvements and will continue to champion these.

Outcome five: People can lead healthier and independent lives for longer

- Held first Mental Health Summit in conjunction with Croydon Citizens.
- Worked with partners to secure Dementia Friendly status for Croydon.
- Building closer relationships between the Council and NHS through the co-chaired joint Health and Care Board.
- Secured 'Good' CQC ratings for all six of Croydon Council's Extra Care services.
- Became one of six nationwide Front Runner sites piloting best practice in NHS Discharge.
- Led the borough's tributes to her late Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II.
- Worked with VCFS to mitigate impact of the natural end of the Community Fund and to reset the relationship with the VCFS from funder to facilitator.
- Commissioned a new volunteering service from CVA.
- Co-designing a new Information and Advice Contract with the VCS.

In addition to the priorities identified in the Mayor's Business Plan, significant focus has been placed on ensuring that those responsible for Croydon's financial collapse are held to account.

At the Appointments and Disciplinary Committee on 23rd March 2023 there was unanimous cross-party agreement on recommendations to:

- Refer the Penn report, the two Reports in the Public Interest (RIPI), the Non-Statutory Rapid Review report, the PwC report into the Council's Companies and other liabilities, the Kroll report and all other relevant documents to the Metropolitan Police.
- Refer the above investigation reports to the former Members and Senior Officers' professional bodies and institutes for their consideration.
- Pursue legal action to reclaim as much of the former Chief Executive's settlement payment as possible.
- Write to the Secretary of State and others to call for a strengthening of the Local Government accountability framework to ensure that Senior Officer or Members can be held accountable for their actions in situations like Croydon's.

Whilst not core work of the Council, it is important to local residents and to me that those responsible for the financial and governance failures detailed in the two RIPI, Penn and Kroll reports are held to account for their actions.

Priorities for 2023/24

- 2.1** Over the coming year the Council will build upon the progress set out above to continue to deliver the Mayor's Business Plan and transform the Council.
- 2.2** We will continue to deliver our various existing transformation programmes including the corporate Transformation plan, Housing Transformation Plan, People Strategy and those in CYPE and Adults focused on:
- Preparing for inspections from Ofsted, ILACS, HMIP, HMIC, CQC.
 - Delivering the agreed Safety Valve Plan and SEND strategy 2023 – 2026
 - Improving outcomes for care experienced young people
 - Delivering the Adults Improvement Plan including managing demand through reablement, front door, hospital discharge and transitions.
 - Working with the NHS to deliver the Front Runner project piloting best practice in NHS Discharge
- 2.3** We will also continue to celebrate Croydon's year as London Borough of Culture, celebrating our cultural, heritage and creative sectors and maximising the long-term benefits for Croydon.
- 2.4** Within the framework of the Mayor's Business plan I have also set several areas for particular focus during the coming year:
- **Finances** - Balancing the Council's budget and negotiating a package of support from Government to return Croydon to financial sustainability.
 - **Housing** - Improving the Council's housing service and mobilising the new Housing Repairs Contract.
 - **Town Centre** - Working with partners to develop a new masterplan to regenerate the Town Centre and increasing meantime use of empty units.
 - **Addressing Broken windows issues** – Improving the performance of graffiti removal, grass cutting and related public realm services including the development of a robust new waste contract.
 - **Purley Pool** – Progress the delivery of a new swimming pool and leisure facilities in Purley.
 - **Planning** – Reform Planning policy through the Local Plan review to ensure development respects the character of our local communities.

Relationship with the Improvement and Assurance Panel

Since becoming Mayor, my Cabinet, the Corporate Management Team and I have worked closely with the Improvement and Assurance Panel (IAP) developing open, collaborative and constructive working relationships.

During that time the IAP have not issued any 'advice notes' to the Administration, this compares with the six 'advice notes' issued to the previous Administration.

This positive working relationship was noted by the Written Ministerial Statement on the 16th of March which recognised *"the positive steps taken by the Council, with oversight from the Improvement and Assurance Panel, to lay the foundations for its recovery and ensure that legacy issues are being addressed. In May 2022, Croydon changed its model of governance with the election of a Mayor, Jason Perry, and a new Council. The Secretary of State acknowledges the Panel's assessment in their latest report that the Mayor has been working constructively with them and is prepared to "take firm decisions" to return the Council to a sustainable financial footing. The Panel have also commented that within the Council there is "much evidence of managers and staff grasping the scale of the problem and doing their best to fix it."*

Given the scale of the additional Capitalisation required it is understandable that, as a precautionary measure, the Government intends to formalise our current improvement panel arrangements by putting them on a statutory footing.

This step would give the panel the power to issue Directions to the Council where they consider we may otherwise breach our Best Value duty. We should be clear that this is not powers being taken away from the Council, it is granting the IAP the power to intervene in exceptional circumstances which we hope they will not need to use.

In light of the Government's 'minded to' decision to move the IAP to a statutory footing, Cabinet, CMT and I are working collectively with the IAP to support them to develop their Exit Strategy which will set out the key milestones and performance indicators against which progress on the Council's continuing transformation should be measured.

The IAP have identified three key areas of focus for their work as Finances, Transformation and Housing.

Executive decision-making power continues to rest with me as Executive Mayor. However, I have asked that the IAP are briefed on the development of major policies and strategies to ensure they are kept informed of progress and are able to offer expert advice as they have over the previous year.

In addition to the Chief Executive's formal response to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 'minded to' letter, I have written directly as Mayor to the minister committing that the Council *"will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the Panel and your Department to ensure Croydon benefits from all the support possible to put right the problems left by the previous Labour Administration."*

A full copy of my letter is available at Appendix 2.

The final confirmation of the Directions and the updated membership of the IAP are expected in due course.

Mayor's Business Plan 2022 - 2026



Mayor's foreword



In recent years, trust in our Council has been hit as the full extent of the financial mismanagement under the previous Administration has come to light. The two Reports in the Public Interest highlighted deep governance failures and the two Section 114 notices, effectively declaring the Council bankrupt, left it unable to balance its own books and reliant on £150m of government support to stay afloat. The process of 'Opening the Books' has further highlighted inherent weaknesses in income projections and budget setting processes.

At the same time, rather than listening to and serving the people of Croydon, the Council lost sight of its core purpose, preferring to play monopoly with council taxpayers' money, resulting in bailing out its own failing housing company whilst increasing debt to over £1.6bn. Residents deserve and expect better and over the coming years that is what I will deliver.

This Croydon Mayoral Business Plan sets a new direction, building on the hopes and aspirations of our residents and businesses. The Plan will transform the Council into one that delivers sound and sustainable local government services, and in so doing will transform our borough into one that Croydonians can once again be proud to call home.

Change will not happen overnight but, over the next four years, I will put the Council back on track by working through our five priority outcomes and seizing the opportunity to do things differently. I want to improve the quality and responsiveness of the services we continue to provide, whilst being prudent with every penny of taxpayers' money.

I fully recognise that the scale of the financial challenge facing Croydon is almost without precedent in local government. That's why balancing the books, resolving the outstanding financial threats facing the Council, and putting our finances on a stable, secure footing will be the most important task of my Administration in the coming years.

To do that, the Council will need to continue to reduce spending for years to come. That will mean extremely difficult decisions about the services we continue to provide to residents and businesses. Ultimately the Council has to spend less and, in so doing, will be able to do less.

My overarching priority must be to deliver a wholesale transformation of the Council's way of working, so that we balance the budget and change how services are run. The Council will work more closely with our partners from the business, statutory, and voluntary sectors to bring more resources to the borough and to support and empower our diverse communities as we transform the Council and the borough.

At the same time, I will instil strong governance to ensure the mistakes of the past can never happen again and that the Council is once again listening to our residents' concerns. At the heart of this agenda will be a steadfast commitment to seek maximum value for money from every penny the Council spends.

Alongside addressing our financial challenge, I will refocus the Council on residents' core priorities. We will work to make Croydon a place of opportunity for business, earning and learning; to ensure every child and young person in Croydon has the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential; to make Croydon a cleaner, safer and healthier place; and to support our residents to live independently while ensuring the most vulnerable people are safe. Together with our communities and partners, we will restore pride in our borough.

While some of these priorities will require new funding, much can be achieved by getting better value from the money we already spend; making good use of technology; working more closely with our partners like the Police, the NHS and local community organisations; and ensuring the Council listens to and empowers residents to do more for themselves. I will not be able to do everything our community wants, and, in many instances, the Council will have to do less until we have managed to stabilise our finances. This isn't just about balancing the books. I am committed to creating a sustainable Council to support residents over the longer term.

Croydon Council has been in crisis for too long. Whilst I do not underestimate the scale of the challenge, I am confident we can and will change the Council for the better. This Business Plan sets out a positive but realistic vision of where we will be in four-years' time. A council which balances its budget, which listens to and works with residents and business, and which focuses its available resources on protecting vulnerable people and delivering core services well.

Jason Perry, Executive Mayor of Croydon



Outcomes and supporting priorities

1. The council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services

- Get a grip on the finances and make the Council financially sustainable.
- Become a council which listens to, respects and works in partnership with Croydon's diverse communities and businesses.
- Strengthen collaboration and joint working with partner organisations and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.
- Ensure good governance is embedded and adopt best practice.
- Develop our workforce to deliver in a manner that respects the diversity of our communities.



By transforming the Council, we will be better placed to achieve these outcomes:



2. Croydon is a place of opportunity for business, earning and learning

- Support the regeneration of Croydon's town and district centres, seeking inward investment and grants.
- Deliver a vibrant London Borough of Culture which showcases local talent and supports Croydon's recovery.
- Support the local economy and enable residents to upskill and access job opportunities.

3. Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential

- Ensure children and young people have opportunities to learn, develop and fulfil their potential.
- Make Croydon safer for young people.
- Work closely with health services, Police and the VCFS to keep vulnerable children and young people safe from harm.

4. Croydon is a cleaner, safer and healthier place, a borough we're proud to call home

- Make our streets and open spaces cleaner so Croydon is a place that residents and businesses can feel proud to call home.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour, knife crime and violence against women and girls so that Croydon feels safer.
- Invest in council homes to drive up standards and develop a more responsive and effective housing service.
- Ensure new homes are safe, well-designed and in keeping with the local area.
- Lead action to reduce carbon emissions in Croydon.

5. People can lead healthier and independent lives for longer

- Work with partners and the VCFS to promote independence, health and wellbeing and keep vulnerable adults safe.
- Work closely with health services and the VCFS to improve resident health and reduce health inequalities.
- Foster a sense of community and civic life.

Croydon at a glance

Population¹

Largest population in London (390,800), based on 2021 Census

- Most 0-19s in London (97,925)
- Most 20-64s in London (239,761)
- 3rd most over-65s out of 32 London boroughs (53,114)
- Projected growth 2022 - 2041, 7.9%²

Croydon's businesses

Home to **14,990** enterprises - 13th highest out of 32 London boroughs (2022).³



13,885 Micro
(0-9 employees)



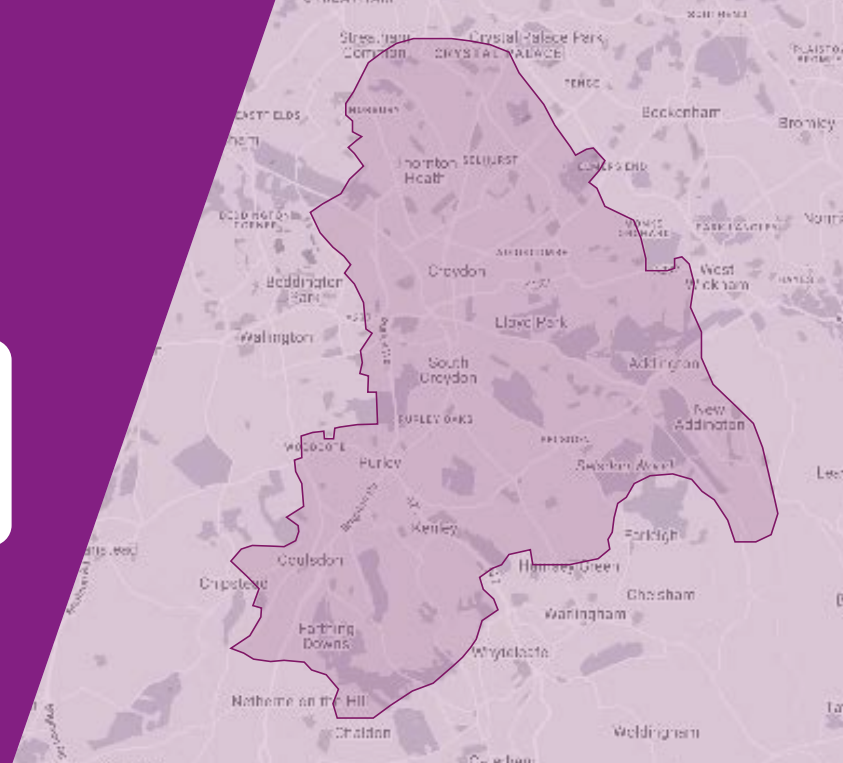
910 Small
(10-49 employees)



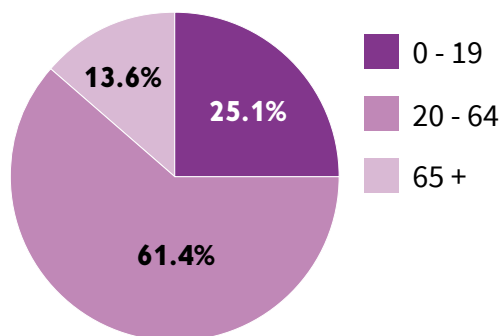
160 Medium
(50 to 249 employees)



35 Large
(over 250 employees)



Age in years (2021 Census)



Population change by age group in Croydon 2011-2021:

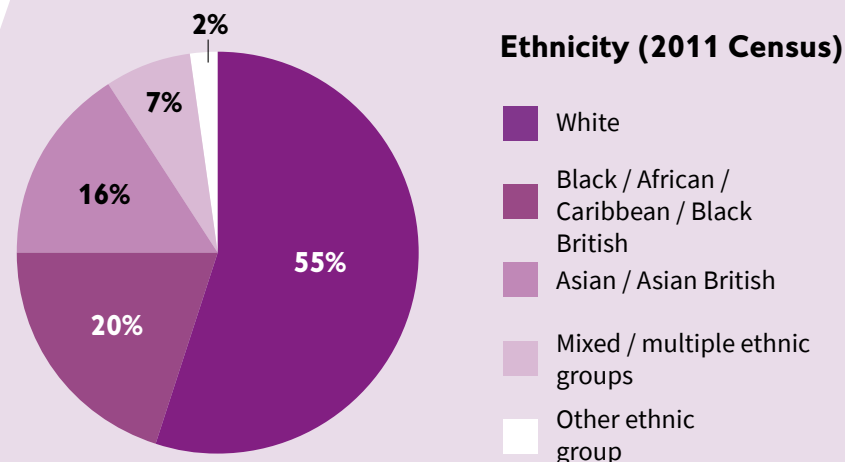
- Children aged 0-15 years increased by 1.5%
- People aged 16-64 years increased by 7.3%
- People aged 65 and over increased by 19.6%

Croydon's green space⁴



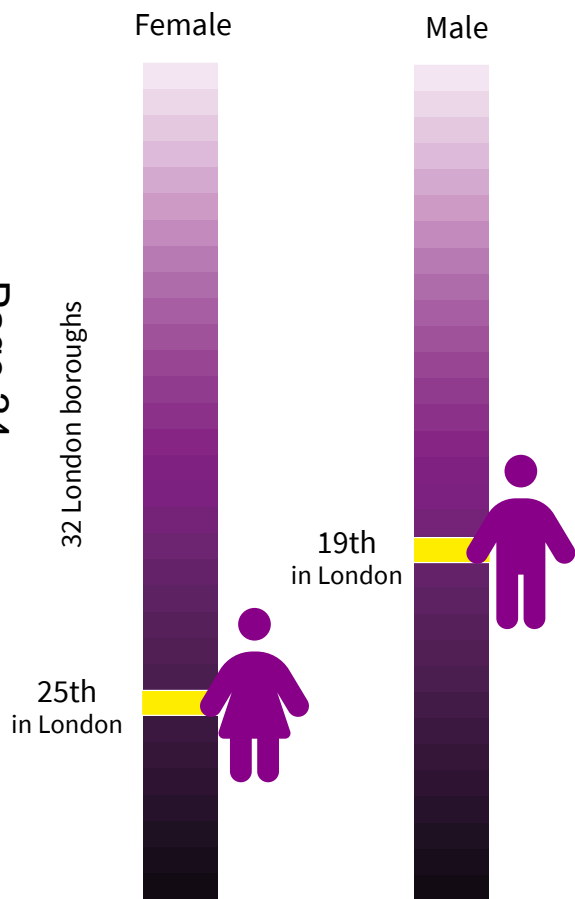
Diversity⁵

One of London's most diverse boroughs (2011 Census)



Challenges

London life expectancy at birth (2018-2020)



Gap in life expectancy at birth between most deprived and least deprived ward of the borough (2016-20)



Health Inequalities ⁶

Education ⁷

Early Years Foundation Stage

74.6% achieved a good level of development. London average 74.1%, national average 71.8% (2018/19)

74.6%

Key Stage 2

60% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. London average 65%; national average 58% (2021/22)

60%

Key Stage 2 8% of pupils reached a higher standard in reading, writing and maths. London average 11%; national average 7% (2021/22)

8%

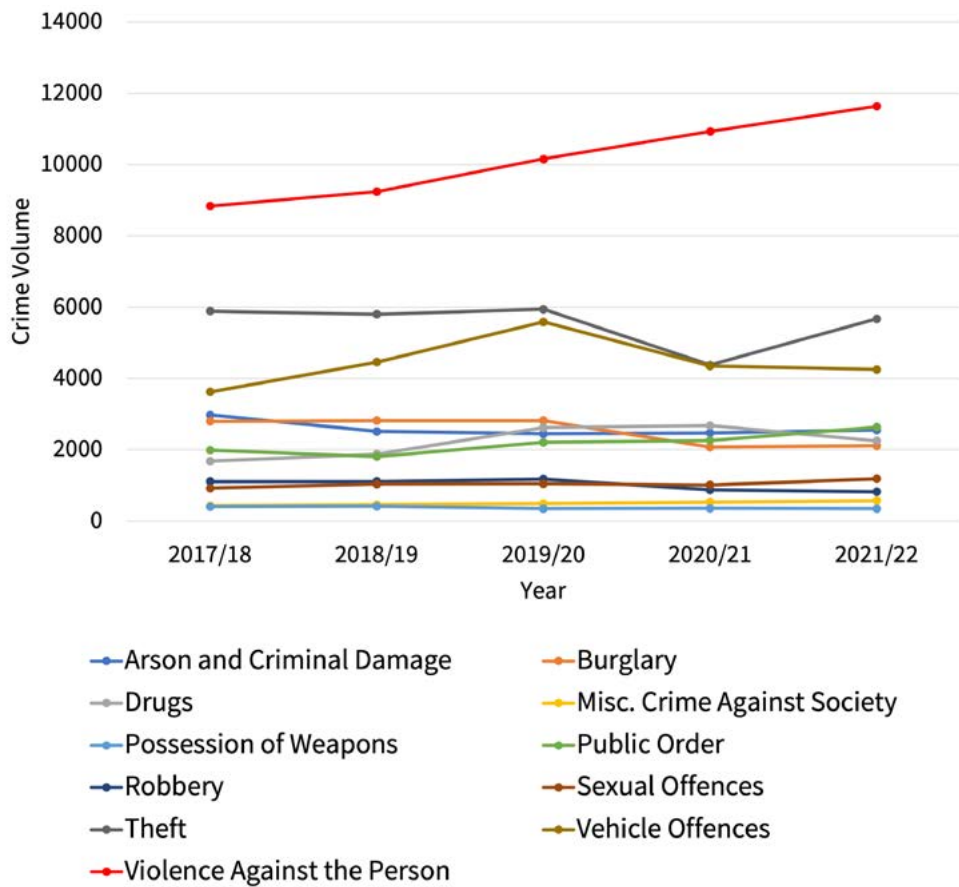
Key Stage 4 47.4 average Attainment 8 score per pupil. London average 52.6, national average 48.8 (2021/22)

47.4

Key Stage 4 48.7% of pupils achieved grades 9-5 in English and maths. London average 57.3%, national average 48.8% (2021/22)

48.7%

Volume of crime in Croydon by type in the last five years



40,437 offences in Croydon in the rolling 12 months to September 2022, 15th highest rate in London (out of 32). This is 103.6 per 1,000 population.

Crime ⁸

Children's and Adults' Social Care



Rate of **children looked after** within the 32 London authorities (March 2021)⁹

March 2021

683 children of which 211 were unaccompanied asylum seekers

July 2022

538 children of which 95 were unaccompanied asylum seekers



A rate of 970 per 100,000 18-64 year olds accessing long term support from **Adult Social Care** "at one point in the year" out of 31 London authorities. (2021/22)¹⁰

2021/22

2,325 18-64 year olds



A rate of 6,665 per 100,000 65+ year olds accessing long term support from **Adult Social Care** "at one point in the year" out of 31 London authorities. (2021/22)¹⁰

2021/22

3,600 65+ year olds



18th

£36,347

18th highest median annual income for full time workers. The London median annual income is £37,500 (2021).



17th most deprived London borough (2019)

**14,120
(5.7%)**

Percentage of 16-64 population out of work on Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit (September 2022)



8th in London

28.9%

Percentage of pupils in state-funded nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, non-maintained special schools and pupil referral units (does not include independent schools) known to be eligible for free school meals (January 2022)



10th in London



Croydon has 152,900 households, the highest number in London (Census 2021).

13,393 council homes, 12th most out of 33 London boroughs (2021)

Private rented - 35%

Social rented - 15%

Owner occupied - 50%

Tenure Profile Estimates (2019)

**50**

Number of food banks in the borough

**38 (17.4%)**

of LSOAs are in the top 20% most deprived in England (2019).

**121,000**

Employee Jobs (2021)

82,000 full-time
39,000 part-time



Houseprice to Earnings ratio

In Croydon average house prices were 11.88 times average earnings. London average 13.73; England 9.1 (2021).

Economy ¹¹

Housing ¹²

Outcome 1: The Council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services

Outcome 1 spans the activity of the whole Council and focuses on transforming the organisation into one that delivers sound, sustainable local government services. Owing to the Council's financial situation, we have fewer resources to spend on services for residents. Some services will have to stop; others will be targeted at people with the most need. In some cases, we will work with the community to help themselves and then help residents find the help they need. We must achieve all five of the priority aims below to transform the Council. Unless we do so, we will not be able to accomplish the other four outcomes in this plan.

1. Priority: Get a grip on the finances and make the Council financially sustainable

With the Council still reliant on Government support to stay afloat, getting a grip on the finances is a top priority. This will mean difficult but necessary decisions to make the Council financially sustainable for the future. We will instil financial discipline, make services more efficient and seek to get value for money from every penny of taxpayers' money we spend.

To do this we will:

- Deliver the savings in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and increase our income.
- Reduce council debt by selling or letting more council assets and repaying capital loans.
- Strengthen financial management systems, budget setting, controls and monitoring.
- Ensure all staff comply with finance and human resources procedures, controls and regulations.
- Deliver projects within budget, with governance controls on spending.

- Review the Housing Revenue Account to plan investment in council housing stock.
- Introduce robust contract management to ensure efficient, value for money services.
- Redesign services to improve efficiency and enhance residents' experience.
- Explore shared delivery of services where this could achieve economies of scale.



2. Priority: Become a council which listens to, respects and works in partnership with Croydon's diverse communities and businesses

For too long the Council has been an organisation which 'does to' residents rather than work with them. We will work to increase opportunities for residents to get involved in decisions and improvements that affect their lives and put local voices at the heart of the Council's work. We will ensure that all residents are treated fairly, with respect and dignity.

To do this we will:

- Hold regular Croydon Mayor's Question Time events around the borough.
- Actively listen to and take account of resident feedback.
- Develop new ways for residents and partner organisations to have their say on council decisions.
- Ensure the voices of children, young people and their families are heard and inform service development and commissioning.
- Improve customer service standards with a Croydon Customer Charter.
- Work with council tenants and leaseholders to deliver the Residents Charter.
- Make it easier to contact the Council and install a new, reliable telephone system.
- Improve responses to Mayor/Member enquiries, complaints and information requests.



3. Priority: Strengthen collaboration and joint working with partner organisations and the voluntary, community and faith sectors

To become financially sustainable the Council will have to deliver essential services within a smaller budget. It will not be able to meet residents' needs on its own. In some cases, others will have to take the lead in future, with the Council stepping back to adopt a supporting, partnership role. To achieve the outcomes Croydon needs, we must join efforts with all partners from the business, statutory, and voluntary sectors to bring more resources to the borough and to support and empower our communities to help themselves. The voluntary, community and faith sectors (VCFS) have an excellent track record of identifying local issues and reaching out to the most vulnerable in our communities. With its partners in the statutory and business sectors, the Council will build support for community and faith groups that play this vital role.

We will:

- Create closer relationships and joint working between the Council and our partners through revitalised partnerships.
- Work with our partners to support bids and bring new funding to the borough.
- Empower local VCFS organisations to bid for council contracts and opportunities.
- Transfer council-owned buildings to management by VCFS organisations where appropriate.
- Work with the health sector to provide coordinated support and funding for the VCFS.

4. Priority: Ensure good governance is embedded and adopt best practice

The Council must learn the lessons of past failures and embed sound governance processes to ensure that decision-making is transparent, open and honest. These must ensure effective control of our projects and programmes and encourage meaningful scrutiny and challenge.

To do this we will:

- Complete full implementation of recommendations in both Reports in the Public Interest.
- Introduce internal control boards to ensure good governance and project delivery to time and within budget.
- Ensure capital projects have clear outcomes and agreed budgets that are delivered.
- Train and enable staff and elected Members to perform their governance roles effectively.
- Publish a Forward Plan of the key council decisions to be made.
- Build staff understanding of and confidence in using the Council's whistle blowing policy.



5. Priority: Develop our workforce to deliver in a manner that respects the diversity of our communities

We have not always lived by our values. The Council needs to change how it works, actively put residents first and regain their trust. We need to strengthen leadership and management, develop behaviours aligned with the Council's values, improve staff skills, and create a psychologically safe and inclusive environment for all staff. We will support, develop and value our staff to ensure the Council is accessible and visible to our diverse communities and that it delivers the proactive and respectful services they expect and deserve.

To do this we will deliver a new People and Cultural Transformation Strategy to:

- Strengthen our leadership and management capabilities.
- Build an equal, diverse and inclusive workplace.
- Prioritise the health, wellbeing and resilience of our staff, where staff can thrive and are engaged and motivated to deliver positive outcomes for our diverse communities.
- Build our skills and capabilities and optimise our performance.
- Acquire and retain talent, responding to skills gaps in the context of a more competitive recruitment market.
- Establish a market leading reward package for staff.
- Develop an employer brand to attract employees who share the Council's values.

Outcome 2: Croydon is a place of opportunity for business, earning and learning

1. Priority: Support the regeneration of Croydon's town and district centres, seeking inward investment and grants

The Council will work with businesses and residents to develop a new, sustainable plan to regenerate Croydon town centre that responds to changes in the retail and leisure industry. Together we will develop collaborative strategies, seek inward investment and apply for grants to revive our high streets and district hubs, and unleash Croydon's economic potential.

2. Priority: Deliver a vibrant London Borough of Culture which showcases local talent and supports Croydon's recovery

Being awarded the status of Borough of Culture 2023 brings funding for a programme that will put the spotlight on Croydon's amazing cultural, arts and music offer. The celebration will showcase a diverse range of local artists, cultural organisations and venues and will see Fairfield Halls once again playing a key role in local cultural life.



With our partners we will:

- Develop and deliver a clear shared vision with businesses, developers and residents to steer our town centre and high street recovery.
- Launch an exciting inward investment campaign for Croydon to attract new businesses and jobs in growth sectors.
- Work with and encourage more business associations or Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to bring businesses together and foster recovery in district centres.
- Reopen Purley Pool and Leisure Centre at the heart of Purley town centre.

We will work with our partners to:

- Deliver the Borough of Culture programme of Flagship Events across the borough that puts Croydon on the map.
- Set up an Ignite Fund to empower local artists and cultural enterprises to get involved.
- Offer an attractive annual programme of cultural and community events.
- Work with partners to re-establish Fairfield Halls as one of the premier cultural venues in South London.
- Attract inward investment in culture, creating a legacy.



3. Priority: Support the local economy and enable residents to upskill and access job opportunities

We will convene partners, developers, investors and Croydon's diverse communities to create economic opportunity for all and enable residents to develop the skills needed to access it.

To do this, we will:

- Use the Council's spending power to buy and employ locally, offer local providers the opportunity to join our supply chains and encourage anchor organisations to do likewise whilst still ensuring value for money.
- Pay the London Living Wage, encouraging our suppliers and other employers to do so.
- Work with training providers and businesses to equip and enable residents to fill jobs in growth sectors and move up career paths.
- Use the social value element of our contracts to ensure that suppliers use local resources such as Croydon Works, Croydon College, London South Bank University and Croydon Commitment.



Outcome 3: Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential

1. Priority: Ensure children and young people have opportunities to learn, develop and fulfil their potential

Croydon is a young borough, with the largest population of under-18s in London. We want to celebrate their talents and achievements and work with partners to enable our children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, to fulfil their potential.

We will:

- Enable more pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to attend and thrive in Croydon schools.
- Develop an effective Education Partnership with schools.
- Work with schools to improve support for vulnerable pupils and to continue to reduce exclusions.
- Explore with young people, the VCFS, providers and businesses how we can improve access to youth services in Croydon.
- Develop and deliver an Early Years Strategy to ensure every child is given the best start in life.
- Work with all education providers to improve attendance, inclusion and standards for all, so that more of our children and young people can fulfil their potential.
- Celebrate the talents of our young people by supporting initiatives such as 'Croydon has talent'.



2. Priority: Make Croydon safer for young people

Making the borough safer for our young people is a top priority. In the year to July 2022, serious youth violence in Croydon rose by almost a quarter compared to the previous 12 months. We will work as one Council to strengthen partnerships with the voluntary, business and statutory sectors and schools in Croydon to tackle the root causes of youth crime, protect those at risk of offending and embed a strong joint approach to prevent youth violence and help our young people to be, and feel, safe.



We will:

- As one council, develop and deliver a youth safety plan with our partners that leads to a reduction in serious youth violence and exploitation and keeps young people safe, seeking government funding to cut youth crime.
- Reduce the severity of the impact of gang activity and exploitation on children and young people in Croydon.
- Work with partners to provide mentors for young people in care or excluded from school.
- Develop and implement the Holiday Activities and Food programme to fund school holiday activities and nutritious food for as many young people eligible for free school meals as possible.

3. Priority: Work closely with health services, Police and the VCFS to keep vulnerable children and young people safe from harm

The Council will work with partners including schools to help families earlier when problems arise. We will support families to stay together where it is safe to do so by providing targeted holistic and integrated support. Where statutory services are needed, these will be of good quality and provide value for money. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a corporate parent to ensure children and young people who need to be in our care, and those leaving our care, have the best start in life.

We will:

- Transform and redesign services such as early help and family hubs so families can access the right support in the right place at the right time, reducing the need for statutory support and intervention.
- Review the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership to embed the commitment to safeguard children and young people by all partners.
- Implement a programme of continuous improvement to sustain the quality of services relating to children, young people and education.
- Implement inspection recommendations and benchmark services, bringing spending on social care for children down to the average for similar London councils by 2023/24.



Outcome 4: Croydon is a cleaner, safer and healthier place, a borough we're proud to call home

1. Priority: Make our streets and open spaces cleaner so that Croydon is a place that residents and businesses can feel proud to call home

Residents expect and deserve to feel proud of our borough as they walk down the street. That means working with them and partners to look after our streets, parks and open spaces, and crack down on the graffiti and litter which blight our communities.



We will:

- Review the street cleaning and refuse collection contract.
- Work with partners and Street Champions on a targeted area-based approach to cleaning up our district centres.
- Reintroduce a graffiti removal service.
- Seek funding to improve the public realm of our town centre and district centres, including replacing underpasses with surface level crossings.
- Strengthen our relationship with 'Friends' Groups, giving them a stronger voice and supporting their initiatives.

2. Priority: Tackle anti-social behaviour, knife crime and violence against women and girls so that Croydon feels safer

Ensuring our borough is and feels like a safe place to live is a top priority. We will strengthen partnerships between the voluntary, business and statutory sectors in Croydon to share intelligence and coordinate action. The Safer Croydon Partnership will be restructured, with six delivery boards focussed on violence against women and girls, youth safety, hot spot areas, counter-terrorism, substance misuse and community engagement. We will support the Police to tackle crime and violence in our borough. We recognise what 'Friends' Groups can do to tackle low level anti-social behaviour (ASB) and will work with residents and partners to crack down on ASB hot spots.

We will:

- Strengthen the role that the Safer Croydon Partnership takes to tackle crime and violence, supported by a substance misuse board to deliver on the Government's 10-year programme.
- Review the Community Safety Strategy to focus it on three delivery priorities: violence against women and girls, youth safety and hot spot areas.
- Crack down on ASB hot spots by working with the Police to introduce Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and other appropriate measures.
- Develop and deliver a plan to tackle violence against women and girls by building on our work to tackle domestic abuse, responding to the voices of victims and survivors, and working to stop the perpetrators of violence.

3. Priority: Invest in council homes to drive up standards and develop a more responsive and effective housing service

Council tenants and leaseholders expect warm, safe and dry homes, well-maintained by their landlord, but too often the Council has fallen well short of this basic standard. We will transform the housing service to invest in and improve standards in council homes and to put residents at the heart of decisions about the housing service. A renewed focus on tenants will ensure they are treated with respect and their issues and complaints are responded to promptly and effectively.

We will:

- Work with tenants to transform the Housing Directorate into an effective and responsive service as set out in a revised Housing Improvement Plan.
- Introduce a new, effective and responsive housing repairs service.
- Develop an asset management strategy to invest in our council homes, modernise and bring them up to a standard fit for the 21st century.
- Invest in and provide affordable homes.
- Prevent homelessness by providing advice, guidance and appropriate support.
- Review procurement of temporary accommodation for homeless people to obtain value for money.

4. Priority: Ensure new homes are safe, well-designed and in keeping with the local area

New development will be design-led, not density-led. While we must continue to plan for new homes, schemes must respect the views of local people, enhance the character of our places, and recognise the need for amenity space.

We will:

- Review Croydon's Local Plan to remove intensification zones, support sustainable development and emphasise design and character over density.
- Revoke the SPD2 Suburban Design Guide.
- Review conservation areas to ensure the borough's special places are protected for generations to come.
- Review the planning and enforcement service to identify the resources needed to improve the service for customers.
- Enforce policies to tackle the cumulative impact of houses in multiple occupation.
- Review the building control service to ensure it can fulfil current statutory duties and new obligations relating to building safety.



5. Priority: Lead action to reduce carbon emissions in Croydon

Tackling the Climate Emergency is vital, but it is not something we can do alone. The Council will lead a borough-wide partnership to secure external funding and focus efforts on driving down carbon emissions.

We will work with partners across the borough to:

- Embed climate adaptation and carbon reduction in the strategies of the Council and its key partners.
- Drive a green economic recovery, developing skills and local retrofit capacity.
- Develop a pipeline of retrofit projects and promote public transport and active travel.
- Encourage people, businesses and partners to take action to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency.
- Lobby government and the GLA for regulation and funding to scale up action.



Outcome 5: People can lead healthier and independent lives for longer

1. Priority: Work with partners and the VCFS to promote independence, health and wellbeing and keep vulnerable adults safe

We will harness all the skills and experience available to improve health and wellbeing in the borough, enable people to live independently for as long as possible, and keep adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect safe. We will work with partner organisations, including Health, the private sector and voluntary organisations to put residents at the heart of policy making, commissioning and service design.

We will:

- Work with partners through the new Adult Social Care and Health Improvement Board to develop a sustainable model of adult social care for the future.
- Involve residents through a strengths-based approach to practice and commissioning, and co-design our future engagement model with people with lived experience.
- Maximise prevention, early intervention and independence, and manage demand for statutory services, by developing our reablement, direct payments, and care technology offers.
- Commission cost-effective services and continue to work with providers to support and develop the market to meet local need in innovative ways.
- Work with partners and stakeholders to recognise and support carers.
- Support and progress health and care integration where this benefits residents.
- Collaborate with partners to make Croydon a dementia friendly borough.
- Support the development of homes that promote independence.



2. Priority: Work closely with health services and the VCFS to improve resident health and reduce health inequalities

Following the pandemic tackling inequality and improving the health of our residents is more important than ever. We will build on our already close partnership with the local NHS to improve public and mental health, reduce inequalities and provide targeted support for those with long-term conditions.

We will:

- Work with individuals, communities and the NHS to promote and increase life expectancy.
- Reduce inequalities in provision for our diverse communities across the borough.
- Advocate and lobby for proportionate NHS funding to reflect the health inequalities within Croydon.
- Target health checks with the aim of reducing the impact of long-term health conditions.
- Work with the NHS to provide an effective vaccination programme for Covid and flu and advocate for immunisation for all communicable diseases where scheduled vaccination provides protection.
- Develop an updated multi-agency harm reduction and suicide prevention strategy.

3. Priority: Foster a sense of community and civic life

Croydon's sense of community spirit is one of our greatest strengths. We will increase pride in Croydon and continue to foster a vibrant and active civic life, celebrating the contribution of different communities and creating opportunities for people to come together and share their experiences and histories.

We will:

- Foster good community relations.
- Facilitate community action and celebrate residents' contributions.
- Speak up for Croydon and celebrate the borough's sense of place and its traditions and history.



Ensuring delivery of the plan

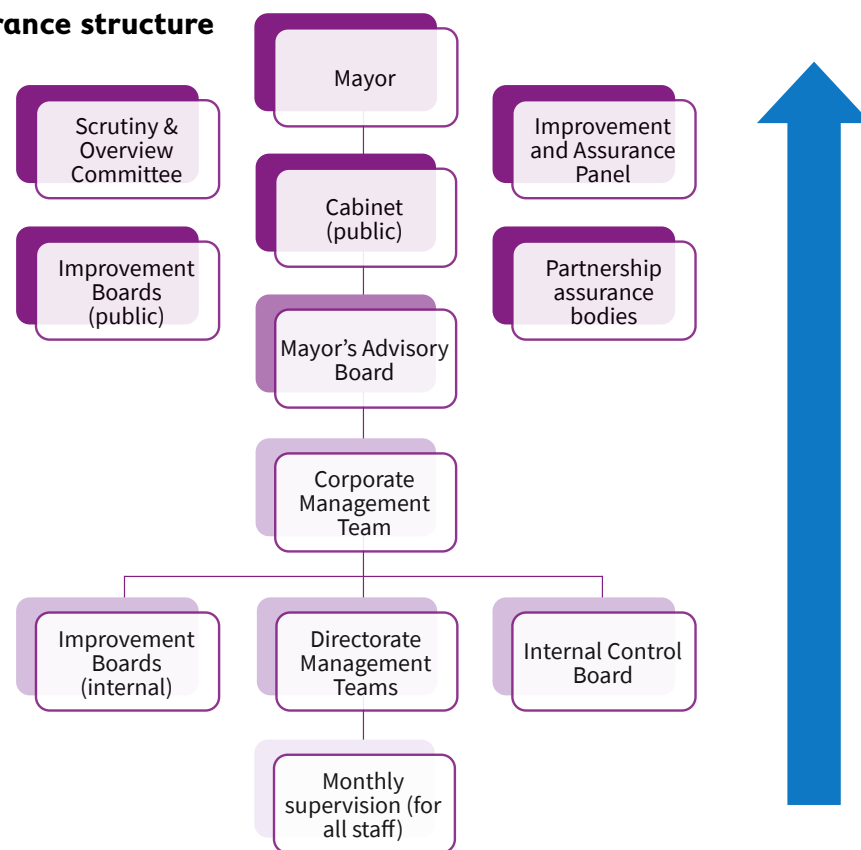
The Mayor's Business Plan will create a new set of objectives throughout the organisation and be developed into themed strategies, detailed plans for each directorate and the service plans. These will inform the personal objectives of every member of staff. The Plan includes action to strengthen the Council's management systems of programmes and projects, as well as internal controls and performance management and monitoring. All council staff are receiving training to ensure that they comply with the required procedures and controls. This should produce timely and accurate information that will enable management to intervene when and where necessary.

We will ensure the implementation of this Plan through themed Internal Control Boards. These take operational decisions and provide the Corporate Management Team (CMT) with assurance that expected outputs are developed and delivered within agreed timescales and cost and to the right standard. A set of key performance indicators (KPIs) will track progress in delivery of the actions in the plan and achieving our outcomes and priority aims. These will be reported regularly to CMT, the Mayor in Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee and other appropriate regulatory committees of the Council. They will also be viewed by the Government appointed Improvement and Assurance Panel that reports to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Chain of objectives



Assurance structure



References

1. Population: Source - Office of National Statistics (ONS), 2021 Census. See www.croydonobservatory.org.
2. Projected growth 2022-41: Source - GLA 2020 based housing led projections.
3. Croydon's businesses: Source - ONS UK business counts 2022.
4. Croydon's green space: Source - Croydon.gov.uk Locally Listed Historic Parks and Gardens.
5. Diversity: Source – ONS, 2011 Census (Census data not available at time of publication. See www.croydonobservatory.org).
6. Health Inequalities: Source: Office of Health Inequality and Disparities (OHID) Fingertips Public Health data.
7. Education: Source - Department for Education statistics. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2021/22 results not available at time of publication.
8. Crime: Source - Metropolitan Police Service Crime Dashboard September 2022.
9. Rate of children looked after: Source - Department for Education Statistics: looked-after children.
10. Adults Social Care: Source - NHS Digital Adult social care activity and finance report 2021-22.
11. Economy: Sources - ONS Annual survey of hours and earnings, 2021; Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019, English indices of deprivation 2019 (LSOA - lower super output area); ONS Claimant Count September 2022; Department for Education statistics on school pupils and their characteristics (free school meals); croydon.simplyconnect.uk (foodbanks); ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (employee jobs).
12. Housing: Sources – ONS Census 2021 (households); ONS Local authority housing statistics data returns 2020-21 (council homes); [Metastreet Survey \(2019\)](#) (Census 2021 data on tenure not available at time of publication); ONS Housing affordability in England and Wales (2021).

26th April 2022

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of the 16th March.

My Chief Executive has responded to your Officials to confirm that the Council welcomes the continuation of the Improvement and Assurance Panel's support for Croydon's transformation. I also want to thank you for the recognition in your letter and Written Ministerial Statement of the good progress my Administration and Officer team are making and the importance of protecting and enhancing the momentum we have developed.

I recognise that the scale of the Capitalisation Direction support which has been necessary in order to help Croydon address its outstanding historic financial mismanagement issues, means the Department rightly requires a greater level of assurance over our improvement.

Whilst we have made some specific suggestions on the terms of reference for the new Improvement and Assurance Panel mandate, we overall accept and understand the desire to formalise our current arrangements. We will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the Panel and your Department to ensure Croydon benefits from all the support possible to put right the problems left by the previous Labour Administration.

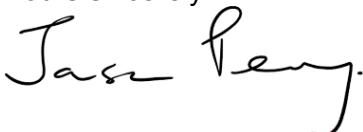
We have already begun work with the Panel to define an 'exit strategy', setting out the improvements needed in the Council over the coming years. Primary amongst these will be to return Croydon to a sustainable financial footing. As we have previously discussed, however, the increasing cost of servicing the £1.6bn debt left by the previous Administration, and the fact Croydon does not have anywhere near sufficient assets to sell to substantially reduce it, means we will not reach sustainability without long-term support from Government to reduce our toxic debt burden.

Whilst I am committed to taking the tough decisions necessary to reduce costs and improve efficiency in the Council, this alone cannot meet the scale of challenge presented by our historic debt level. This is not something we will be able to fix alone. I welcome the work which is underway with your Officials to explore options for a resolution to this issue and I look forward to working with you over the coming months to find a solution which both allows Croydon to return to financial sustainability and protects the public purse. This is a real priority and an issue which we will need to resolve by the Autumn, to give the Council certainty about its financial envelope for the 2024/25 budget setting process.

Considering the ongoing challenges facing my Local Authority, I would welcome the opportunity for a six-monthly political level meeting between the two of us, our respective Officers and Officials, and the Chair of the Improvement and Assurance Panel to give us a collective opportunity to review progress. If you are open to such a suggestion, I will ask my office to coordinate with yours to identify suitable dates.

It has been my priority since my election in May 2022 to sort out the terrible financial and governance fiascos that I have inherited. Once again may I thank you for your support in helping us to deal with these issues and start to restore pride to Croydon.

Yours sincerely



Mayor Jason Perry
Executive Mayor of Croydon

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Scrutiny & Overview Committee	
DATE OF DECISION	6 June 2023	
REPORT TITLE:	Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24, including the re-establishment of the Homes Sub-Committee	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer	
LEAD OFFICER:	Adrian May Interim Head of Democratic Services	
LEAD MEMBER:	Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee	
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	<p>In accordance with paragraph 1.2 (vi) of Part 4E - Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules, in the Council's Constitution, the Committee should agree an initial scrutiny work programme at its first full meeting after the Annual Council meeting.</p> <p>In accordance with paragraph 1.2 (iv) in part 4.E – Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee has the ability to appoint such Sub-Committees as it considers appropriate, by resolution determining the terms of reference and membership including the appointment of a Chair and Vice-Chair.</p> <p>Additionally, paragraph 2.4 of the same procedure rules allows for appointments to Sub- Committees to be varied by resolution of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at any point during the Municipal Year.</p>	
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	N/A	

1. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24 AND R E-ESTABLISHMENT OF HOMES SUB-COMMITTEE

- 1.1. This report sets out for the agreement of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee the underlying principles to guide the work programmes of the Committee and its Sub-Committees. A further report providing more further detail on the work programme will be brought back to the next Committee meeting on 25 July 2023.

- 1.2. The report also proposes the re-establishment of the Homes Sub-Committee and Streets & Environment Sub-Committee arrangement and a change to the membership of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee, as agreed by the political groups on the Council. The proposed membership can be found in the accompanying Appendix 1 to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to:
 1. Agree the underlying principles to guide the work of the Council's Scrutiny function in the forthcoming year.
 2. Agree that the remit of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee will be divided through the formation of a separate Homes Sub-Committee until the end of 2024-25 municipal year.
 3. Agree that the terms of reference agreed for both the Streets & Environment and the Homes Sub-Committees in October 2022, as outlined in section 6, remain valid and are agreed.
 4. Agree to waive the requirement for the seats on the Sub-Committees to be allocated in line with the overall political balance of the Council.
 5. Agree the appointments (including regular and reserve members and chairs and vice-chairs) to the Sub-Committees as set out in Appendix 1.
 6. Note that Sub-Committee arrangements will revert to three sub-committees (Children & Young People, Health & Social Care and Streets, Environment & Homes) from the start of the 2025-26 municipal year, unless the Scrutiny & Overview Committee resolves otherwise.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Following media reports of the housing conditions at Council owned properties on Regina Road leading to the Housing Improvement Plan in 2021, the work programme of the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee has predominantly focussed on housing issues at the expense of issues relating to its streets and environment brief. To ensure that there is sufficient room in the work programme for housing related items and as housing is a key priority for the Council, a new, time limited, Homes Sub-Committee was established in October 2022 to sit alongside a reformatted Streets & Environment Sub-Committee. This arrangement was initially made on a trial basis until the end of 2022-23 municipal year.
- 3.2. As the initial trial of the Homes Sub-Committee revealed that there was a lot more work to do on the improvement journey, and the budget work highlighted that there was a lot more to be done on temporary and emergency accommodation, both in terms of the service we were offering and the huge cost it was giving us, it is proposed that this arrangement of scrutiny sub-committees continues for a further two years, until the end of the 2024-25 municipal year, at which point it will be reviewed. To re-

establish the Homes Sub-Committee and the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee requires a resolution of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee, which is the reason for the recommendations set out in the report.

4. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

- 4.1. As noted above, in accordance with paragraph 1.2 (vi) of Part 4E - Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules, in the Council's Constitution, the Committee should agree an initial scrutiny work programme at its first full meeting after the Annual Council meeting. In line with the principle followed at the start of the last municipal year, at its first meeting, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to agree the guiding principles that will form the underlying basis for including items in the work programme. These principles will be used by the Committee and its sub-committees filter items for inclusion in the work programme for the year ahead. A full, outline work programme will be brought to the next Committee meeting on 25 July 2023.
- 4.2. In between this meeting and the next on 25 July 2023, the Sub-Committees (Children & Young People Sub-Committee, Health & Social Care Sub-Committee, Homes and Streets & Environment Sub-Committee) will each hold their own meetings. The discussions at these meeting, along with other informal discussions, will be used by the Scrutiny Work Programming Group to draft a outline work programme for the agreement of the Committee on 25 July.
- 4.3. The financial recovery of the Council will continue to remain the primary focus of Scrutiny and it is against this backdrop that the Committee is asked to agree the following underlying principles for the development of the work programme: -
 1. **The Public's Money.** Scrutiny wants reassurance that taxpayers' money is put to best use. At a time when the Council is making cuts to balance the books, it has no money to waste. In the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, every pound of public money should be valued. Scrutiny will aim to look at the impact of any financial decisions on the public and the Council's finances, including knock-on effects. We will aim to research best practice and to provide suggestions as well as criticism.
 2. **The Public's Services.** Scrutiny wants reassurance that services are improving. This is about leadership, culture and organisation as much as it is about budgets. We will seek reassurance that even in difficult financial circumstances, we are still meeting our duty of care to the most vulnerable. Scrutiny will listen and learn from the public's experiences of service performance to guide its work on Croydon's transformation.
 3. **The Public's Voice.** Scrutiny wants to make sure that the Council is transparent, open and engaging with the people it exists to serve. Scrutiny will monitor the planned improvements in governance for Croydon's local democracy, as well as inviting public voices into the Scrutiny process itself. The Mayor was elected on a mandate to "listen to Croydon" and Scrutiny will hold the executive to account for this pledge.

5. RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

- 5.1. As set out in paragraph 1.2 (iv) in Part 4E – Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules in the Council’s Constitution, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee is permitted to set up any sub-committees it considers appropriate. To do this the Committee must take a resolution determining terms of reference and membership including the appointment of a Chair and Vice-Chair. This report will set out both proposed terms of reference and memberships for the both the Streets & Environment and Homes Sub-Committees for the Committee’s approval.
- 5.2. Given that the Homes Sub-Committee has been set up to increase the capacity of Scrutiny to scrutinise the Council’s response to the challenges within the Housing Service, it is proposed that the new sub-committee is set up until the end of 2024-25 municipal year. At which point the Scrutiny Chairs will review whether it is still needed.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE.

- 6.1. As originally agreed by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 18 October 2022, to facilitate re-establishing the Homes Sub-Committee, it is proposed that the homes remit will be removed from the terms of reference for the Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee and used to create two new sub-committees. These will be known as the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee and the Homes Sub-Committee.
- 6.2. The proposed terms of reference for the two new sub-committees for the agreement of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee are: -

Streets & Environment Sub-Committee

1.To scrutinise:

- a. The built environment
- b. Planning policies
- c. Public realm
- d. Transport
- e. Highways and streets
- f. Green and clean
- g. The environment, conservation, climate change and sustainability

2. To scrutinise Flood Risk Management and report findings direct to the Cabinet and/ or other partners.

Homes Sub-Committee

1.To scrutinise:

- a. Housing policies

- b. Housing Needs
- c. Housing Improvement Plan (led by the Housing Improvement Board)
- d. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- e. Temporary & Emergency Accommodation
- f. Housing Associations in the borough
- g. Social Housing, including responsive repairs and planned maintenance
- h. Housing Revenue Account
- i. Private Sector Accommodation And Landlords

7 POLITICAL BALANCE AND THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEES

- 7.1 If the changes set out above are agreed, the Committee needs to constitute its sub-committees having regard to the rules on political balance. The rules on political balance and committees / sub-committees are set out in sections 15 to 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the 1989 Act) and supplemented by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
- 7.2 The Committee is required to review the representation of different political groups on its sub-committee in specified circumstances. As soon as practicable after the review, the Committee then has a duty to determine the allocation to the different political groups all the seats on its sub-committee.
- 7.3 The allocation is determined by applying the political balance rules prescribed by section 15(5) of the 1989 Act. These rules are set out in the next paragraph and are designed to ensure that the political composition of the Council's committees and sub-committees, as far as possible, replicates the political composition of the Council.
- 7.4 The rules are that seats on relevant committees / sub-committees must be allocated to different political groups (i.e. a group of two or more members), so far as reasonably practicable, in accordance with the following four principles:
 - (a) That not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group. In other words, committees/sub-committees comprising solely of members of the same political group are not allowed.
 - (b) That the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the Council's membership. As no political group has an overall majority, this rule is not applicable.
 - (c) Subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that each political group is allocated the same proportion of the total seats across all the *ordinary committees* of

the Council as the proportion of the members of the Council that belong to that group. In other words, the total number of seats on certain committees have to be taken together and then allocated proportionately to each political group so far as is possible. This rule is not applicable to sub-committees.

- (d) Subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that each political group is allocated the same proportion of the seats on each relevant body as the proportion of the members of the Council that belong to that group.

- 7.5. Following the mayoral and local elections in May 2022 and the by-elections on 30 June and 3 November 2022, the two main political groups in the Council remain as the Labour Group and the Conservative Group. The Council also has two Green Party Members (who have constituted a political group) and one Liberal Democrat Member.
- 7.6. For the purposes of political balance calculations, the membership of the Council in percentage terms breakdowns as follows:

Political Group/ Ungrouped Member	Members	Percentage
Conservative	34	47.9%
Labour	34	47.9%
Green	2	2.8%
Liberal Democratic	1	1.4%

- 7.7. Paragraph 1.3 of the Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution states –
- ‘Any Sub-Committees of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee shall comprise of a minimum of 7 Members, appointed in accordance with the overall political balance of the Council.’
- 7.8. Clearly, as the Conservative and Labour groups have equality of Members on the Council, with no political group having overall control, it is not possible to achieve proportionality or fairness without an even number of seats on each new Scrutiny Sub-Committee. This would require there to be a membership of eight councillors (four Conservative and four Labour) on the two new respective Sub-Committees.
- 7.9. Scrutiny can be most effective when there is input from a range of different voices into the process, working together to improve outcomes for the good of the whole borough. Given the makeup of the Council includes representatives from the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats, the two main groups have agreed informally to waive the

requirement in this instance for seats to be allocated in line with the overall political balance of the Council. This would allow both the Homes Sub-Committee and the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee to be set up with seven members, allocated as follows.

Sub-Committee	Conservative seats	Labour seats	Green seats	Liberal Democrat seats
Homes	3	3	1	-
Streets & Environment	3	3	-	1

- 7.10. Following consultation with the Conservative and Labour groups, and in accordance with their wishes, the Committee is recommended to appoint the Members and reserves, including appointing Chairs and Vice-Chairs, to the Streets & Environment and Homes Sub-Committees, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 7.11. Following the appointments to scrutiny sub-committees made at the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting immediately after the Annual Council meeting on 17 May 2023, a commitment was given that the two largest political groups on the Council would review the allocation of Chair and Vice-Chair roles on the scrutiny sub-committees to ensure they better reflected the overall political balance of the Council. A change to the appointment for Vice-Chair of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee had been proposed as a result of this review, which is also set out in appendix 1 for the agreement of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 For the political balance requirement to be waived it requires that no Member of the Committee vote against the proposals. If a Member does vote against the proposals, then the allocation of Sub-Committee seats will revert back to the political balance allocation outlined above.

9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Political group leads have been approached in advance of the meeting to consult on the proposal to waive the requirement for political balance in making appointments to the Scrutiny Sub-Committees.

10. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 10.1 This report contributes to priority 1: The Council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Proposed Membership of Scrutiny Sub-Committees

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Appendix 1

Updated Scrutiny Sub-Committee Appointments 2023-24

A. SCRUTINY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUB-COMMITTEE (Change to the Reserve Members)	
(Membership 13 - 8 Members and 5 Co-optees (1 non-voting))	
Labour Group Members to be appointed: 4	Conservative Group Members to be appointed: 4
1. Maddie Henson (VC)	1. Richard Chatterjee (C)
2. Mike Bonello	2. Holly Ramsey
3. Manju Shahul-Hameed	3. Mark Johnson
4. Catherine Wilson	4. Helen Redfern
RESERVE MEMBERS	
1. Amy Foster	1. Adele Benson
2. Tamar Barrett	2. Samir Dwesar
3. Eunice O'Dame	3. Luke Shortland
	4. Fatima Zaman
CO-OPTES	
1. Voting Governor Rep	(Vacant)
2. Voting Governor Rep	Paul O'Donnell
3. Voting Diocesan Rep	Elaine Jones (Catholic Diocese)
4. Voting Diocesan Rep	(Vacant) (Anglican Diocese)
5. Non-voting Teachers Rep	Josephine Copeland

B. SCRUTINY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SUB-COMMITTEE (Reallocation of Vice-Chair appointment and membership change)	
(Membership 8 - 6 Members and 2 Co-optee (non-voting))	
Labour Group Members to be appointed: 3	Conservative Group Members to be appointed: 3
1. Eunice O'Dame (C)	1. Adele Benson
2. Patsy Cummings	2. Holly Ramsey
3. Sherwan Chowdhury	3. Robert Ward (VC)
RESERVE MEMBERS	
1. Humayan Kabir	1. Sue Bennett
2. Ellily Ponnuthurai	2. Mark Johnson
3. Manju Shahul-Hameed	3. Helen Redfern
CO-OPTEE (non-voting)	
1. Gordon Kay (Healthwatch Croydon)	
2. Yusuf Osman (Social Services Users Representative)	

C. SCRUTINY STREETS AND ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

(Change in membership, including Chair & Vice-Chair appointment)

(Membership 7)

Labour Group Members to be appointed: 3	Conservative Group Members to be appointed: 3	Green Group Members to be appointed: 1
1. Louis Carserides (VC)	1. Danielle Denton	1. Ria Patel (C)
2. Stella Nabukeera	2. Gayle Gander	
3. Ellily Ponnuthurai	3. Luke Shortland	
RESERVE MEMBERS		
1. Leila Ben Hassel	1. Adele Benson	1. Esther Sutton
2. Sherwan Chowdhury	2. Samir Dwesar	
3. Mohammed Islam	3. Simon Fox	

C. SCRUTINY HOMES SUB-COMMITTEE

(New sub-committee: Membership, Chair and Vice-Chair appointments)

(Membership 7)

Labour Group Members to be appointed: 3	Conservative Group Members to be appointed: 3	Lib Dem Member to be appointed: 1
1. Kola Agboola	1. Sue Bennett	1. Claire Bonham
2. Leila Ben Hassel (C)	2. Adele Benson	
3. Ellily Ponnuthurai	3. Danielle Denton (VC)	
RESERVE MEMBERS		
1. Clive Fraser	1. Richard Chatterjee	
2. Alisa Flemming	2. Joseph Lee	
3. Brigitte Graham	3. Nikhil Sherine Thampi	

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Scrutiny and Overview Committee
DATE	6 June 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Scrutiny Recommendations
LEAD OFFICER:	Simon Trevaskis – Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer - Scrutiny
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Councillor Rowenna Davis – Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee
ORIGIN OF ITEM:	<p>The Scrutiny & Overview Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution requires recommendations from Scrutiny Sub-Committee's to be submitted to the Committee for its comment and consideration, before approving their submission to the appropriate decision maker.</p> <p>The Cabinet response to recommendations made by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee is provided for the Committee's information.</p>
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	<p>The Scrutiny & Overview Committee is asked to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the recommendations made by its Sub-Committee's for submission to the Executive Mayor for his consideration. 2. Review the response provided by Mayor to recommendations made by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee. 3. To agree whether to make any formal recommendations arising from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting held on 22 May 2023.
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report sets out for the consideration of the Committee the recommendations arising from recent meetings of its Sub-Committee. These are presented in accordance with the Council's Constitution for approval by the Committee for submission to the appropriate decision maker. The recommendations set out in Appendix A are from the meeting of the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 March 2023 and relate to the following items: -

- Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract Specification (recommendations SE.1.23/24 to SE.3.23/24)
- Local Planning Authority Service Transformation (recommendation SE.4.23/24)

- 1.2. This report also sets out the response from the Mayor in Cabinet to recommendations made by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee. This is provided for the information of the Committee in Appendix B.
- 1.3. The meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting held on 22 May 2023 was unexpectedly ended prematurely by a fire alarm before the Committee had the opportunity to finalise its conclusions and recommendations on the Annual Asset Disposal Plan 2023/24 or to review the Waste and Street Cleansing Commissioning item.
- 1.4. It was not possible to reschedule a meeting of the Committee to formally conclude discussion of these items ahead of their consideration by the Mayor at the Cabinet meeting on 24 May 2023. However, the Committee received a briefing on the Waste and Street Cleansing Commissioning from the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment, Cllr Scott Roche and council officers on 24 May prior to the Cabinet meeting.
- 1.5. Feedback from the both the Committee's discussion at this briefing and its discussion on the Annual Asset Disposal Plan (at the committee meeting on 22 May 2023) was provided by the Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee to the Mayor at the Cabinet meeting held on 24 May 2023. However, should the Committee wish to make any specific recommendations on these items, these need to be formally agreed. Any recommendations to be agreed will be set out in Appendix C (to follow).

2 APPENDICES

- 2.1. Appendix A: Recommendations from Scrutiny Sub-Committees

Appendix B: Cabinet Response to Recommendations Made by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.

Appendix C: Scrutiny & Overview Committee – Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the meeting held on 22 May 2023 (to follow)

3 SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Paragraph 1.5 (iii & iv) of Part 4E – Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution sets out the requirement that recommendations made by Scrutiny Sub-Committees should be submitted for the consideration of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee, to approve their submission to the relevant decision maker.

- 3.2 The exception to this requirement is for specific powers delegated to Sub-Committee relating to the scrutiny of Health Services and the duties and functions of the Council as an Education Authority. For these matters, the relevant Sub-Committee can make direct recommendations.
- 3.3 Set out in Appendix 5 is the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Streets and Environment Sub-Committee
- 3.4 The Committee is asked to review this recommendation and confirm its approval for them to be submitted to the next available meeting of the Cabinet for consideration.

4 CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The rights of scrutiny to make recommendations to the Cabinet, Council, non-Executive Committee, Partner Agency or Partnership Board is set out in Section 8 of Part 4E – Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution.
- 4.2 When making a recommendation to the Cabinet, a response needs to be given within two months to confirm whether the recommendation has been accepted or not. If accepted, this response should include how the recommendation will be implemented.
- 4.3 To ensure the Committee can monitor the response given to its recommendations, this report will be included as a standing item on each agenda, setting out in Appendices 1 to 4, the response from the Cabinet to the recommendations of the Committee.
- 4.4 The Committee is asked to note the responses given.

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Appendix 2 – Recommendations arising from Streets & Environment Sub-Committee; 14 March 2023

Item: Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract Specification

Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Political Lead	Officer Lead
SE.1.23/24	The Sub-Committee recognised there was a large number of households in the Borough that used communal bins and recommends that the specification of the Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing contract includes a requirement for identifying a successful solution for managing waste and recycling collections from these properties.	Councillor Scott Roche	Steve Iles
SE.2.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommended that a dynamic approach to behavioural change was adapted as a part of any future service delivery to ensure effective engagement and communications with residents.	Councillor Scott Roche	Steve Iles
SE.3.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommended that there was a continuation of an 'as-is' service for residents in terms of a collection frequency.	Councillor Scott Roche	Steve Iles

Item: Cabinet Report - Local Planning Authority Service Transformation

Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Political Lead	Officer Lead
SE.4.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommended that Councillors be invited to attend future Planning Resident Engagement events.	Councillor Jeet Bains	Heather Cheesbrough

Appendix B – Item: Borough of Culture

Considered by Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 6 December 2022

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (ie Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
1.	That an all-Member Briefing is provided in advance of the launch event to update Councillors on the Borough of Culture programme, explain how to encourage community involvement and detail the support available for individual artists wanting to participate.	Councillor Andy Stranack SCRER	Rejected as already in progress	Kristian Aspinall, Director of Culture & Community Safety	N/A	A briefing for all members is already planned and will be scheduled prior to launch in February 2023. Will include in-person briefing to groups, and a written briefing / FAQ.	TBC
2.	That the evaluation of the success of the Borough of Culture is tested by a group made up of Members and Officers.	Councillor Andy Stranack SCRER	Accepted	Kristian Aspinall, Director of Culture & Community Safety	N/A	To be included in the Evaluation development plan for London Borough of Croydon	TBC

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