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Cabinet Agenda

To: Mayor Jason Perry (Chair)

Councillors Jeet Bains, Jason Cummings, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Yvette Hopley, Ola Kolade, Scott Roche and Andy Stranack

A meeting of the **Cabinet** which you are hereby invited to attend, will be held **Wednesday, 31 January 2024** at **6.30 pm. 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

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 18)

To approve the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 6th December 2023 as an accurate record.

3. Disclosure of Interests

Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, they are required to consider **in advance of each meeting** whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), an other registrable interest (ORI) or a non-registrable interest (NRI) in relation to any matter on the agenda. If advice is needed, Members should contact the Monitoring Officer **in good time before the meeting.**

If any Member or co-opted Member of the Council identifies a DPI or ORI which they have not already registered on the Council's register of interests or which requires updating, they should complete the disclosure form which can be obtained from Democratic Services at any time, copies of which will be available at the meeting for return to the Monitoring Officer.

Members and co-opted Members are required to disclose any DPIs and ORIs at the meeting.

- Where the matter relates to a DPI they may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation.
- Where the matter relates to an ORI they may not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation.
- Where a Member or co-opted Member has an NRI which directly relates to their financial interest or wellbeing, or that of a relative or close associate, they must disclose the interest at the meeting, may not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not stay in the meeting unless granted a dispensation. Where a matter affects the NRI of a Member or co-opted Member, section 9 of Appendix B of the Code of Conduct sets out the test which must be applied by the Member to decide whether disclosure is required.

The Chair will invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3, to be recorded in the minutes.

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. **STAGE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM SCRUTINY** (Pages 19 - 30)

6. **Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses to Recommendations arising from Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 26 September (Appendices 1 & 2)** (Pages 31 - 40)

7. **Residents Survey** (Pages 41 - 118)

8. **Libraries Service Review** (Pages 119 - 438)

9. **Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Programme and Growth Zone Annual Budget & Programme - 2024/25** (Pages 439 - 468)

10. **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation Results** (Pages 469 - 656)

11. **Building Safety Act and Building Control Readiness** (Pages 657 - 672)

12. **Education Estates Strategy** (Pages 673 - 760)

13. **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) School Funding 2024/25 Formula Factors** (Pages 761 - 794)

14. **2023-24 Period 7 Financial Performance Report** (Pages 795 - 832)

PART B AGENDA

15. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

"That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended."

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Cabinet

Meeting of Cabinet held on Wednesday, 6 December 2023 at 6.32 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Mayor Jason Perry (Chair);

Lynne Hale (Deputy (Statutory) Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes (Vice-Chair)), Councillors Jeet Bains (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration), Jason Cummings (Cabinet Member for Finance), Maria Gatland (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Ola Kolade (Cabinet Member for Community Safety) and Scott Roche (Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment)

Also Present: Councillors Margaret Bird (Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care), Rowenna Davis (Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee), Stuart King (Leader of the Opposition), Callton Young (Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance), Amy Foster (Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Janet Campbell (Shadow Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care), Chrishni Reshekaron (Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes), Christopher Herman (Shadow Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment) and Richard Chatterjee

Apologies: Councillors Ola Kolade and Scott Roche for lateness

Katherine Kerswell (Chief Executive Officer) and Elaine Jackson (Interim Assistant Chief Executive)

PART A

89/23 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

90/23 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none or the following disclosures of interest were made:

91/23 **Urgent Business (If any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

92/23 **Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses to Recommendations arising from: Homes Sub-Committee held on 24 July 2023 (Appendices 1, 2 & 3)**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses to Recommendations arising from the Home Sub-Committee meeting which was held on 24 July 2023.
The recommendations covered the Housing Transformation, the Mobilisation of the Responsive Repairs Contract, and the New Housing Strategy, to which the report details.

The Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Councillor Rowenna Davis, shared with Cabinet that:

- The Scrutiny Homes Sub-Committee welcomed the Executive Mayors decision to offer Domestic Violence Training to all frontline staff, following the recommendation from Scrutiny Members who recognised staff dealing directly with families in their homes, where training would help identify support to families where required.
- It was noted that other recommendations were turned down such as the specialist repairs teams for highly vulnerable residents.

- The Scrutiny and Overview Committee (the Committee) commended the Future Options for Maintained Nursery School report and the responses to the consultation and acknowledged that whilst doing nothing was not an option, the decision to properly explore alternatives were welcomed to improve opportunities for young people; further, a briefing was scheduled with the Committee on the 'Next Steps' where they would add best value along the way.

- The Committee noted that the Council's finances and the Period 6 Financial Performance report suggested that the council were forecasting a smaller use of the corporate contingency budget at the end of the financial year, due to withdrawing down resources from an alternative backup fund in response to increased homelessness as addressed within the report and would welcome more insight to these pressures.

- Lastly, the Committee noted the need to increase Asset Disposals to meet the council's debts and credited the council's increased pace of sales to date, and emphasised that timely communication to tenants was essential, not least as some treasured organisations would be required to find new homes.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1.1. Approve the responses and action plans attached to this report as Appendices 1, 2 & 3; and

1.2. Delegate authority to the officers identified in Appendices 1, 2 & 3 to report back to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, or relevant Sub-Committee, within the periods specified in the agreed responses and action plans, and on progress made in implementing any action plan.

93/23 **Future Options for Maintained Nursery Schools - Consultation Outcomes Report**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Future Options for Maintained Nursery Schools – consultation outcomes report which summarised the outcomes of the informal consultation with residents and key partners n the future of Maintained Nursery Schools.

The Executive Mayor acknowledged that some options were received as part of the consultation and working collaboratively with the nurseries to explore the options to address feasibility, would ensure that Maintained Nursery Schools were financially sustainable.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Maria Gatland spoke to this report thanking those who took part in the consultation on the proposal to reduce the number of maintained nursery schools via closure or amalgamation. She informed Cabinet that the current model was financially unsustainable, and the consultation provided options for feasibility and sustainable model that could be delivered through the funding allocated by government. The report highlighted that doing nothing was not an option and other models were explored collaborating with the maintained nurseries within three months. Further, the recommendations enabled officers to consider the new childcare measures within detailed modelling of other options.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Amy Foster thanked officers for hard work for informal consultation brought into the report. Although she supported the recommendations, she had asked whether the three-month window would not create a destabilised uncertainty for families and staff whether it would be open in September, especially given that recruitment and enrolment processes for September had started.

The Executive Mayor highlighted that the three-month window was to access the feasibility to review what worked and did not work and making decisions within a timely manner. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Maria Gatland, added that this was a very sensible recommendation.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1.1. Note the benefits of listening to the community and families, who have responded on the proposal to reduce the number of MNS

within the borough, via closure or amalgamation. The responses of which are included in the analysis of the feedback to the informal consultation (Appendix 1).

1.2. Note that doing nothing is not an option; but request that officers explore and carry out more detailed modelling of other options suggested as part of the consultation process, to determine if any of these are feasible and will make MNS financially viable. This is to be done in collaboration with the MNS within the next 3 months. (Noting that other options may also develop through this process.

1.3. Note, if after further exploration a sustainable model is not achievable there would be a requirement to return to the proposal within the informal consultation.

1.4. Implement any actions, that came forward as part of the consultation, that can be delivered immediately, with the MNS that have a financial deficit, so that current deficit does not increase further but reduces.

94/23 **Housing Strategy 2023-28**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Housing Strategy 2023-28 report and highlighted that over the past eighteen months the council had seen improvements in the new housing repairs contractors, a new Residents Charter to ensure residents had a voice in decisions that affected them, the redevelopment plans for Regina Road, and a reshaping of the Housing Directorate to better serve residents.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale spoke to the report and shared with Cabinet that the strategy and delivery plan were important in enabling council to address the increasingly complex and challenging context within which the council delivery the housing services. As such, the strategies which included the Asset Management Strategy, the Resident Engagement Strategy and the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, demonstrated a step-by step, forward thinking and a proactive approach to shaping the future of the Housing services. Positive feedback to the draft priorities and objectives of the housing strategy 2023-28 through consultation were detailed within the report and had been incorporated into the strategy. The co-production to the strategy had involved officers from across the council and key issues for the housing services had been identified, such as: the provision of appropriate accommodation for care experienced young people, older people and the development of the local plan.

The Corporate Director for Housing, Susmita Sen, added that the strategic document would underpin a number of strategies and ambition to protect services for residents with particular focus on the landlord’s

function and the regulator of social housing and this also formed part of the voluntary undertaking.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Chrishni Reshekaron welcomed the housing strategy, though noted that the strategy could be stronger in the following areas: improving standards in the private rented sector; tackling antisocial behaviour in all tenures; meeting the net zero commitment; and improving housing options from victims of domestic violence and asked whether these four areas required sufficient attention in the strategy.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale responded that though all the areas mentioned were important, the current focus was to have the housing service in order to provide good decent services to residents. The Executive Mayor added that the elements mentioned would be addressed within other areas of the council such as the antisocial behaviour through the community safety plan, and the net zero and carbon area addressed within the local plan, to name a few, highlighting that these elements fall in other areas within the council and not just within housing.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1.1. Consider:

1.1.1 the feedback received from the Homes Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd October,
1.1.2 the feedback received on the draft Housing Strategy 2023-2028 from residents and partners via the engagement and consultation process as detailed in Appendix B, and
1.1.3 the Equalities Impact Assessment detailed in Appendix C
1.1.4 The Housing Delivery Plan detailed in Appendix D

1.2. Delegate authority to Corporate Director to make minor amendments in conjunction with Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member prior to publication.

1.3. Agree the Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 as detailed in Appendix A; and

1.4. **RECOMMEND** the Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 to Full Council for adoption.

95/23 **Transport for London Local Implementation Plan Healthy Streets Funding and Programme 2024/25**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Transport for London Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Healthy Streets Funding and Programme 2024/25 report which was a refresh to the LIP programme agreed at

Cabinet in January 2023. The report noted the changes in investment in Central Croydon, the Corridors, the cycle scheme and the school streets programmes amongst other elements.

The Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment, Councillor Scott Roche, spoke to the report highlighting that the LIP programme was recommended to continue the focus on the regeneration of the town centre, and this was funded through TfL safer and healthy streets. Cabinet heard that not all requests would be met in full, as the programme was ambitious, however, the report itself was to receive comments and approval from TfL. The programme also supported the TfL and the London Transport strategy. The delivery programme focused on the areas highlighted within Appendix A of the report. Further, the recent Love Bid for £18.5 million pound to help transform Croydon town centre was an addition to the proposed LIP programme which would provide the perfect opportunity for a step change in the town centre by bringing significant additional funding for transport and public realm recruitments.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment, Councillor Christopher Herman, welcomed the proposal around the closure of serval subways in favour of the service level crossings in the town centre, noting that there were some serious wellbeing concerns with the boroughs most vulnerable people who used the subways for shelter, and asked what the council's plan was to support them.

The Executive Mayor responded that there were a number of strategies to respond to homelessness and appropriate measures would be taken. The idea of a subway to create shelter was not identified for people and thus the right support for those using subways for protection and shelter would be addressed within the right services.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1.1. To agree the Local Implementation Plan delivery programme for 2024/25 including:

- Central Croydon (£1,800,000)
- Corridors (£1,025,000)
- Neighbourhoods (£375,000)
- School Streets (£250,000)
- Road Safety (£200,000)
- Active Travel (£394,000)
- Bus Priority (£550,000)
- Cycle Parking (£100,000)
- Cycle Training (£130,000)

as set out at in the Appendix A to this report and forming the third year of the Local Implementation Plan Delivery Plan to be submitted to Transport for London to release Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Funding for 2024/25.

1.2. To agree that the Corporate Director, Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery (in consultation with the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment) finalise and approve the Local Implementation Plan 2024/25 delivery programme for submission to Transport for London, making any necessary adjustments to the programme prior to and post submission.

1.3. To agree the expenditure in 2024/25 set out in this report and Appendix A, subject to funds having been confirmed and allocated by external funders and Council funding agreed by Budget Council.

96/23 **Finance 6 Period Financial Performance Report**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Finance 6 Period Financial Performance Report that addressed the current forecast and continued to project a balance budget at the year end, which had been achieved through careful financial monitoring.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings shared with Cabinet that the report was another overall forecast yearend balance position, highlighting that the HRA remained at the £12 million pounds overspend position as previously reported. He informed that the use of the corporate contingency had reduced from £4.1 million pounds to £3.5 million pounds though the aim remained for all departments that were showing overspend positions, to not use the corporate contingency at year end and would seek to bring overspend back within their normal budgets. The adult social care was credited for their improved departmental position within their budget which had reduced from a £1.4 million pounds overspend position down to a £0.2 million pounds position. Housing department had shown a £2.2 million pound pressure relating to emergency accommodation which was a sector wide pressure met using economic demands pressure budget that had been set aside for such events. Both changes were identified as potential movements and had crystallised as anticipated. Lastly, the Local Government finance policy statement was recently published, and it was clear that there was no fundamental change in the local government funding and the assumptions within the MTFS would therefore remain valid.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Callton Young asked a question on the rationale for using the economic demand reserve in particular and in respect of the backlog of 2000 housing cases that had come to light and was there confidence that the external auditors would see that new challenge being rooted in the cost of living crisis. Further, why was the council perceived £5 million pounds from this year's public health grant into the public health reserve when Croydon residents were in need of improved health care provision now and prefer not to wait until next year for it.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, responded that the use of the economic demand reserve was used purposely for such pressures as it was impossible to predict anything that would happen in each department over the course of the year. The emergency accommodation was particularly impacted due to the asylum-seeking support where there were over 1000 cases which was producing an in-year pressure. The use of the reserve would be for these very reasons. With regards to the public health care, it was noted that all expenditure on public health were reviewed on an on-going basis. The money spent would see the outcomes required which took planning, it would be used in a timely manner for the intended purpose and was different to instant demand pressures. The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yvette Hopley, added that the health services were aware of the contingency within the budget and addressed that the money would be spent in a timely manner in line with the plans proposed throughout the year.

The Executive Mayor **RESOLVED**:

1.1. To note the General Fund revenue budget outturn is forecast to breakeven at Period 6, after the forecast utilisation of £63m capitalisation directions requested from DLUHC, £3.5m of the corporate risk contingency budget and £2.2m of the corporate economic demand pressures budget. It is not planned to utilise the risk contingency budget and directorates will work to bring the service directorate positions within budget.

1.2. To approve the movement of £2.2m economic demand pressures budget from Corporate to the Housing directorate as set out in paragraph 4.95. This is a budget transfer within directorates, not a change to overall budget, and is in line with the intended purpose of the £5.5m economic demand pressures budget agreed at full Council in March 2023.

1.3. To note the progress in MTFS savings achievement as set out in paragraph 4.105.

1.4. To note the work that has commenced on the Council's Transformation Programme as set out from paragraph 4.100.

1.5. To note the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget outturn is forecast to overspend by £12.0m.

1.6. To note the General Fund capital programme 2023-24 forecast underspend of £17.6m against the revised capital budget of £144.7m.

1.7. To note the HRA capital programme 2023-24 forecast overspend of £5.7m against the revised capital budget of £33.2m.

1.8. To note the Council's historic borrowing and debt burden continues to be critical to the sustainability of the Council's revenue budget. Dialogue with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) continues, and the Council is seeking further financial support from Government in regards to its level of indebtedness and balancing the budget to ensure it can deliver sustainable local government services.

1.9. To note that the Council continues to operate Spend Control Panels to ensure that tight financial control and assurance oversight are maintained.

1.10. To note that current forecasts are based on the best available information at the time and will be subject to review and change during the financial year.

97/23 **Fees and Charges 2024-25**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Fees and Charges 2024-25 report which contained the annual review of fees and charges for the services across the council.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, shared with Cabinet that the report was a standard update which was restored in the correct place within the annual schedule of financial papers. There were different rules and procedures applied across the list which related to inflation changes, legislation, cost recovery limits, subsidiaries and statutory prices which would affect many of the proposed charges. Further details were addressed within Appendix A of the report.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Callton Young, enquired about the council's plan to put the careline charges up above inflation where in some cases as high as 15% and asked how a 15% hike would justify on careline users.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings responded that the changes in some of the prices related to a number of requirements where some related directly to inflation and others related to cost of service provision which vary from sector to sector. It was noted that the fees and charges report related to service provision. The Corporate Director for Adults Social Care & Health (DASS & Calidcott Guardian) Annette McPartland, added that in the adult and social care package, people were means tested on their ability to pay, though costs had increased in line with inflation, it was also in line with the costs of the care provided.

The Executive Mayor **RESOLVED** to:

1.1. Have due regard to the equalities impact assessment in Appendix 2 in making the decisions set out in these recommendations.

1.2. Approve the fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 to the extent that they fall within the authority of the Executive to determine.

1.3. Note that changes to parking charges are linked to the parking policy transformation and separate consultation is taking place on the draft parking policy.

1.4. Approve delegation for further in-year amendments to fees and charges for the financial year 2024-25, to the relevant Corporate Director following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and the Executive Mayor.

98/23 **Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2023-29**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Capital Programme and Capital Strategy 2023-29 report, which outlined the strategic direction for Croydon's capital management and investment plans. The programme saw the council make capital investments across the borough to provide improved infrastructure for residents whilst managing the impact of debt. Further, the strategy discusses planed expenditures from 2023 to 2029 and would deliver investment for the public in line with the objective of the Mayor's business plan.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, in summary shared with Cabinet that the paper detailed the current forecast capital spending borrowing for the council, where debt and its associated costs were significant financial considerations in relation to the council's sustainability, and therefore it was imperative that the council did all they could to manage capital spend. The forecast still resulted in an increase of the general fund debt due to the continuing need for capitalisation directions, which highlighted the ongoing unsustainable impact of capitalisation as a means of bridging the revenue gap for this council. However, the council had continued to bear down on capital expenditure, and the regular review of all capital expenses and slippage were ongoing.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Callton Young, enquired on the Mayors' debt write off negotiation with DLUHC, and asked what progress on the negotiations were being made, and further to provide a high level of indication of the alternative options that were being explored.

The Executive Mayor responded that there were further conversations with DLUHC officials at both civil and political level, with various options still under negotiations.

The Executive Mayor in cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve and to recommend the following to Full Council:

1.1. Approve the Council's 2023-29 General Fund Capital Programme which includes planned expenditure of £486.53m (including capitalisation directions) across the six years.

1.2. Approve the Council incurring nil borrowing for 2023-24, with borrowing projected of £28.38m in 2024-25 and £175.17m over the four years after 2024-25. The cost of this borrowing will be factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for final agreement at Full Council resulting in 2024-25 total interest charge and Minimum Revenue Provision of £72.5m.

1.3. Approve the Council 2024-25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme with a total investment planned of £57.26m with borrowing of £24.80m.

1.4. Approve an increase to the 2023-24 HRA capital budget from £33.248m to £37.162m, owing to increased major repairs and improvements, with this £3.914m increase funded by HRA reserves.

1.5. Approve the Council's Capital Strategy, as detailed within Appendix A of this report.

1.6. Note the Council's historic legacy borrowing and debt burden continues to be critical to the sustainability of the Council's revenue budget. Dialogue with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) continues, and the Council is seeking further financial support from Government in regards to its level of indebtedness and balancing the budget to ensure it can deliver sustainable local government services.

99/23 **Quarterly Procurement Plan Update**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Quarterly Procurement Plan Update report which continued to streamline and improve the council's approach to procurement to ensure delivery in a timely and transparent way. The report highlighted the changes to the Annual Procurement Plan as well as the governance processes for the agreement on each of the contracts.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, informed Cabinet that point 4.3 of the report should state: "For this quarterly update, there are 11 additions and 5 amendments to planned procurements with 6 additions and 3 amendment to contracts extensions and variations."

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Callton Young asked a question on whether it was agreed that the ongoing work by the Constitution Working Group and the General Purposes Committee, where recent revelations had shown that the contracts and procurement work had been snarled up by failure to delegate decision-making appropriately.

The Executive Mayor responded that the scheme of delegation had not snarled within the organisation and worked very effectively, with all delegations listed within the report provided.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1.1. To approve the update to the Annual Procurement Plan for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A.

1.2. To approve the delegated decisions in the revised APP to those Lead Members or Officers as stated in Appendix A that includes the procurement strategy and award decisions, the duration of the contracts and contract values.

1.3. The delegated decisions shall only be exercised following recommendations from the Contracts & Commissioning Board, which include approval from both the Lead Cabinet Member and the Cabinet Member for Finance.

1.4. To allow for minor changes to proceed whilst retaining the agreed delegated so long as none of the following thresholds for changes are exceeded:

i. Contract value exceeds that proposed in the APP/Quarterly Update Report, by the lesser of £500K or 25%, or the new aggregate value exceeds £1m and it becomes a key decision

ii. Substantial / material changes to procurement from that defined in the APP/Quarterly Update Report e.g. material risks are identified

(Should either of those thresholds be exceeded, the delegation cannot be exercised, and the decision shall be recommended to the Executive Mayor, unless a further delegation is approved. Where a delegated decision is a Key Decision to Officers, it must be made in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member).

100/23 **Progress update on tranche 1 asset disposals, seeking approval for tranche 2 of asset for disposal and approval of the update of the Community Asset Transfer Policy. Part A**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Progress update on tranche 1 asset disposals, seeking approval for tranche 2 of asset for disposal and approval of the update of the Community Asset Transfer Policy - Part A

report, which provided an update on the sale of the tranche 1 assets and sought to seek approval for the tranche 2 asset disposals. The report also sought to update and consult on the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, shared with Cabinet that the report was the second of the three tranche assets, which formed a key part of managing the council's debt levels and associated costs. He further noted that an asset listed on the disposable programme could have a variety of actual impacts ranging from pre-negotiating of existing lease arrangements to the possibility of also outright sale; this did not automatically follow the occupants of individual assets where they would be required to leave the building of it being sold. Similarly, any existing leases with the council would be considered of tenants of other buildings. Further, each asset was individual and to be handled accordingly. Councillor Jason Cummings was pleased with the progress made thus far and noted that the council needed to continue to with the work to ensure that the forward capital receipt targets were met.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Stuart King, had asked a few questions, firstly, enquiring on the time frame of tranche 3 that was indicated to commence within twelve months, and asked for a steer on when the tranche would be published and begin; secondly, in relation to tranche 2 and the four properties to be sold, whether the four properties had been recently made vacant or were considered long term vacancies; and lastly, in relation to the Community Asset Transfer (CATs) Policy, was the intention for the publication (of the scheduling of properties that may be eligible for CATS) to occur during as part of the consultation or to follow after the conclusion of the consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings, responded that with regards to the timescales for tranche 3, the intention was to complete them as quickly as possible due to the impact of reducing external affairs and borrowing and costs that were associated. Though the council had capacity to undertake this work. There was no set time for tranche 3 to be published, but it would be at its reasonable and earliest opportunity. Further, there would be more information with regards to properties that may be more suitable for CAT transfer rather than vacant properties that were present and disposed primarily for capital receipt. The Executive Mayor added that the Community Asset Transfer paper would go out to consultation following oversight at the Scrutiny and Overview Committee (in Part B) before Christmas, with the policy to go to consultation to be approved before the sites would be published in the public domain.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1.1. To note the progress made on tranche 1 disposals.

1.2. To approve tranche 2 of sites for disposals as set out in Appendix 1 of this report together with indicative values in Appendix 1 (exempt appendix) of the Part B report.

1.3. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Resources and s151 Officer to agree, in consultation with the Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, the terms and final price for each disposal included within tranche 2.

1.4. The delegations in this report shall only be exercised following:

i. sign off of a business case/ financial assessment by the Corporate Management Team (CMT)

ii. formal Red Book valuation, if required, on a property to be sold; and

iii. formal marketing unless there is a clear special purchaser or offer made considerably in excess of the market value.

1.5. To note that the target value for disposals for tranche 2 is £24.8m and that disposals of tranche 2 assets will commence immediately alongside tranche 1 disposals.

1.6. To seek approval to commence consultation with the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) on the proposed amendments to the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy set out in paragraphs 4.15 to 4.21 and to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Resources and S151 Officer, in consultation with the Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, to approve a final amended CAT Policy (Draft in Part A Appendix 3) having considered the feedback provided through the consultation with VCFS organisations.

101/23 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 7:50pm

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	**CABINET**	
DATE	**31 January 2024**	
REPORT TITLE:	**STAGE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM SCRUTINY**	
LEAD OFFICER:	**Jane West, Corporate Director for Resources** **Adrian May, Interim Head of Democratic Services** **T: 020 8726 6000 X 62529. Email:** **adrian.may@croydon.gov.uk**	
LEAD MEMBER:	**Councillor Rowenna Davis** **Chair, Scrutiny and Overview Committee**	
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	Recommendations that have been developed from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and its Sub-Committees since the last Cabinet meeting are provided in the appendices to this report. The constitution requires that an interim or full response is provided within 2 months of this Cabinet meeting.	
KEY DECISION?	**No**	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**No**	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report presents recommendations to the Executive from Scrutiny following meetings of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee held on 10 October 2023, the Streets and Environment Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023 and the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 21 November 2023.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Executive Mayor has the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations contained within this report. The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is asked to:

2.2 Receive the recommendations arising from the meetings of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee held on 10 October 2023 (Appendix 1), the Streets and Environment Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023 (Appendix 2) and the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 21 November 2023 (Appendix 3).

2.3 To provide a substantive response to the recommendation (a Scrutiny Stage 2 Report) at the Cabinet meeting on 27 March 2024.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

3.1 Part 4E of the Council's Constitution: Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules (paragraphs 8.5 – 8.7) and Section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000 require the executive to consider and respond to a Scrutiny and Overview report within 2 months beginning with the date on which the executive receive the report or recommendation.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

Children & Young People Sub-Committee – 10 October 2023

Item: Youth Justice Plan 23/24

4.1 The Sub-Committee thanked the officers and Cabinet Members for attending and sharing open and honest responses to Member's questions.

4.2 The Sub-Committee concluded that it would like to revisit the Youth Justice Plan early in its Work Programme for 24/25, with a particular focus on how parents and carers would be involved in the development of the Plan.

Streets & Environment Sub-Committee – 1 November 2023

Item: Cleaner Croydon

4.3 The Sub-Committee concluded that they would like to add the 'blitz clean' programme to its work programme for 2024/25, to monitor whether the programme was successful and having a sustained impact on district centres, alongside data on the number of businesses and residents engaged during the cleans.

Item: Local Plan Review

4.4 The Sub-Committee welcomed the update on the Local Plan review, and for officer's and the Cabinet Member's responses to Member's questions.

4.5 Members welcomed the responses to questions on consultations with developers and residents and were keen to see that all those affected by the Plan were able to contribute their views

Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 21 November 2023

Item: 2023-24 Period 5 Financial Performance Monitoring Report

4.6 The Committee welcomed the reassurance given that the overspend within the Housing Revenue Account, to address the backlog of repairs, was reaching its peak and that there were controls in place to monitor and manage expenditure.

4.7 The Committee noted that work continued on the delivery of identified savings within Children's and Adults Social Care budgets that required further evidencing before being included in projections, with it anticipated that these would be delivered by the year end.

4.8 The Committee welcomed the confirmation that their previous recommendations relating to council tax collection had been accepted, but with the reintroduction of enforcement processes, recognised that there would be value in the Service engaging with local advocacy organizations to review processes after a period of operation.

4.9 The Committee raised concern about the quality of the questions in the Budget Consultation in comparison to those in the Mayor's resident's engagement survey.

Item: Progress update on tranche 1 asset disposals, seeking approval for tranche 2 of asset for disposal and approval of the update of the Community Asset Transfer Policy

4.10 The Committee noted the progress that had been made to date in delivering the asset disposals identified in tranche 1 and that more sales were needed to help improve the Council's financial position.

4.11 Although the opportunity to review the report before Cabinet was appreciated, the Committee was concerned by feedback received from community and voluntary organisations that they had not been notified about potential disposals of their leased premises before publication. As such, the apology given by the Executive Mayor to those organisations was welcomed.

4.12 As feedback from the local community and voluntary sector indicated uncertainty about how the proposed disposals would affect their tenancies, the Committee welcomed clarification that there would be forthcoming conversations with the tenants about their lease options.

4.13 The Committee welcomed confirmation that it was likely the list of properties available for Community Asset Transfer would be available before the end of the year.

4.14 The Committee welcomed confirmation that additional capacity had been brought into the team managing the asset disposal process to speed up the pace of disposal.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Scrutiny meetings do not necessarily result in any recommendations to the executive.

6 CONSULTATION / PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

6.1 The recommendations were developed from the deliberations of either the Scrutiny & Overview Committee or one of its Sub-Committees.

7 CONTRIBUTION TO EXECUTIVE MAYOR'S BUSINESS PLAN

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

Priority 4: 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.

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

Priority 2: 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.

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

Priority 1: 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.

Priority 4: 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.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 The Scrutiny recommendations to the Executive may have financial implications. Following the recommendations being received at Cabinet, the Executive will identify and consider any financial implications as part of their response.

8.1.2 If any recommendation is subsequently progressed for consideration and decision by the Executive Mayor in Cabinet, full financial (as well as legal and equalities implications) would be presented.

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 Under Section 9F Local Government Act 2000 ("the Act"), Scrutiny and Overview Committee have the powers to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken in connection with the discharge of any executive and non-executive functions and to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority with respect to the discharge of those functions. The Committee also has the power to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority on matters, which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of its area.

8.2.2 Under Section 9FE of the Act, there is a duty on Cabinet to respond to the scrutiny report, indicating what (if any) action Cabinet proposes to take, within 2 months of receiving the report and recommendations.

8.2.3 Approved by: Mark Turnbull, Interim Corporate Solicitor (28/11/2023)

8.3 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the contents of this report

8.4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.4.1 The Council has a statutory duty, when exercising its functions, to comply with the provisions set out in the Sec 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council must in the performance of its functions, therefore, have due regard to:

i. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.

ii. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

iii. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.4.2 The recommendations in the appendices to this report have equality implications and will require an EQIA as part of the development of the proposals. The implications will be explored to identify impact and mitigation utilised to negate any adverse impact where necessary.

8.4.3 Approved by: Naseer Ahmad on behalf of the Equalities Manager. (24/11/2023)

9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Children & Young People Sub-Committee – 10 October 2023

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Streets and Environment Sub-Committee – 1 November 2023

Appendix 3 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 21 November 2023

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Meeting of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee held on 10 October 2023
https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=167&MId=3751

Meeting of the Streets and Environment Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023
https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=170&MId=3507

Meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 21 November 2023
https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=3513&Ver=4

Appendix 1 – Recommendations arising from Children & Young People Sub-Committee – 10 October 2023

Item: Youth Justice Plan 23/24

Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Political Lead	Officer Lead
CYP.2.23/24	The Sub-Committee commended the inclusion of parents and carers in delivering prevention and intervention work in the Youth Justice Service, but recommended that there should be greater involvement of parents and carers in the development of the next Youth Justice Plan for 24/25.	Councillor Maria Gatland	Róisín Madden - Director of Childrens Social Care

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Appendix 2 – Recommendations arising from Streets & Environment Sub-Committee – 1 November 2023

Item: Cleaner Croydon

Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Political Lead	Officer Lead
SE.14.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommended that Members were engaged for their views on how well the 'Love Clean Streets' app was working, as well as for their input as to how the implementation of the app in Croydon could be made more accessible for residents.	Councillor Scott Roche	Karen Agbabiaka - Interim Director of Streets & Environment
SE.15.23/24	The Sub-Committee recommended that regular walkabouts for Ward Councillors were scheduled with the new Client Officer team to identify issues and feedback local knowledge concerning street cleaning, fly tipping, weeding and graffiti.	Councillor Scott Roche	Karen Agbabiaka - Interim Director of Streets & Environment

Item: Local Plan Review

Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Political Lead	Officer Lead
SE.16.23/24	The Sub-Committee welcomed the inclusion of the Green Grid and Local Green Spaces in the Local Plan Review, and recommended that Blue Corridors (watercourses and natural ponds) were explicitly referenced and considered in this area of work.	Councillor Jeet Bains	Heather Cheesbrough - Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration

Appendix 3 – Recommendations arising from Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 21 November 2023

Item: 2023-24 Period 5 Financial Performance Monitoring Report

Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Political Lead	Officer Lead
SOC.18.23/24	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that with the reintroduction of council tax enforcement to those in receipt of council tax support, a meeting should be arranged with local advocacy organisations, including the CAB and the South West London Law Centre, after a few months of operation to review the processes to ensure that the available support is reaching those who need it most.	Councillor Jason Cummings	Allister Bannin – Director of Finance
SOC.19.23/24	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that future iterations of the budget consultation are subject to independent review before publication.	Councillor Jason Cummings	Allister Bannin – Director of Finance

Item: Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Progress update on tranche 1 asset disposals, seeking approval for tranche 2 of asset for disposal and approval of the update of the Community Asset Transfer Policy

Recommendation Number	Recommendation	Political Lead	Officer Lead
SOC.20.23/24	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that there is preliminary engagement with existing tenants on the possibility of an asset being identified for disposal before any report identifying assets is published.	Councillor Jason Cummings	Huw Rhys Lewis - Interim Director Commercial Investment & Capital
SOC.20.23/24	The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that local councillors are informed, prior to publication, that an asset in their ward will be listed for disposal.	Councillor Jason Cummings	Huw Rhys Lewis - Interim Director Commercial Investment & Capital

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	**CABINET**	
DATE	**31 January 2024**	
REPORT TITLE:	**Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses to Recommendations arising from: Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 26 September (Appendices 1 & 2)**	
LEAD OFFICER:	**Jane West, Corporate Director for Resources** **Adrian May, Interim Head of Democratic Services** **T: 020 8726 6000 X 62529. Email: adrian.may@croydon.gov.uk**	
LEAD MEMBER:	**Councillor Rowenna Davis** **Chair, Scrutiny and Overview Committee**	
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	The Constitution requires that in accepting a recommendation, with or without amendment, from a Scrutiny and Overview Committee or Sub-Committee, the Executive Mayor shall agree an action plan for the implementation of the agreed recommendations and shall delegate responsibility to an identified officer to report back to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or Sub-Committee, within a specified period, on the progress made in implementing the action plan.	
KEY DECISION?	**No**	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**No**	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:		All

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report invites the Executive Mayor to approve the full response reports arising from the Stage 1 reports presented to the Cabinet meeting held on 22 November 2023, including:

- Action plans for the implementation of agreed recommendations, or;
- Indicating where a recommendation is already in progress, or;
- Reasons for rejecting the recommendations.

and that these be reported to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or relevant Sub-Committees.

1.2 The Constitution requires that in accepting a recommendation, with or without amendment, from a Scrutiny and Overview Committee or Sub-Committee, the Executive Mayor shall agree an action plan for the implementation of the agreed

recommendations and shall delegate responsibility to an identified officer to report back to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or Sub-Committee, within a specified period, on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Executive Mayor, in Cabinet, has the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendation below and is **RECOMMENDED** to:

2.1.1 Approve the responses and action plans attached to this report as Appendices 1 & 2; and

2.1.2 Delegate authority to the officers identified in Appendices 1 & 2 to report back to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, or relevant Sub-Committee, within the periods specified in the agreed responses and action plans, and on progress made in implementing any action plan.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

3.1 Part 4E of the Council's Constitution: Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules (paragraphs 8.5 – 8.7) and Section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000 require the Cabinet to respond to a Scrutiny and Overview report within 2 months beginning with the date on which the executive received the report.

3.2 Detailed reasons for individual responses and action plans recommended are contained in the appendices to this report.

3.3 Scrutiny and Overview Committee and relevant Sub-Committees are responsible for monitoring progress in implementation of recommendations to the Cabinet.

4 SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Scrutiny recommendations are set out in the appendices to this report.

4.2 The detailed responses, including reasons for rejected recommendations and action plans for the implementation of agreed recommendations are also contained in these appendices.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 These are contained in the appendices to this report.

6 CONSULTATION / PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

6.1 The recommendations have been developed following the deliberations of either the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or one of its Sub-Committees.

6.2 The recommendations in the appendices to this report may involve further consultation and as each recommendation is developed, these implications will be explored and approved through appropriate decision-making routes.

6.3 Some of the recommendations in the appendices to this report are the result of Pre-Decision Scrutiny.

7 CONTRIBUTION TO EXECUTIVE MAYOR'S BUSINESS PLAN

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

Priority 4: 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.

Priority 5: 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.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 The recommendations set out in the appendices to this report may have a financial implication and as each recommendation is developed the financial implication will be explored and approved through appropriate decision-making routes.

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 Under Section 9F Local Government Act 2000 ("the Act"), Scrutiny and Overview Committee have the power to review or scrutinise decisions made or other action

taken in connection with the discharge of any executive and non-executive functions and to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority with respect to the discharge of those functions. The Committee also has the power to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority on matters, which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of its area. To discharge this scrutiny function, the Committee has appointed Scrutiny Sub-Committees. Pursuant to the above provisions the Committee, and its Sub-Committees, have made recommendations arising from their scrutiny of areas under their remit, which are detailed in the attached appendices.

8.2.2 Under Section 9FE of the Act, there is a duty on the executive to respond to the scrutiny reports, indicating what (if any) action they propose to take, within 2 months beginning with the date on which the executive received the report.

8.2.3 *Approved by*: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation & Corporate Law, on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer.

8.3 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 The recommendations in the appendix to this report may have a Human Resources impact and as each recommendation is developed these implications will be explored and approved through appropriate decision-making routes.

8.4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.4.1 The Council has a statutory duty, when exercising its functions, to comply with the provisions set out in the Section 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council must, in the performance of its functions, therefore, have due regard to:

1. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
2. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.4.2 The recommendations set out in the appendices of this report have equality implications and will require an EQIA as part of the development of the proposals. The implications will be explored to identify impact and mitigation utilised to negate any adverse impact where necessary.

8.4.3 Comment approved by: Naseer Ahmad on behalf of the Equalities Manager. (24/11/2023)

9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses: Recommendations from Scrutiny & Overview Committee, Item: Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026: Performance Report, 26 September 2023

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses: Recommendations from Scrutiny & Overview Committee, Item: People & Cultural Transformation Strategy: Action Plan, 26 September 2023

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Agenda for the meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 26 September 2023
https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=3512

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Appendix 1 – Item: Mayor's Business Plan: Performance Report

Considered by Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 26 September 2023

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / ALREADY IN PROGRESS / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (i.e. Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
SOC.14.23/24	The Committee recommends more performance indicators to measure the vitality of the town centre be included, such as footfall, the number of empty units and business rates.	Mayor Jason Perry ACE	Already in progress. As noted in Appendix A of the Scrutiny performance report additional KPIs are being considered at the Mayor's request including: – Footfall in Town Centre – Employment rate (% of 16-64 year olds in employment) – Annual percentage change in weekly earnings (£) for employed Croydon residents. – Percentage of 16-18 year olds completing study who go on to sustained education, apprenticeship or employment	Elaine Jackson - Assistant Chief Executive	N/A	Data collection from November, final agreed additional KPIs will feature in performance report presented to Cabinet in February 2024 (November data)	TBC
SOC.15.23/24	Given the substantial transformation within the service, the Committee would recommend that additional performance indicators related to Housing are added to the Performance Report to monitor improvement for key areas, particularly void turnaround times.	Mayor Jason Perry ACE	Already in Progress As noted in Appendix A of the Scrutiny performance report additional KPIs are being considered at the Mayor's request including: – Average contact centre wait time (Housing call centre only) – % of residents that ended the call before we spoke to them (Housing call centre only) – % of Responsive Repairs completed within target times We will also add an additional measure on:	Elaine Jackson - Assistant Chief Executive	N/A	Data collection from November, final agreed additional KPIs will feature in performance report presented to Cabinet in February 2024 (November data)	TBC

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / ALREADY IN PROGRESS / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (i.e. Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
			– Average Void Re-let times taken (Days)				
SOC.16.23/24	Given the increasing demand upon services within the Adult Social Care directorate, the Committee would recommend the inclusion of performance indicators to track the waiting times for residents to access services with the highest demand.	Mayor Jason Perry ACE	Accepted Currently under discussion with ASCH to agree measures which will best show 'services with highest demand' and to agree the methodology.	Elaine Jackson - Assistant Chief Executive	N/A	Data collection from November, final agreed additional KPIs will feature in performance report presented to Cabinet in February 2024 (November data)	TBC

Appendix 2 – Item: People & Cultural Transformation Strategy – Action Plan

Considered by Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 26 September 2023

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / ALREADY IN PROGRESS / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (i.e. Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
SOC.17.23/ 24	The Committee recommends that each of the “measures of success” in the action plan be re-evaluated so that they all contain a SMART target that is easy to monitor.	Councillor Jason Cummings ACE	Accepted Work is in progress to create an action plan with fully SMART actions and targets.	Dean Shoesmith - Chief People Officer	N/A	ACE December 23 CMT Jan 24 Workforce co-creation Jan 24, following CMT approval	TBC

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:		**CABINET**
DATE OF DECISION		**31 January 2024**
REPORT TITLE:		**Results of Croydon Residents' Survey – Autumn 2023**
CORPORATE DIRECTOR		**Elaine Jackson, Assistant Chief Executive**
LEAD OFFICER:		**David Courcoux, Director of Policy, Programmes and Performance** **Susie Rundle, Head of Communications and Engagement**
KEY DECISION?	**NO**	**N/A**
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**NO**	**N/A**
WARDS AFFECTED:		**All**

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 As part of the Executive Mayor's commitment to ensure the council is listening to residents, the council commissioned an independent research company to carry out Croydon Council's first statistically significant residents' survey in several years.

1.2 This report asks the Executive Mayor in cabinet to note the results of the residents' survey carried out in autumn 2023 and how this feedback will be incorporated into future transformation and service plans. Also, to agree the timing for the next survey.

1.3 This supports the delivery of the outcomes in the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026 - listening to Croydon and delivering good, sustainable services and value for money; as well as the delivery of the Improvement and Assurance Panel's Exit Strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, the Executive Mayor in cabinet is recommended:

2.1 To note the results of the Croydon residents' survey – autumn 2023 (Appendix A)

2.2 To note that the council's transformation plan, service planning and other processes will all review the results and incorporate actions to respond to resident feedback.

2.3 To agree that the council will carry out targeted deep-dive analysis and engagement with representative groups of residents during 2024. A further comparable residents' survey would then be conducted in 2025 as set out in section 5.3 of the report.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The council is committed to rebuilding its relationship with the people of Croydon after the governance and financial crisis of previous years. A key part of that, as set out in the Executive Mayor's Business Plan, is building an organisation that listens to local people. This residents' survey is one part of that process. It helps officers and members to understand what is important to Croydon's diverse communities and what they think about the council - the way it is run, the services it provides, whether it offers value for money and whether it keeps them informed. It also provides valuable insight into how they feel about Croydon the place - the towns, neighbourhoods and streets they call home.

3.2 Measuring resident satisfaction levels supports the delivery of good sustainable services and is best practice in local authorities. The introduction of comparable annual surveys will enable the council to chart performance over time, and to benchmark against other local authorities regionally and nationally. It will also support the council's aim to become a more open, transparent and accountable organisation. The results of these surveys will provide data to drive service improvement and to monitor, and address, any changes in satisfaction levels over time. This will support the council to meet its Best Value Duty, having regard to 'a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness' and ensuring it is accountable primarily to local residents.

3.3 Croydon's Improvement and Assurance Panel published their Exit Strategy in October 2023. The strategy sets key measurables that will enable the panel to be confident that the council is on a pathway of sustainable improvement. Conducting a residents' survey is listed as an objective in support of organisational change, as it will help to create a culture where the council puts residents first. The results from the residents' survey will inform the council's transformation strategy and shape service planning across the organisation.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 It is recognised best practice for local authorities to conduct regular residents' surveys, in order to provide a representative view of satisfaction levels with councils and the local area. The Local Government Association (LGA) conducts national telephone polling three times a year and regional level results are published on a

yearly basis.

4.2 A regular residents' survey supports the council to have a statistically valid understanding of what is most important to our diverse communities and what they think about the council - the way it is run, the services it provides, whether it provides value for money and whether it keeps them well informed. It also provides valuable insight into how they feel about Croydon the place, and the streets and neighbourhoods they call home. Conducting a residents' survey is part of a wider, ongoing journey to improve the quality of the council's relationship with its communities.

4.3 Croydon Council has not conducted a statistically significant residents' survey in recent years. Following the governance and financial collapse of the council in 2020, a series of reports into governance failings highlighted the need for greater transparency and accountability. It is likely that the governance failures of recent years as well as the subsequent Section 114 Notices, savings programmes and service changes required as a result, will have had a significant impact on resident confidence and satisfaction. As this is the first resident survey since those changes this is likely to be reflected in the opinions expressed and in the results.

4.4 Listening to residents and delivering good, sustainable services is the first of five priority outcomes in the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026 as well as a key pillar of the Mayor's election promise to residents. While the survey was under way by this point, an action to conduct regular residents' surveys was also included as an objective in the Improvement and Assurance Panel's Exit Strategy published in October 2023 in order to support the delivery of organisational and cultural change, to ensure the council puts residents first.

4.5 Following a competitive tender exercise, DJS Research were commissioned to conduct a programme of residents' surveys and research. This report provides the results of the first of these pieces of work, a residents' survey which was conducted between September and December 2023.

4.6 The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed questions and guidance to enable councils carrying out surveys in their own areas to compare results. Croydon's survey is based on industry best practice methodology and the questions have been developed in line with LGA guidance to enable benchmarking against national and regional comparators, and to support the delivery of corporate objectives in the Mayor's Business Plan.

4.7 As this is the first survey for some time, the 2023 results will provide a baseline for measuring performance in future years. The LGA did carry out some telephone polling for the council during August and September 2021 as noted at section 5.1.12 below.

4.8 The results of the autumn 2023 residents' survey will be communicated across the organisation so that they can inform service planning and will be used to shape the council's wider transformation and improvement plans.

4.9 In addition to measuring satisfaction with council services, the survey measures resident perceptions of Croydon the place, and views on a range of partnership issues including crime and safety, health and education. The council will share the findings with agencies and partners across the public, private and community sector, to ensure that together, they deliver a collective response.

5.1 METHODOLOGY

5.1.1 DJS Research carried out the fieldwork from September-December 2023. DJS carried out face-to-face interviews (in-street) as they have found this method provides the most effective and cost-efficient way of reaching diverse populations.

5.1.2 A random locational quota sampling method was used to ensure a representative sample of responses. Random locations within Croydon's ward clusters (North East, North West, Central East, Central West, South East and South West) were selected as areas for interviewers to complete a set number of interviews.

5.1.3 This method ensures a broad geographic coverage of the borough. Further to this, demographic quotas are then set by age, gender, ethnicity, working status and sexual orientation within each of the areas. The demographic quotas were defined using the Census 2021 and the ONS population estimates for 2021.

5.1.4 The number of interviews conducted was 1,694 - above the 1,000 widely regarded by the sector and within LGA guidance as an acceptable level of accuracy for a survey of this nature. A sample of 1,000 gives a margin of error of +/-3.1% on an observed statistic of 50% at the 95% confidence interval. However, using a higher sample provides a greater level of confidence in the data at sub-group level, allowing us to explore statistical significance by different breakdowns, for example by ward cluster or by ethnicity. A sample size of 1,700 gives a sampling error of +/-2.4% at a total level, but more importantly, reduces the margin of error per ward cluster to circa +/-7%.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

5.2.1 The results highlight a number of key themes for the council, including a need to rebuild trust with residents, value for money, resident involvement in decision making and community cohesion and safety.

5.2.2 A summary of headline findings is set out below with the full independent analysis of the results across all 24 questions of the survey set out at Appendix A.

Croydon the place

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5.2.3 In Croydon 69% of respondents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live (69%). This is 6% lower than the average national figure of 75% and 9% lower than the London benchmark of 77%.

5.2.4 Croydon's good public transport links are perceived as one of the best things about living in Croydon by residents (45%), along with the variety of shops (23%) and the availability of parks and open spaces for residents to enjoy (22%). Amenities/leisure facilities, Croydon generally being a good location and schools/education are also mentioned but less frequently.

5.2.5 57% of residents state that it is important for them to personally feel they can influence decisions in their local area however only 34% currently felt they can influence decisions made by public services such as health, police and the council, that affect their local area. When asked if they would like to be more involved in decision making 24% of residents said yes with a further 29% stating that it would depend on the issue.

5.2.6 There are key differences by ward cluster, with residents in Central West and Central East frequently being significantly less satisfied and also feeling less able to influence local decisions in comparison to their neighbouring ward clusters.

Croydon Council

5.2.7 45% of residents are satisfied with the way Croydon Council runs things. This is 11% points below the October 2023 LGA benchmark.

5.2.8 Within these responses there are significant differences between ward clusters, with 58% of North West residents being satisfied with how the council run things compared with only 32% in the Central East cluster. Across the borough, residents who have lived in Croydon for 5+ years are also significantly less likely to be satisfied compared to those who have lived in the area for up to a year (41% compared with 55%).

5.2.9 When asked the reasoning for their scores, residents who are satisfied often recite positive experiences with council services or staff interaction, whereas those who are dissatisfied reference the councils' previous financial crisis.

5.2.10 Along with council satisfaction, residents' ratings in terms of value for money (34%) and keeping residents informed (41%) also come in below the LGA benchmark (-6% points, -15% points).

5.2.11 When asked about trust in the council 45% said they trusted the council 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount. This is 10% points lower than the LGA benchmark.

5.2.12 While there has not been a resident survey of this scale in recent years, some independent research was carried out by the LGA on behalf of the council in August and September 2021. A representative sample of 501 residents was surveyed, primarily to ascertain residents' preferred means of receiving information from the

council. The survey did however include a question about resident trust – how much do you trust Croydon Council? In response 24% of respondents said they trusted the council 'a great deal' or a 'fair amount'.

5.2.13 As with overall satisfaction, there are significant differences between ward clusters, demographic groups and length of residency in Croydon on these measures.

5.2.14 Just over two in five residents (41%) feel as though Croydon Council keeps them informed about the services and benefits it provides. This places Croydon Council's performance 15% points below the LGA benchmark for this metric. 41% of residents felt that Croydon Council listens to them and 48% said they felt the council does not act on the concerns of local residents – this is 5% points higher than the LGA benchmark.

5.2.15 The most important services provided by the council were keeping streets safe, clean and well lit (47%), children, young people and education (46%), rubbish and recycling collection (44%) and support for the elderly and vulnerable adults (41%).

Croydon's communities

5.2.16 Croydon residents think highly of their local communities, with 82% agreeing that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. 78% agree that they feel a sense of belonging to their local area and 61% believe that people in their local area pull together to improve the place they live in.

Feeling safe

5.2.17 88% of Croydon residents report feeling safe in their local area in the daytime and 61% report feeling safe in the evening. According to LGA polls, this compares with 90% of residents feeling safe during the day nationally and 71% at night.

5.2.18 At both times of day there are consistent subgroup differences, whereby some residents feel less safe than others, including residents with a disability, females and more deprived residents.

5.3 Next steps

5.3.1 Since the October 2020 Report in the Public Interest and subsequent S114 Notices, Croydon Council has entered a period of significant political, managerial and organisational change. This survey provides a baseline for the council to understand the experiences and perceptions of residents towards the council, the wider borough and the key issues facing them following that period.

5.3.2 The results of the survey will be widely shared with officers in the council as well as partner organisations across the borough and will be used to shape and inform service planning and improvement in the coming year.

5.3.3 While there are already improvement programmes in place for many of the areas residents have identified as issues, for example customer service and telephony, the updated Transformation Strategy currently in development will set out how the council will reshape services to better deliver for local residents and rebuild the relationship between Croydon Council and the residents in the borough.

5.3.4 To provide greater insight into the results and ensure that council improvement activity is focused on resident priorities, it is recommended that further deep-dive analysis and follow-up engagement with residents is carried out over 2024. This engagement would be designed and delivered by the council in conjunction with independent market research experts, to provide greater depth of understanding of resident sentiments and the reasons behind it, for example through the use of targeted focus groups.

5.3.5 A similar independent resident survey would then be conducted in 2025 providing comparable data on resident perception and opinion.

5.3.6 Given the scale of the long-term systemic transformation Croydon Council is undertaking, as well as the significant financial savings required of the council to reduce its £1.6bn debt, it is likely changes in the lived experience of residents will take time to be reflected in annual survey results.

5.3.7 However, this research will be important in helping the council to improve the quality of its relationship with residents. Understanding key drivers of resident satisfaction, and local perceptions, will support the council in its aim to move from a transactional relationship with residents, to one where local people are engaged as active citizens, involved in decision-making and co-designing services. This will ultimately help to rebuild trust.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Croydon Council has not carried out a statistically significant residents' survey on this scale for several years and the option of continuing to not deliver one was considered, given the council's current financial situation. This option was discounted as the results of the survey will provide invaluable insight into the priorities and perceptions of residents which will be utilised when designing services and our continuing transformation programme.

6.2 The council could choose not to carry out the proposed further engagement activity however this would limit the council's insight into the views of residents, reducing the ability of the council to properly address areas of concern.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 Becoming a council which listens to, respects and works in partnership with Croydon's diverse communities and businesses is a priority in the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026.

This priority supports the delivery of the first outcome in the plan - the council balances its books, listens to residents' and delivers good sustainable services**.**

7.2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.2.1 Finance have been consulted and can confirm that any costs relating to this report can be met within existing budgets.

7.2.1 DJS Research has already been commissioned to conduct three pieces of research for the council. This includes the first residents' survey at a cost of £33,500, with further funding allocated for future resident surveys and research. This spend is within the agreed budget framework and consistent with corporate objectives as set out in the report.

7.2.3 Conducting a residents' survey, which monitors resident satisfaction levels with the services the council provides and the way it is run, supports the council to meet its duty in terms of best value. Resident surveys are an essential tool for Local Authorities and enable the council is to remain on a pathway of continuous improvement, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and assists in evidencing its accountability to local residents.

7.2.4 Comments approved by Lesley Shields, Head of Finance for Assistant Chief Executive and Resources on behalf of the Director of Finance. 06/1/23

7.3 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.3.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. If any actions are identified as a result of the findings of the Croydon Residents' Survey (Autumn 2023), the legal implications of those will be considered at the time.

7.3.2 Approved by: Sandra Hebert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense, Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer (18/01/2024).

7.4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.4.1 Conducting the survey in itself does not have an impact. The survey results are likely to have some impact on people because they will inform future service planning and transformation planning. If any actions are identified as a result of the findings of the Croydon Residents' Survey (Autumn 2023), the equalities implications of those will be considered at the time.

7.4.2 DJS Research's approach was designed to maximise response rates and quality of data from groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act, those with language requirements, and disadvantaged residents. Quotas were set in alignment with the borough profile.

7.4.3 They implemented a range of techniques to ensure the research was as inclusive and accessible as it can be, recognising that Croydon is a diverse borough in terms of ethnicity,

sexual orientation, nationality, religion and language. These included:

- All DJS face-to-face interviewers are Interviewer Quality Control Scheme trained and received comprehensive training on the project prior to it starting,

- The survey questions were formally piloted before fieldwork commenced. A total of 30 interviews were conducted with residents, ensuring a good representation of age, gender, ethnicity, working status, disability and sexual orientation. The pilot tested the comprehension of the survey questions, the full survey process including the length of the survey, the impact of the introduction on response rates and non-response, and how well the script was working, including routing of questions.

- Across their team of London-based face-to-face interviewers DJS has the capability of conducting interviews in more than 20 languages. During the design stages, they assessed the ethnic and language profiles of Croydon's communities and allocated interviewers based on their matched demographic profile.

- Interviews are conducted at different times and days of the week to give everyone an equal chance of taking part in the survey irrespective of childcare responsibilities, employment, or religious commitments etc. Interviewers conducted at least a third of their interviews at weekends, a third in the week before 5pm and a third in the week after 5pm. This is monitored as a KPI for each interviewer.

7.4.2 DJS set a monitoring quota by disability to ensure a representative spread of responses from these residents. Interviewers provided large-font paper copies of the survey to be self-completed where required or paper copies to those who are hard of hearing. Libraries were also contacted and asked to provide a seat or quiet space for interviews as needed.

7.4.5 Comment approved by Naseer Ahmad for the Equalities Manager, (23/01/2024)

DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

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

  Yes

- **HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

As part of the tender exercise, the successful contractor was required to complete a data processing and non-disclosure agreement and will also be required to retain the completed

survey forms in accordance with GDPR and data protection legislation.

As part of the council's contract with DJS Research, a data protection schedule was agreed including confirmation of compliance with data protection laws, data processing obligations and processing activities.

8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 – Croydon residents survey – autumn 2023

8.2 Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

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Residents' Survey 2023

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January 2024

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2. Key findings
3. Local area satisfaction
4. Views of Croydon Council
5. Community cohesion
6. Feelings of safety
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8. Appendix 2: Profile of the sample

1. Background and methodology

Background and methodology

The London Borough of Croydon ('Croydon Council') commissioned DJS Research to deliver its 2023 Residents' Survey.

A total of 1,694 interviews were completed using CAPI interviewing. CAPI stands for computer-assisted personal interviewing and is a form of face-to-face interviewing where the interviewer reads the survey questions from a tablet device and inputs the respondent's answers directly to the device.

Fieldwork took place towards the end of 2023 (18th September 2023 – 6th December 2023).

The results are representative at a borough level by age, gender, ethnicity, economic status and disability.

A detailed description of the methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

Sampling

A random locational quota sampling method was used to ensure we achieved a representative sample. Random locations within Croydon's ward clusters* (North East, North West, Central East, Central West, South East and South West) were selected as areas for interviewers to complete interviews.

The survey aimed to…

1. Gain a strong understanding of the views and priorities of Croydon residents.
2. Collect useful data to create standard Key Performance Indicators which will allow Croydon Council to track key changes over time.
3. Allow comparison between Croydon Council and the Local Government Association (LGA) benchmark scores.
4. Allow for sub-group analysis by ward cluster and demographic characteristics.

*A breakdown of each ward cluster can be found on slide 5.

Ward cluster breakdown

North East
Crystal Palace & Upper Norwood
South Norwood
Thornton Heath

North West
Bensham Manor
Norbury & Pollards Hill
Norbury Park
West Thornton

Central East
Addiscombe East
Park Hill & Whitgift
Shirley North
Shirley South
Woodside

Central West
Addiscombe West
Broad Green
Fairfield
Selhurst
South Croydon
Waddon

South East
New Addington North
New Addington South
Selsdon & Addington Village
Selsdon Vale & Forestdale

South West
Coulsdon Town
Kenley
Old Coulsdon
Purley & Woodcote
Purley Oaks & Riddlesdown
Sanderstead

*Please note that the above information is based on 2022 ward information.

2. Key findings

Key performance indicators

Key performance indicators	Croydon Council Score (2023)	LGA benchmark (October 2023)	% difference
Q01. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? **(% satisfied**)	69%	75%	-6%
Q03. To what extent would you say you are, or would be, safe from crime when walking in your local area...? (**daytime % safe**)	83%	93%	-10%
Q03. To what extent would you say you are, or would be, safe from crime when walking in your local area...? (**evening % safe**)	61%	73%	-12%
Q05. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Croydon Council runs things? (**% satisfied**)	45%	56%	-11%
Q06. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Croydon Council provides value for money? (**% agree**)	34%	40%	-6%
Q07. How well do you think Croydon Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides? (**% informed**)	41%	56%	-15%
Q09. To what extent do you think Croydon Council acts on the concerns of local residents? (**% acts**)	40%	52%	-12%
Q010. How much do you trust Croydon Council? (**% trust**)	45%	55%	-10%

Key findings

Local area satisfaction

On the whole, residents appear to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live (**69%**), and Croydon as a borough is often highly regarded by its residents for its transport links (**45%**), shopping facilities (**23%**) and open spaces (**22%**). There are however key differences by ward cluster, with residents in Central West and Central East frequently being significantly less satisfied and also feeling less able to influence local decisions in comparison to their neighbouring ward clusters.

Views of Croydon Council

45% of residents are satisfied with the way Croydon Council runs things, which is **11% points** below the October 2023 LGA benchmark, and again, residents in Central East appear to be the most critical of the council along with residents who have lived in the borough for 5+ years. When asked the reasoning for their scores, residents who are satisfied often recite positive experiences with the council, whereas those who are dissatisfied reference the councils' previous financial issues. Along with council satisfaction, residents' ratings in terms of value for money (**34%**), keeping residents informed (**41%**) and trust in the council (**45%**) also come in below the LGA benchmark **(-6% points, -15% points** and **-10% points**).

Community cohesion

Residents do however think highly of their local communities, with **82%** agreeing that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, and **78%** agreeing that they feel a sense of belonging to their local area. Agreement scores are lower with regards to perceptions that people in their local area pull together to improve the local area (**61%**), but still remain above over half.

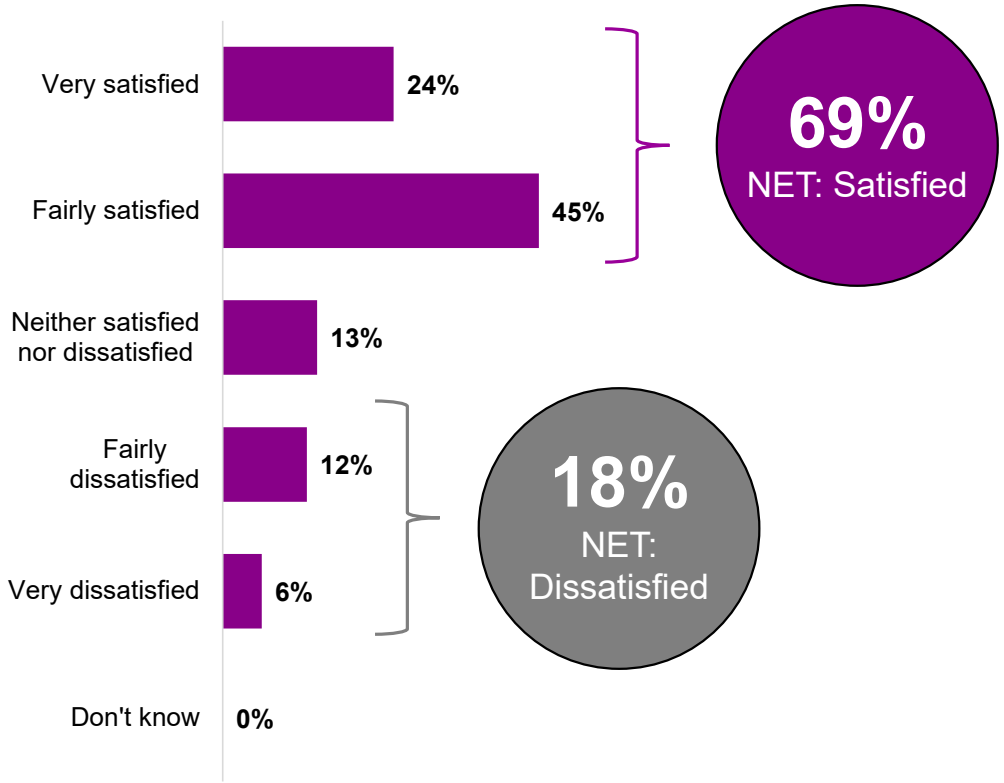
Feelings of safety

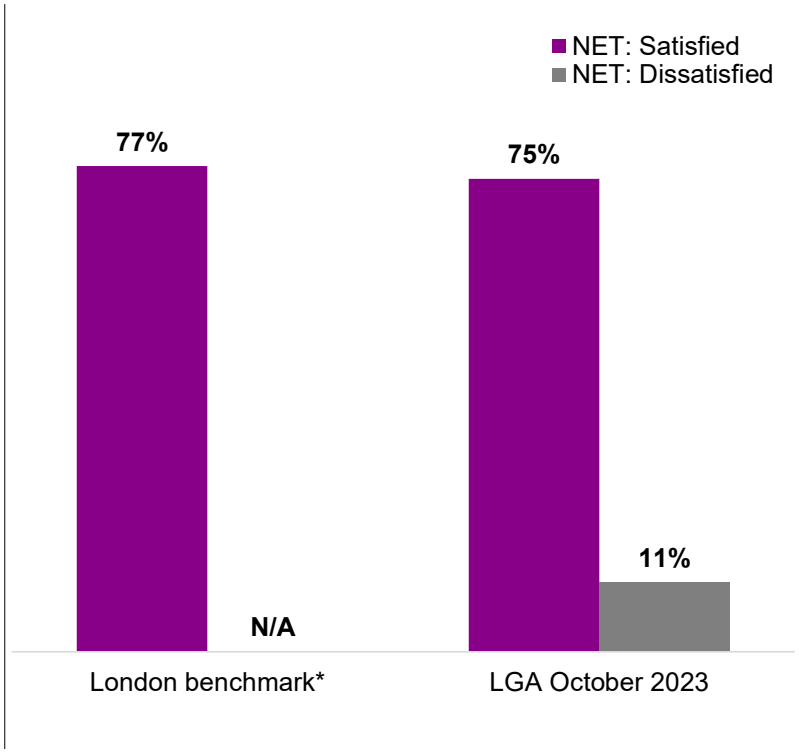
88% of residents report feeling safe in their local area in the daytime and **61%** report feeling safe in the evening. At both times of day there are consistent subgroup differences, whereby some residents feel less safe than others, including residents with a disability, females and residents who are most deprived.

3. Local area satisfaction

Local area satisfaction: Overall results

Just under seven in ten residents (**69%**) report that they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
This places Croydon Council **6% points** behind the LGA benchmark and **8% points** behind the London benchmark for this metric.





Q01. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *London benchmarking figures are an aggregate of available data from 2022 or 2023 residents' surveys carried out by other London boroughs (see detailed methodology for more info). Please note benchmarking figures are not perfectly comparable due to methodological differences.

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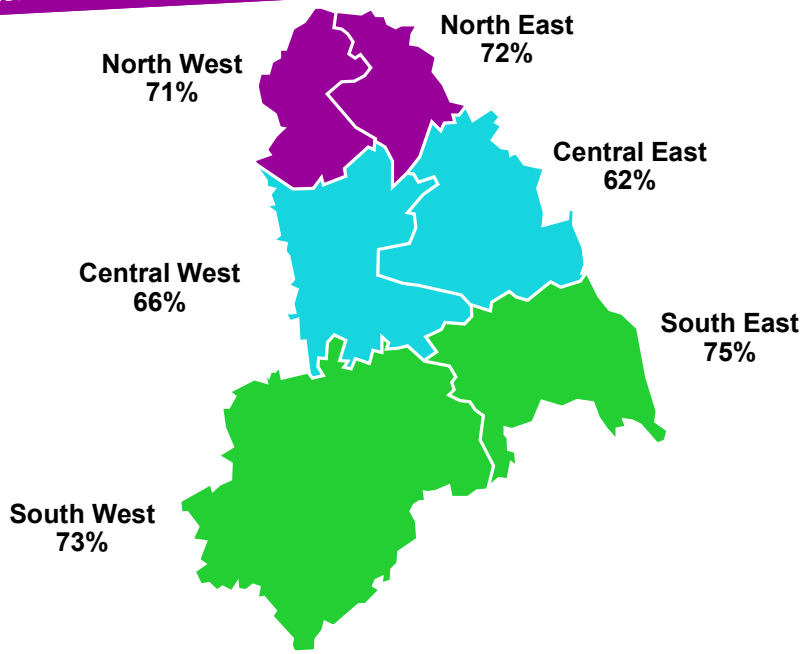
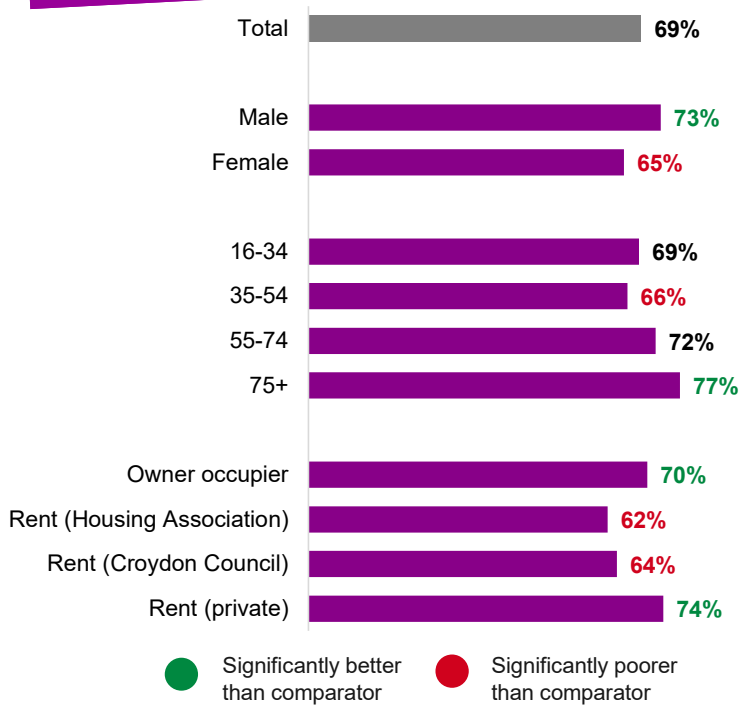
Local area satisfaction: Subgroup differences

Local area satisfaction is significantly higher in the South East compared to the Central East area of Croydon (**75% cf. 62%**). When it comes to demographic differences, males are significantly more likely to be satisfied than females (**73% cf. 65%**), and those aged 65+ are also significantly more likely to be satisfied than those aged 35-54 (**77% cf. 66%**).

% satisfied – ward cluster differences



% satisfied - demographic differences



Q01. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

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Local area satisfaction: Changes in the past two years

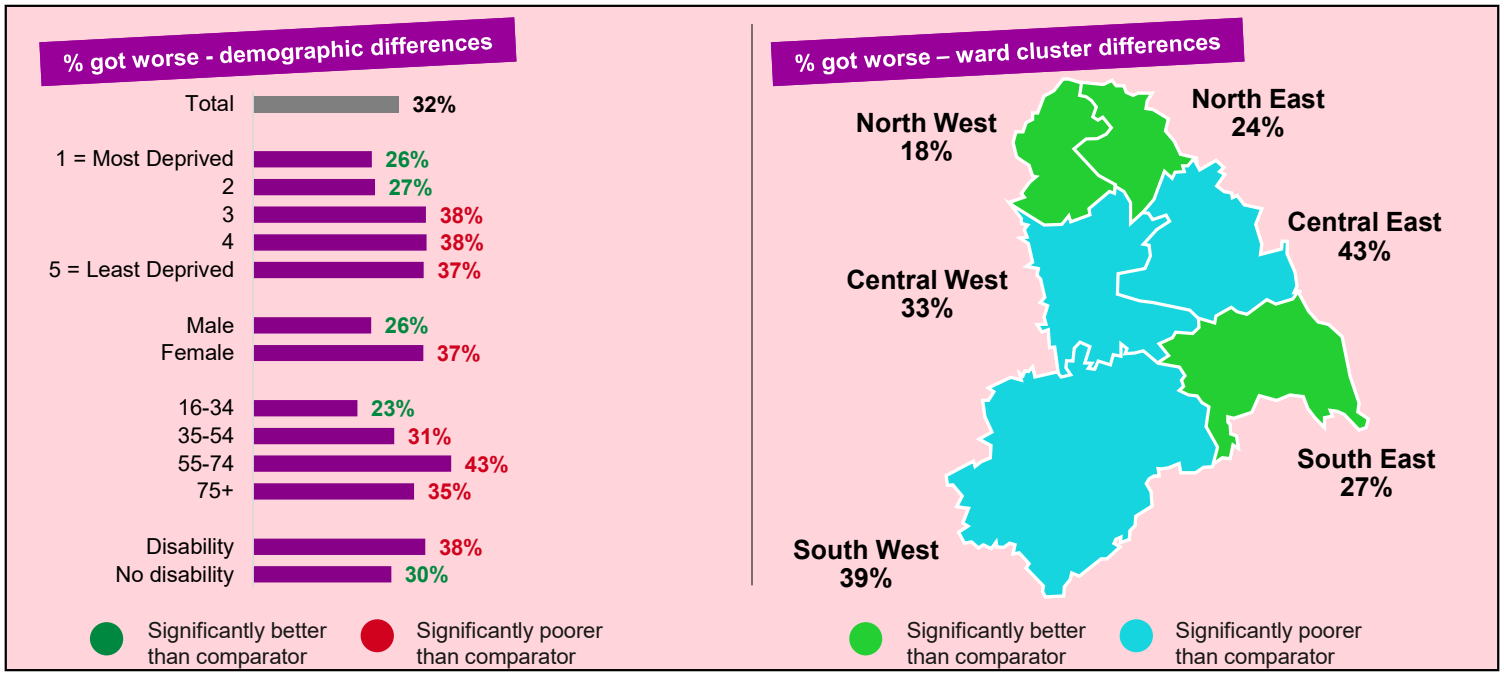
Most residents feel their local area has not changed much in the past two years (**44%**), but **32%** feel it has gotten worse. Indeed, those in the Central East of the borough and those aged 55-74 are significantly more likely to feel this way (**43%** respectively).

32% Got worse to live in

44% Not changed much

17% Got better to live in

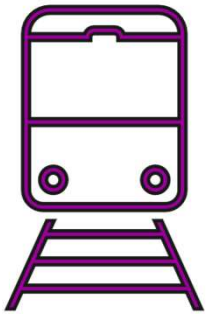
*7% DK / not lived here long enough to say



Q19. Do you think that over the past two years (since May 2021) your area has…? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

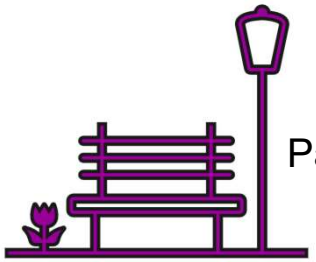
The best things about living in Croydon

Croydon's good public transport links are perceived as one of the best things about living in Croydon by residents (**45%**), along with the variety of shops (**23%**) and the availability of parks and open spaces for residents to enjoy (**22%**). Amenities / leisure facilities, Croydon generally being a good location and schools / education are also mentioned but less frequently.



45% Public transport

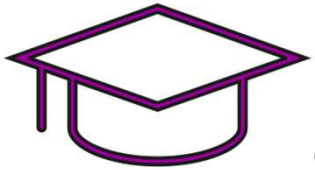
23% Variety of shops



22% Parks / open spaces

14% Amenities / leisure

14% Good location

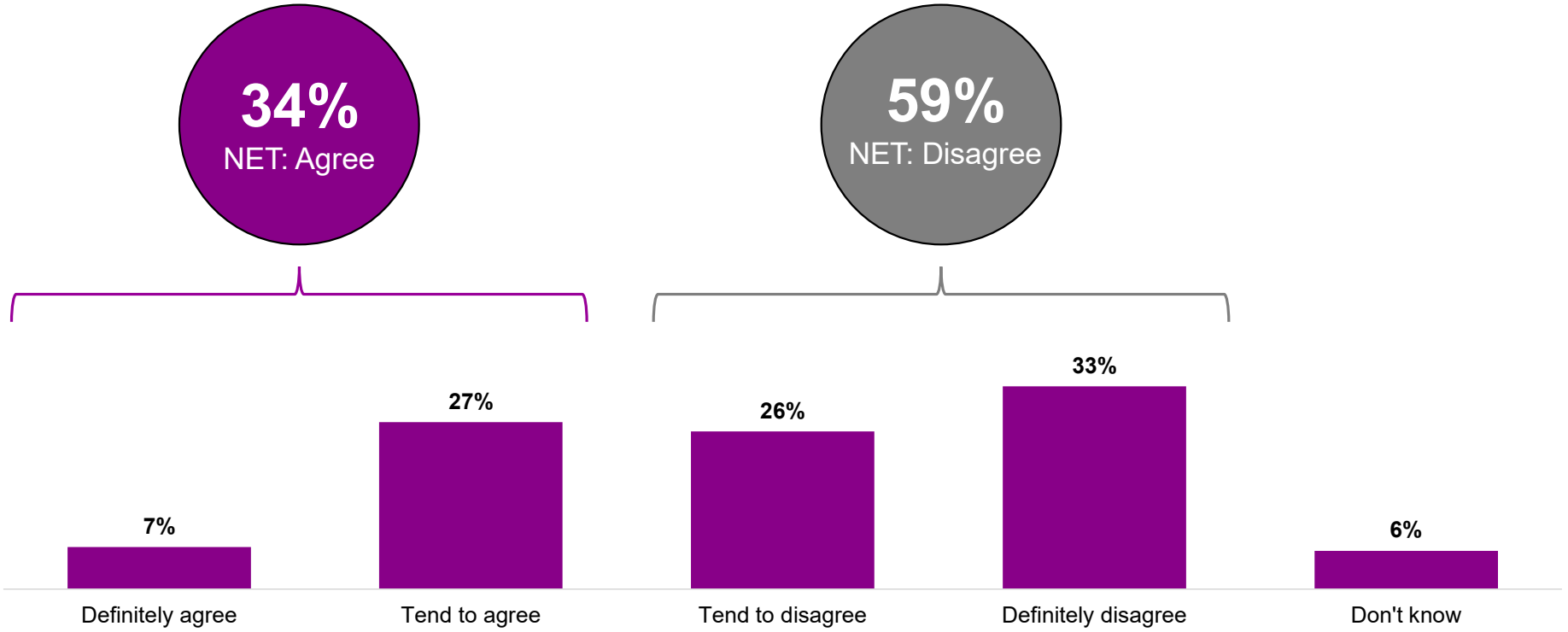


11% Schools / education

Q04. What would you say are the best things about living in Croydon? **Base:** All respondents who gave a valid response (1,691). *Only showing responses 11% and above.

Influence local decisions: Overall results

Around three fifths of residents (**59%**) disagree with the statement that they feel they can influence decisions made by public services such as health, police and the council, that affect their local area.



Q02. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions made by public services such as health, police and the council, that affect your local area?
Base: All respondents (1,694).

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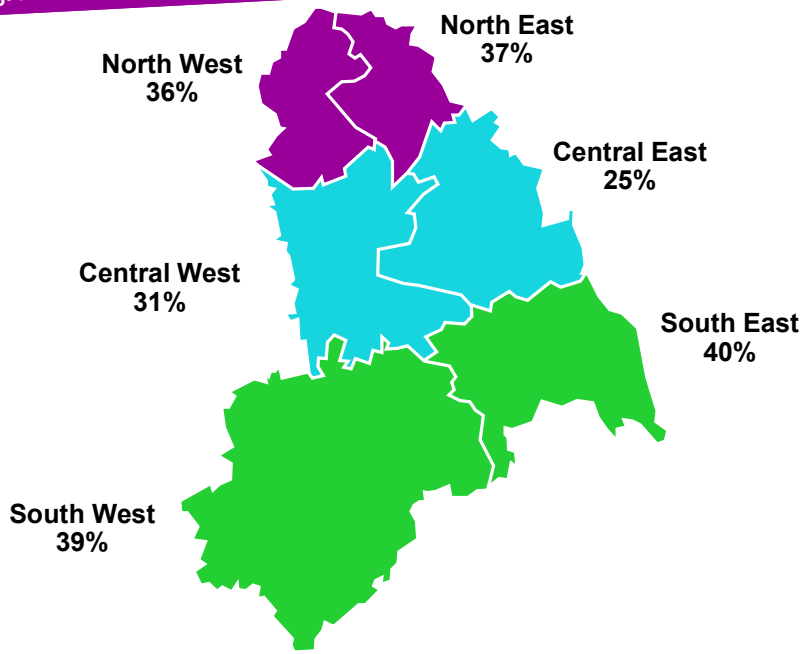
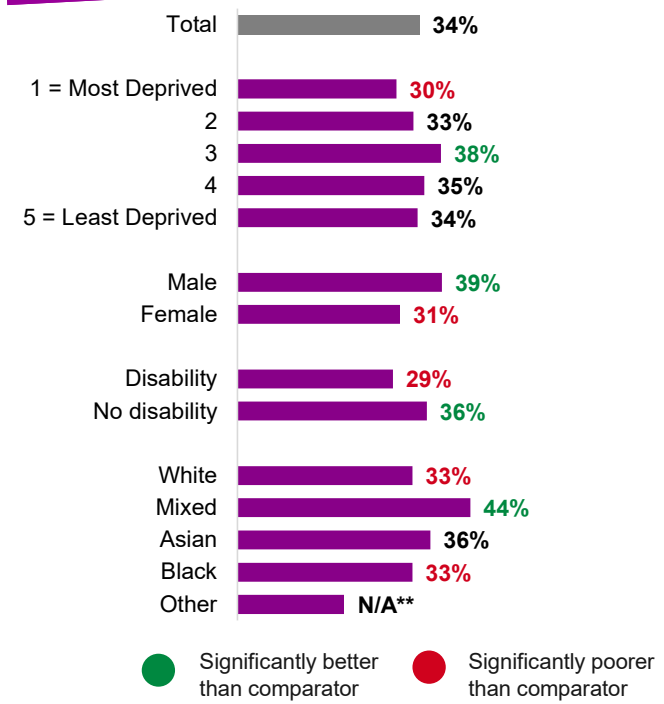
Influence local decisions: Subgroup differences

Of residents who feel they can influence decisions that affect their local area (**34%**), agreement is significantly higher amongst residents who live in the South East of the borough (**40%**). Those in IMD* quintile 3, males, residents without a disability and residents from a mixed ethnic background all also have significantly higher levels of agreement than their comparators.

% agree – ward cluster differences



% agree - demographic differences



Q02. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions made by public services such as health, police and the council, that affect your local area?
Base: All respondents (1,694). *The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measures relative deprivation across each of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom. Areas are ranked from the most deprived area (rank 1) to the least deprived area (rank 5). **Caution low base size (<10).

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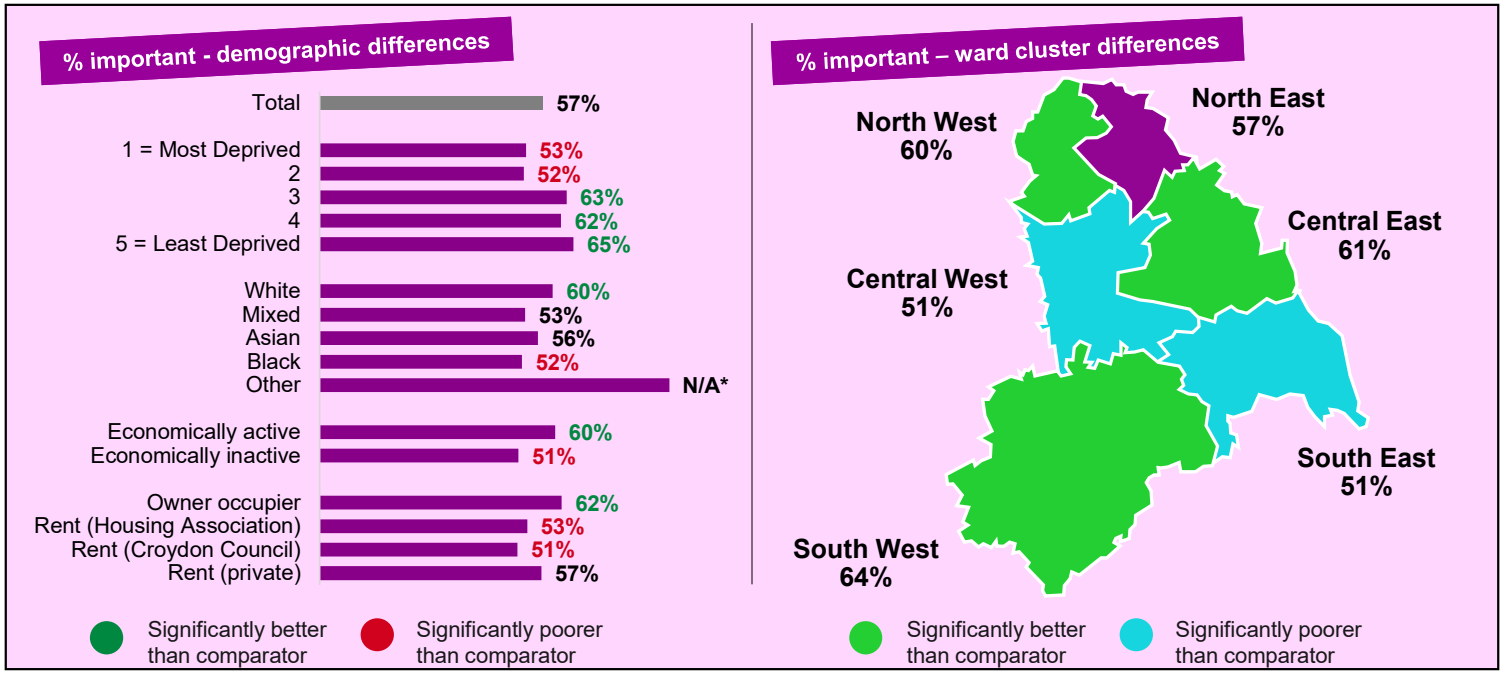
Influence local decisions: Perceived importance

Most residents (**57%**) state that it is important for them personally to feel that they can influence decisions in their local area, but perceived importance is significantly greater for some residents, particularly those in the South West of the borough.

57%
NET: Important

37%
NET: Unimportant



Q020. How important is it for you **personally** to feel that you can influence decisions in your local area? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

Influence local decisions: Resident involvement

Around a quarter of residents (**24%**) would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area and a further **29%** say that it would depend on the issue. Of residents who feel it is important to be able to influence local decisions, sharing ideas on how to improve the neighbourhood is the most popular activity and there appears to be a preference for this to take place via meetings.

Would you like to be more involved in decisions affecting your local area?

24% Yes

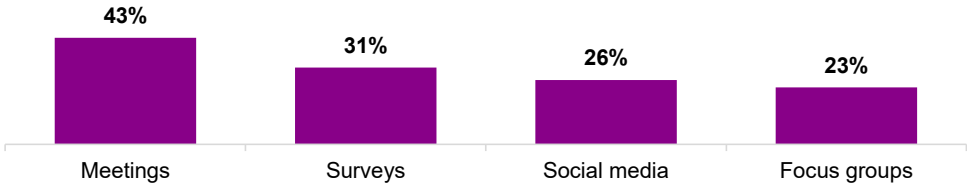
43% No

29% Depends on the issue

4% Don't know

What activities or community events would you be interested in?

How would you like to be involved?



Q021. Generally speaking, would you like to be more involved in the decisions your local council makes which affect your local area? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).
Q022. What activities or community events would you be interested in getting involved with? **Q023.** How would you like to be involved? **Base:** All respondents who feel it is important to be able to influence local decisions (1,038). *Only showing the top 3 responses, all respondent selections can be found in the data tables.

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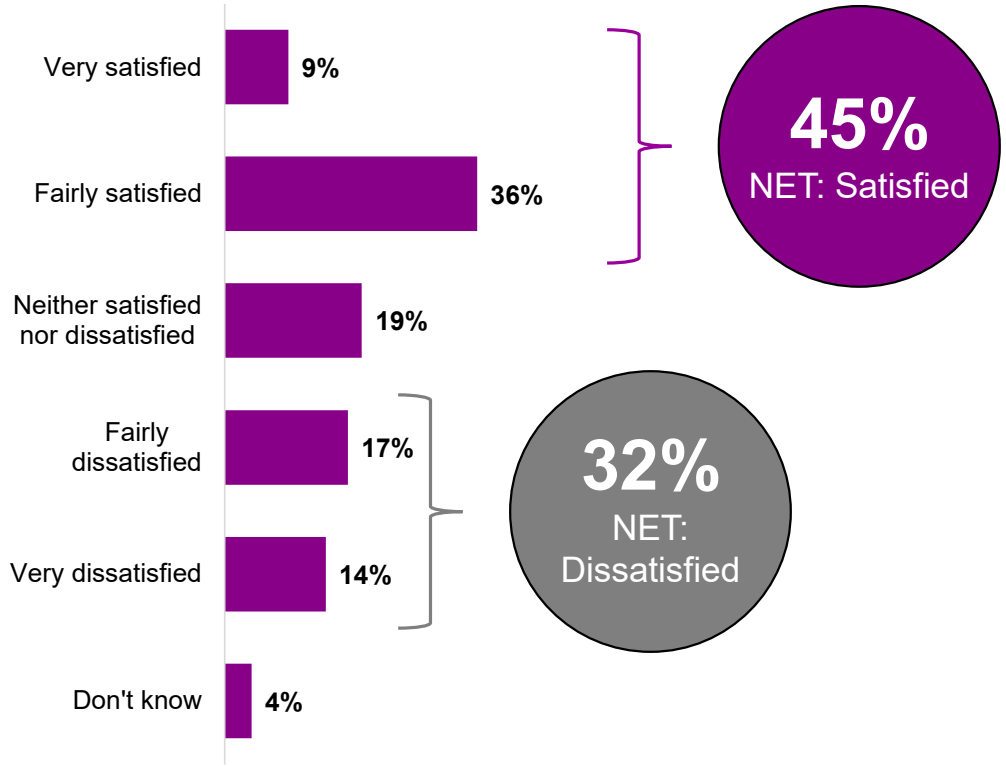
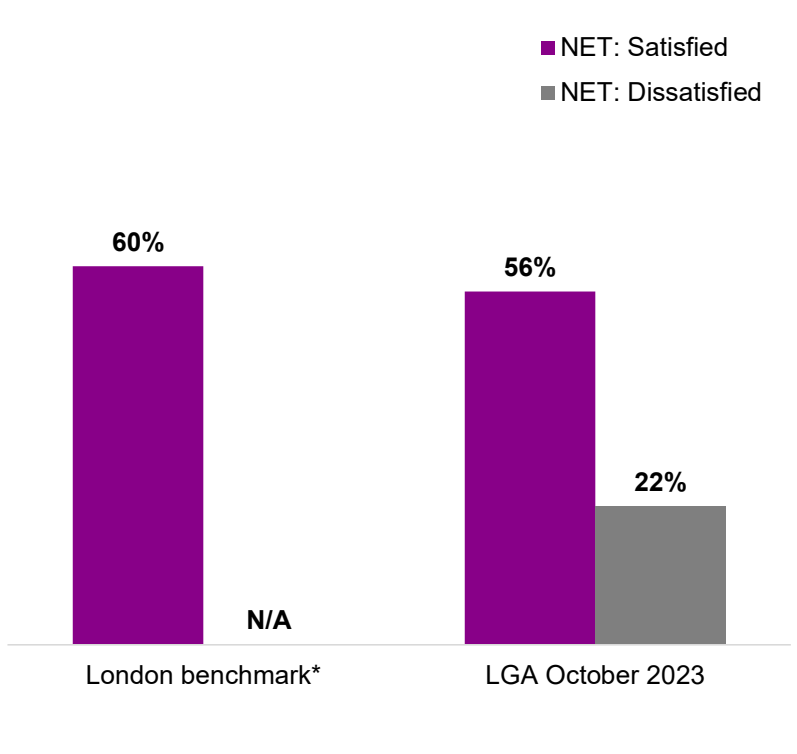
4. Views of Croydon Council

Council satisfaction: Overall results

45% of residents are satisfied with the way Croydon Council runs things, whilst **32%** are dissatisfied. The LGA benchmark has experienced declines this year with regards to council satisfaction (**62% Oct-22 cf. 56% Oct-23**), but despite these declines Croydon Council remain **11% points** behind the most recent LGA benchmark figure.



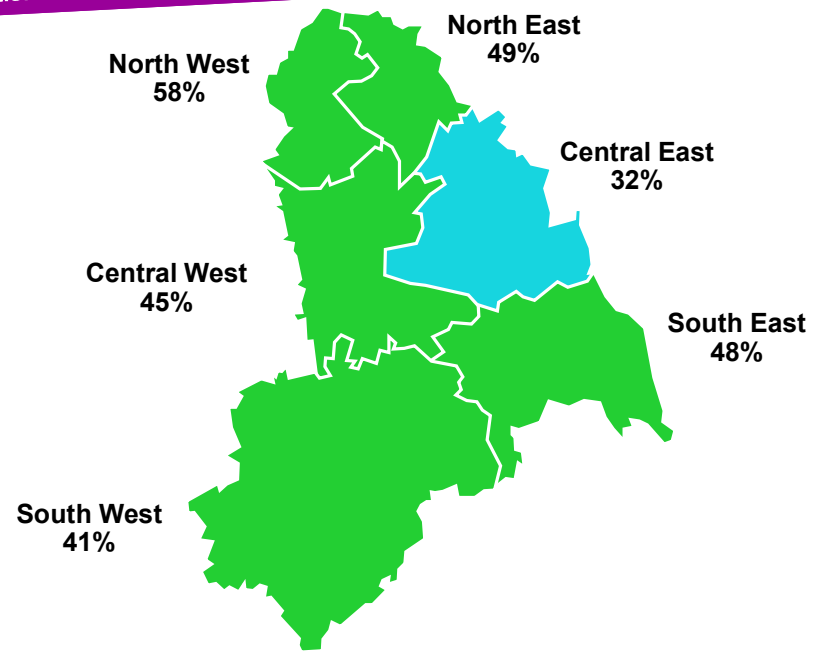


Q05. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Croydon Council runs things? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *London benchmarking figures are an aggregate of available data from 2022 or 2023 residents' surveys carried out by other London boroughs (see detailed methodology for more info). Please note benchmarking figures are not perfectly comparable due to methodological differences.

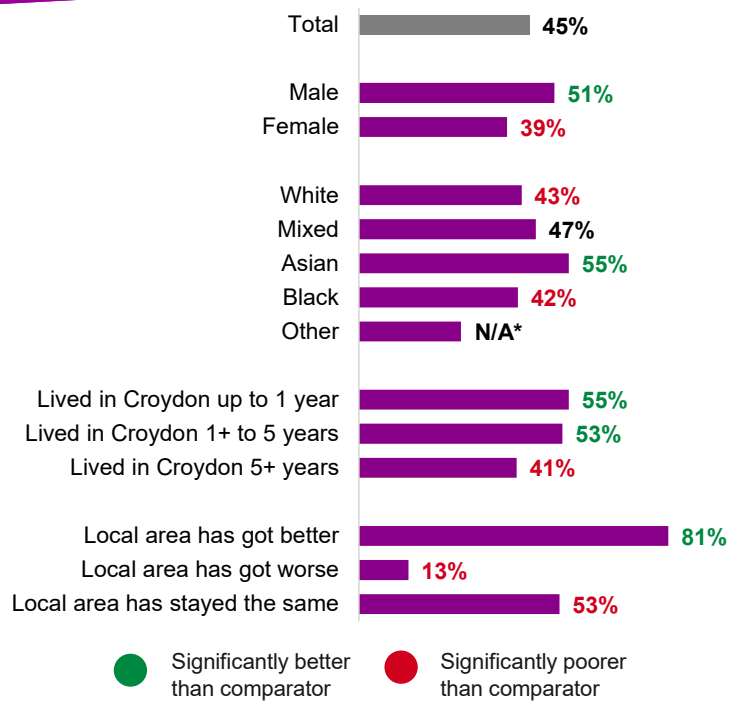
Council satisfaction: Subgroup differences

Satisfaction with the way Croydon Council runs things is lowest in the Central East of the borough (**32%**). Residents who have lived in Croydon for 5+ years are also significantly less likely to be satisfied compared to those who have lived in the area for up to a year (**41% cf. 55%**), perhaps due to the fact Croydon's long-standing residents remember the councils' financial issues back in 2020.

% satisfied – ward cluster differences



% satisfied - demographic differences



Q05. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Croydon Council runs things? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

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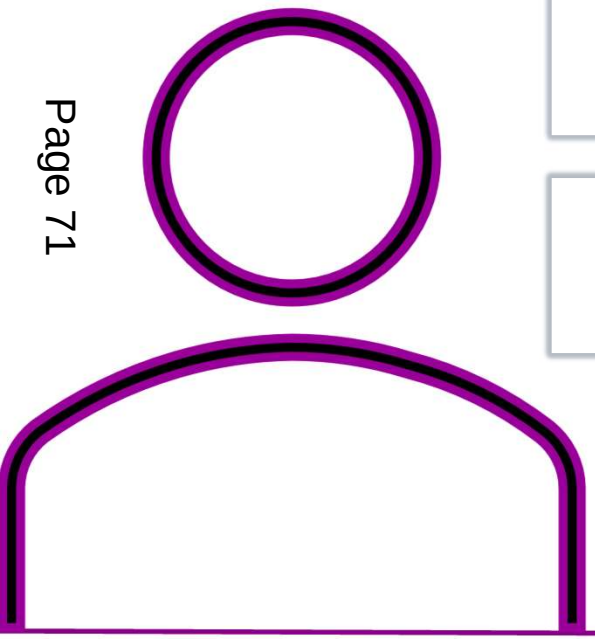
Council satisfaction: Reasons for high ratings

Reasons for high satisfaction ratings often relate to residents not experiencing any problems with the council and thus having no reason to not be satisfied. Some residents do however reflect on past experiences whereby the Croydon Council has helped them or people from their community and references are also made to recent improvements in the local area.



"I personally don't have any problem with them because they have never given me a reason not to be satisfied."
Female, 35-44, North West Croydon

"Because I wouldn't say that they've given me reason not to be satisfied or not to trust them, they give me the basics."
Female, 25-34, North West Croydon

"They have been very helpful to me in the past when I have contacted them."
Female, 35-44, Central East Croydon

"Because I know they look after a lot of people from the area."
Male, 65-74, North East Croydon

"From what I can see, they are doing a lot in the local area."
Female, 35-44, South East Croydon

Q05a. Why do you say that? **Base:** All respondents who gave a valid response and are 'very satisfied' (98).

Council satisfaction: Reasons for low ratings

Croydon Council's previous financial problems are commonly cited by dissatisfied residents as the reason for their dissatisfaction. Some residents have, however, experienced more personal issues in their local area which they feel the council are slow to respond to, this included issues with rubbish / litter, fly tipping, issues with bin collections and council tax increases.

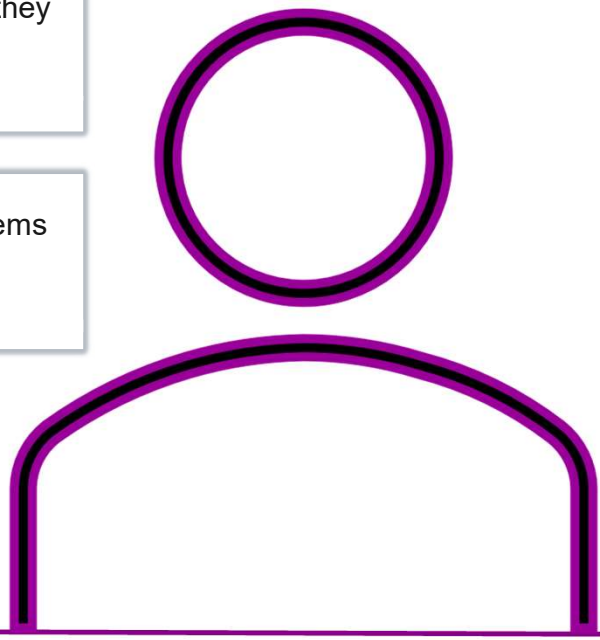
"It feels like they have spent / are spending a lot of money on things that ultimately have not come to fruition."
Female, 75-84, Central East Croydon

"They don't sweep the roads and there's lots of fly tipping that is just left, when you ring up, they don't answer the phone."
Female, 45-54, Central West Croydon

"They can't look after public money, what hope is there of them looking after the town's needs."
Male, 35-44, Central West Croydon

"Can't get through on phone, financial problems bin collection issues, council tax rises."
Female, 45-54, Central East Croydon

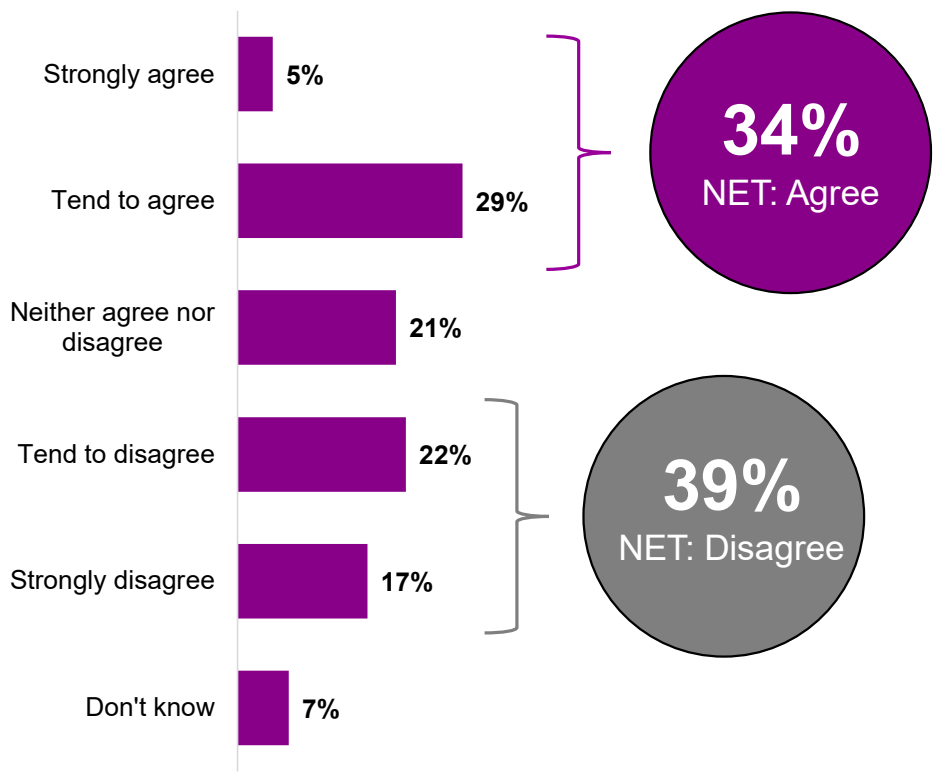
"Because of the council's expenditure with public money."
Female, 55-64, South West Croydon

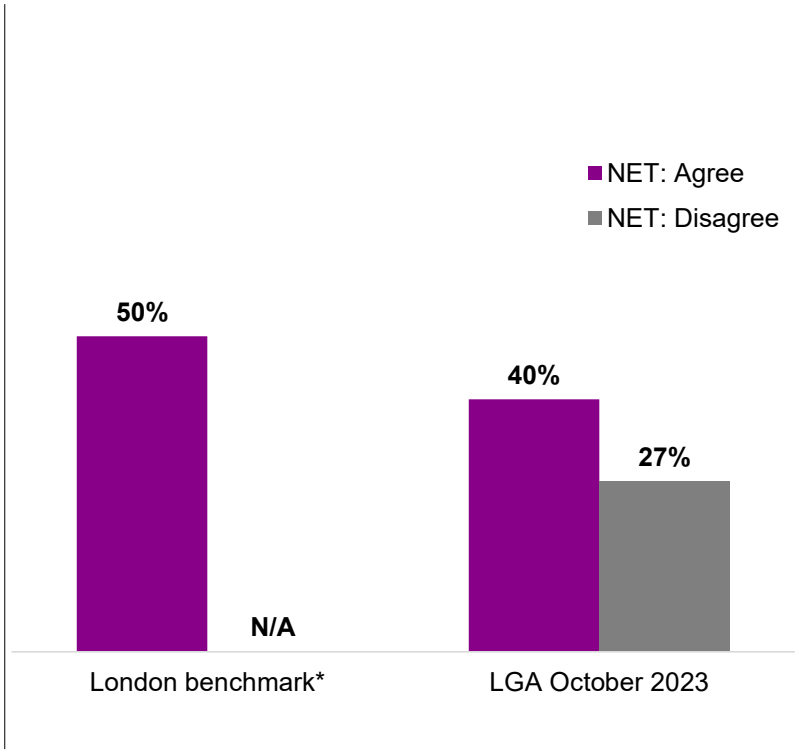


Q05a. Why do you say that? **Base:** All respondents who gave a valid response and are 'very dissatisfied' (229).

Value for money: Overall results

More residents disagree than agree with the statement that Croydon Council provides value for money (**39% cf. 34%**). Again, the LGA benchmark has experienced declines this year in terms of agreement levels for this metric (**46% Oct-22 cf. 40% Oct-23**) and as a result this places Croydon Council **6% points** behind the LGA benchmark.



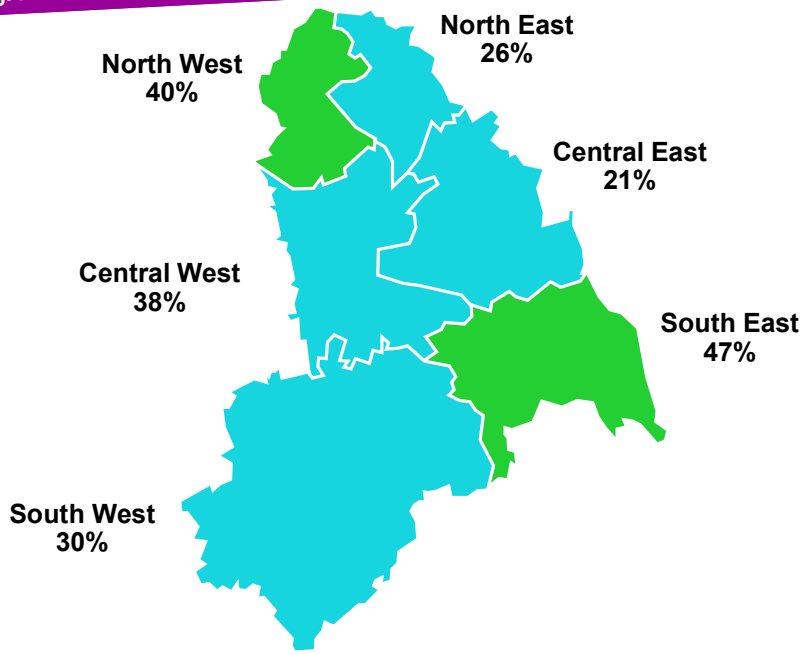


Q06. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Croydon Council provides value for money? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *London benchmarking figures are an aggregate of available data from 2022 or 2023 residents' surveys carried out by other London boroughs (see detailed methodology for more info). Please note benchmarking figures are not perfectly comparable due to methodological differences.

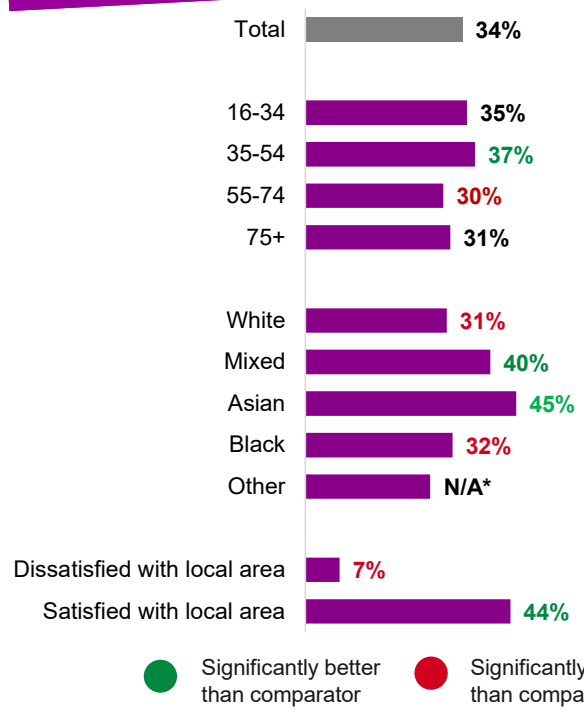
Value for money: Subgroup differences

Perceptions of value for money differ by ward cluster, with those in the South East of the borough being significantly more likely to agree that Croydon Council provides value for money compared to residents in the Central East area (**47% cf. 21%**). In particular, those who are dissatisfied with their local area are significantly more likely to report lower levels of agreement for this metric at just **7%**.

% agree – ward cluster differences



% agree - demographic differences



Q06. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Croydon Council provides value for money? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

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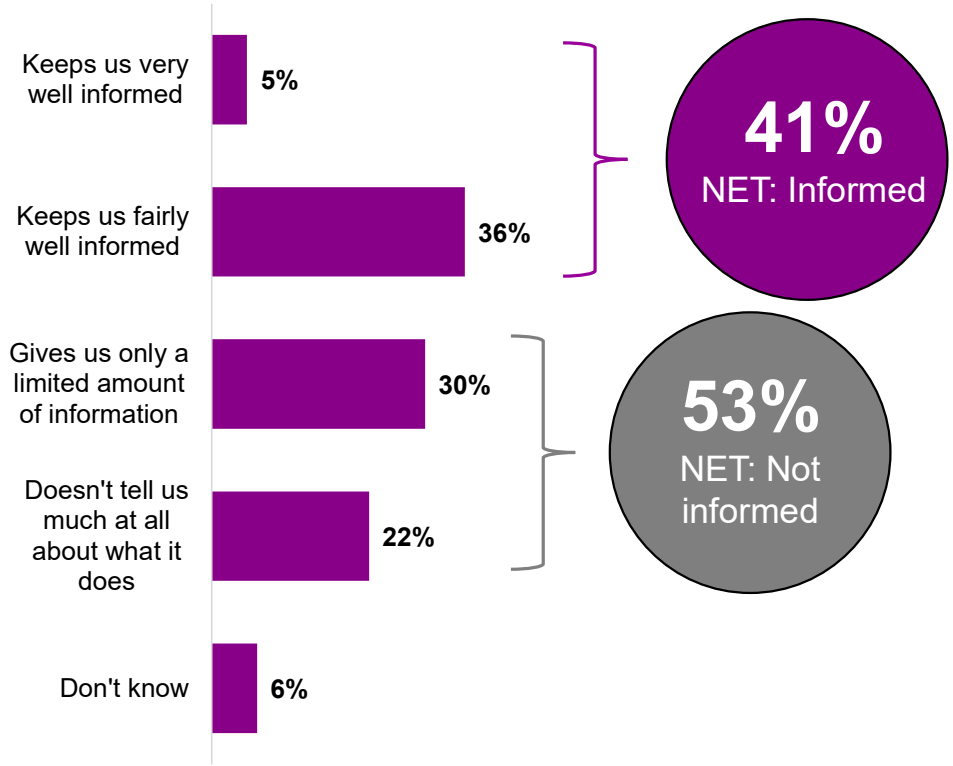
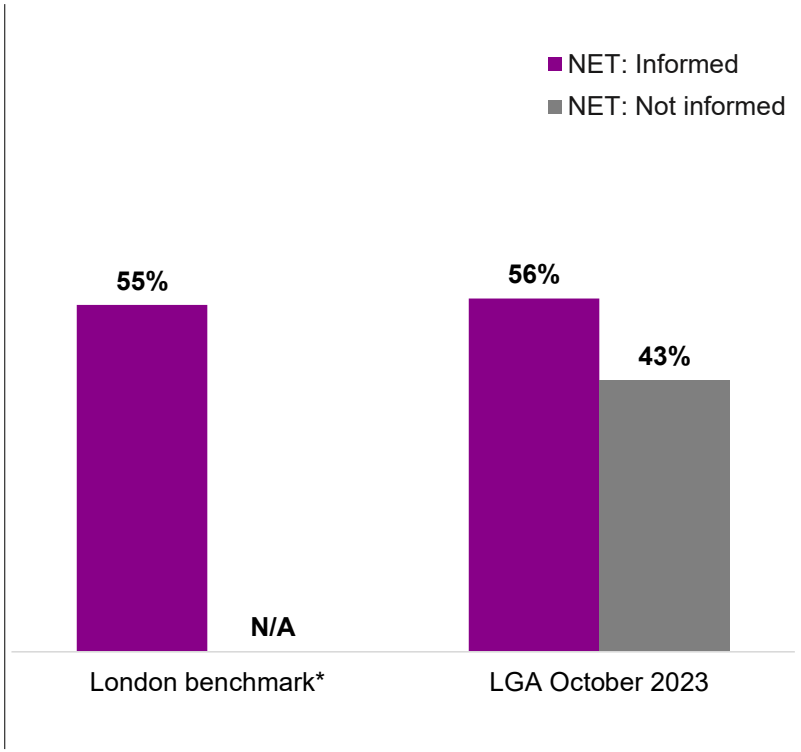
Keeping residents informed: Overall results

Just over two in five residents (**41%**) feel as though Croydon Council keeps them informed about the services and benefits it provides. This places Croydon Council's performance **15% points** below the LGA benchmark for this metric.





Q07. How well do you think Croydon Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *London benchmarking figures are an aggregate of available data from 2022 or 2023 residents' surveys carried out by other London boroughs (see detailed methodology for more info). Please note benchmarking figures are not perfectly comparable due to methodological differences.

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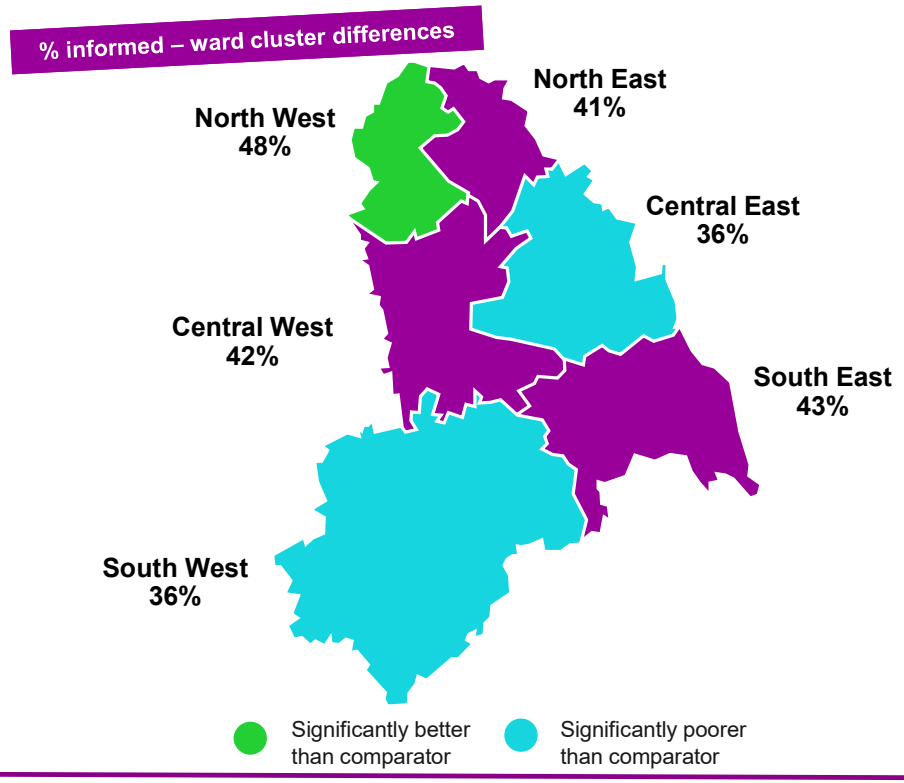
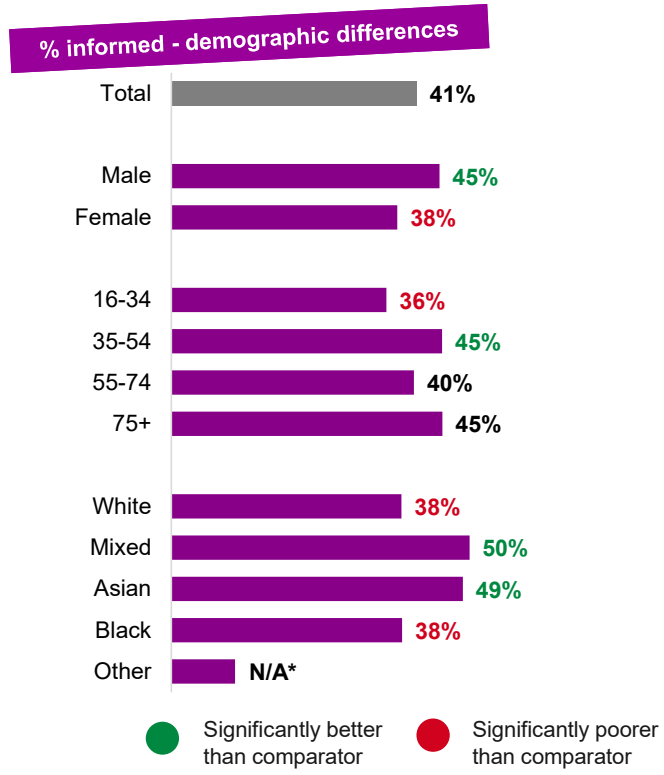
Keeping residents informed: Subgroup differences

Those in the Central East and South West of the borough feel significantly less informed than those in the North West (**36% cf. 48%**). Younger residents are also significantly more likely to feel less informed than those aged 35-54 (**36% cf. 45%**).

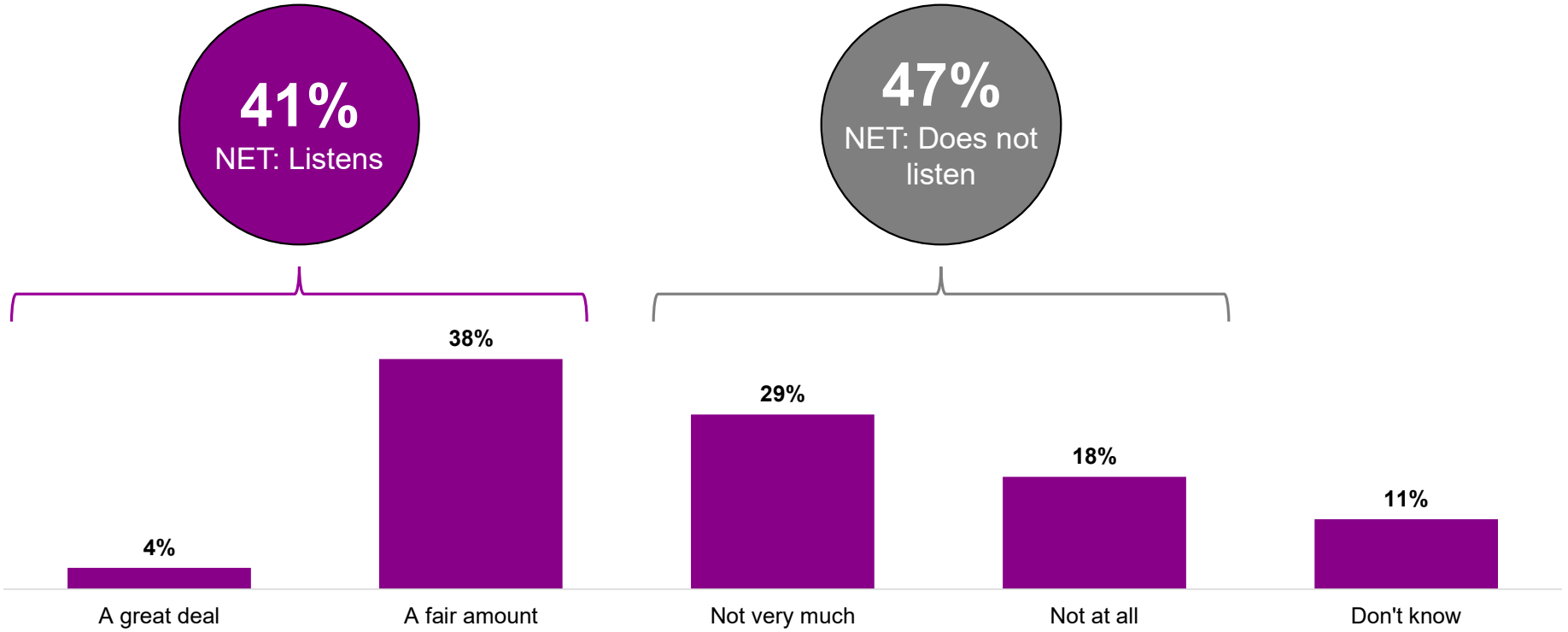




Q07. How well do you think Croydon Council keeps residents informed about the services and benefits it provides? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

Listening to residents: Overall results

41% of residents feel that Croydon Council listens to them, but of those who do feel the council listens, only **4%** say that the council listens ‘a great deal’.



Q08. To what extent do you think Croydon Council listens to local residents? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

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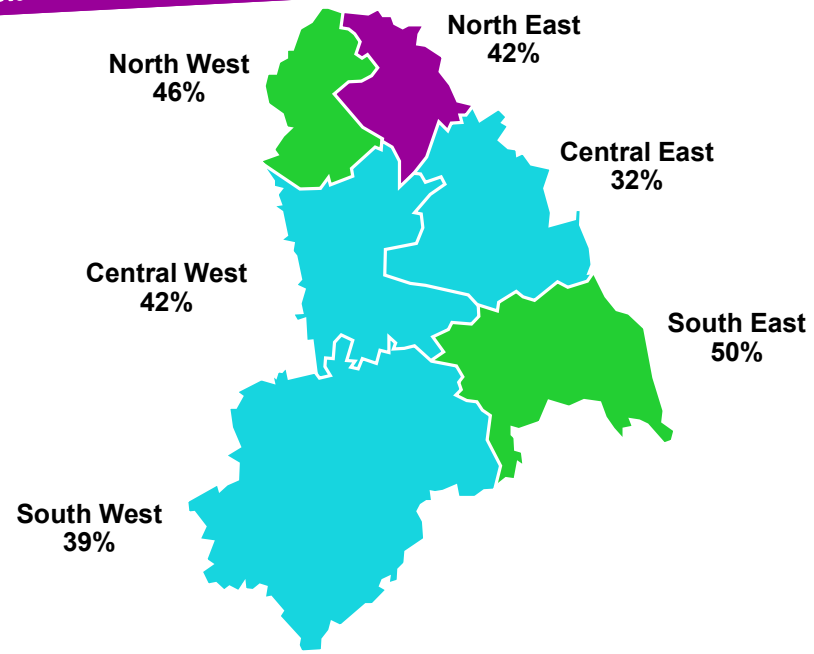
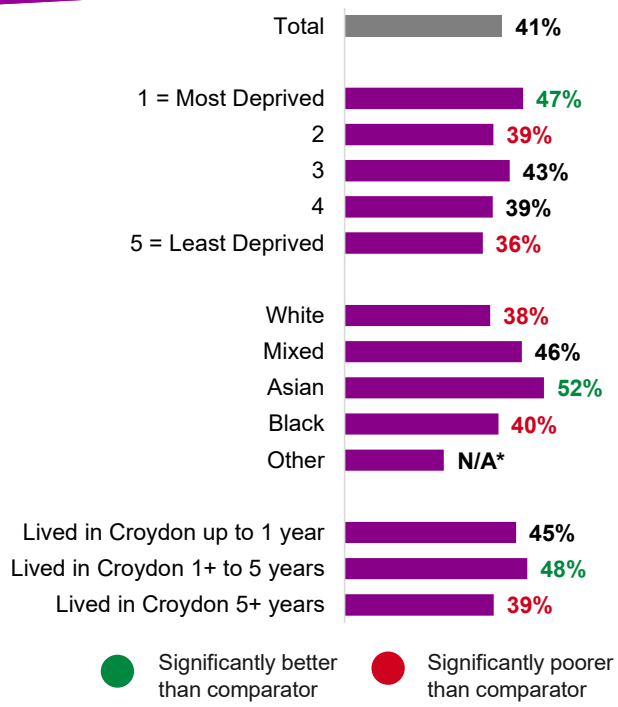
Listening to residents: Subgroup differences

Those in the Central East of the borough, those who are least deprived and those who have lived in Croydon for five or more years are significantly less likely to feel that Croydon Council listens to its residents.

% listens – ward cluster differences



% listens - demographic differences



Q08. To what extent do you think Croydon Council listens to local residents? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

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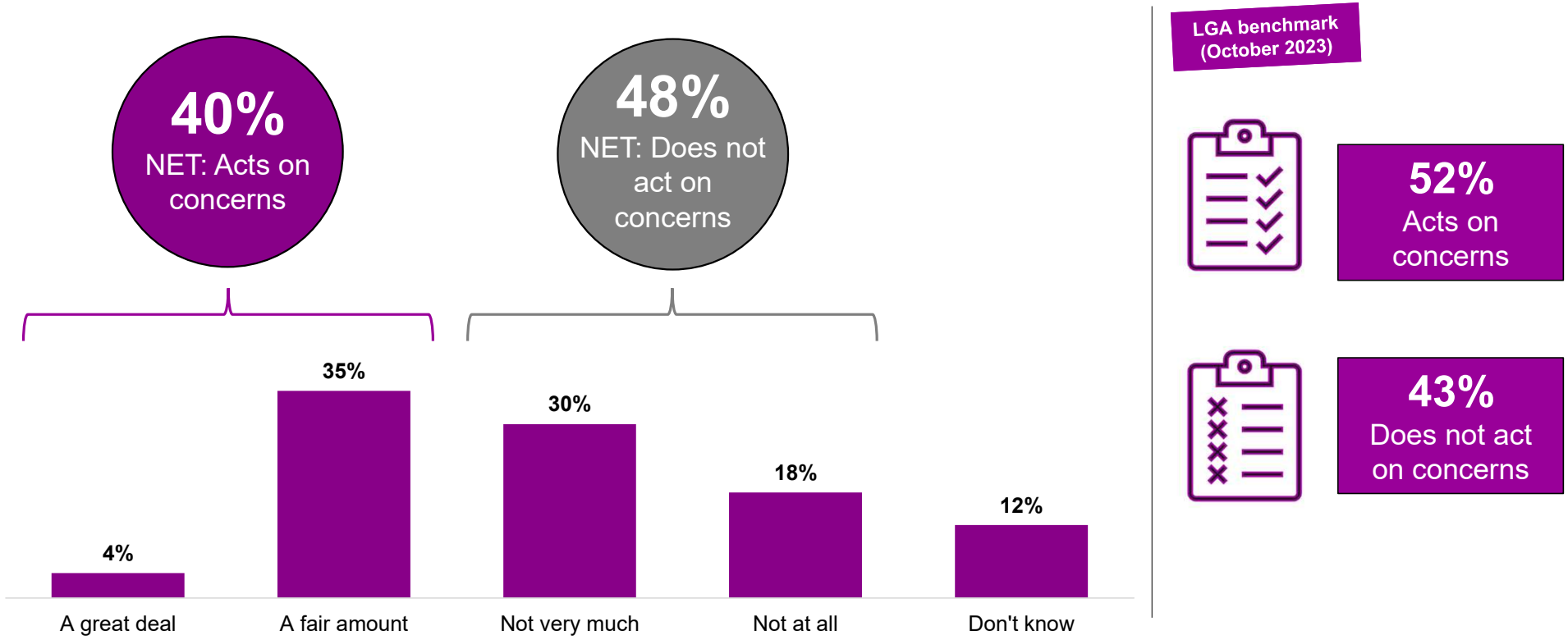
Acting on residents' concerns: Overall results

Almost half of residents feel that Croydon Council does not act on the concerns of local residents (**48%**). Despite this high score, Croydon Council is in fact only **5% points** higher for this metric than the LGA benchmark as in recent years the benchmark has experienced significant declines.

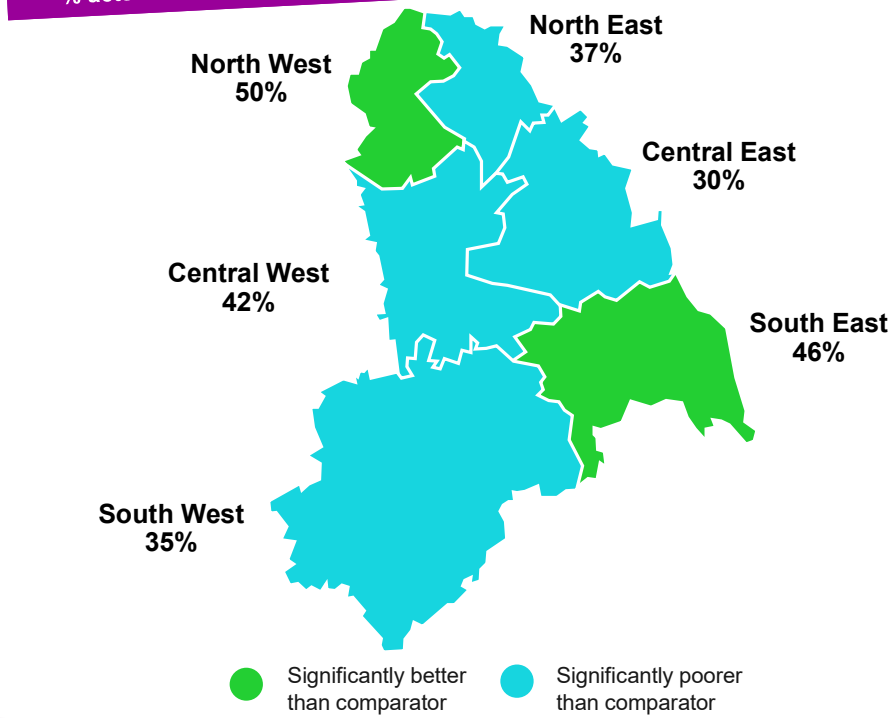


Q09. To what extent do you think Croydon Council acts on the concerns of local residents? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

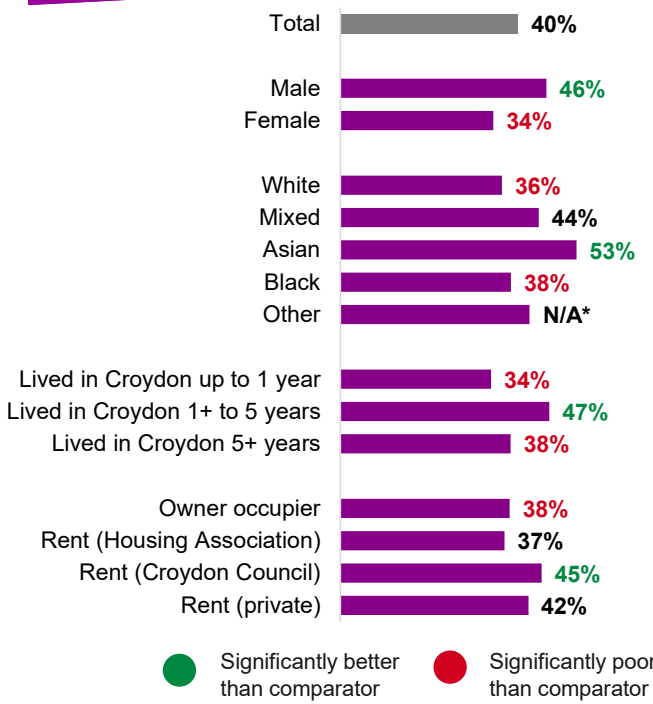
Acting on residents' concerns: Subgroup differences

Those who have lived in Croydon for 5+ years are significantly less likely to think that Croydon Council acts on the concerns of residents (**38%**), but interestingly so are newer residents who have only lived in the area for up to one year (**34%**).

% acts – ward cluster differences



% acts - demographic differences



Q09. To what extent do you think Croydon Council acts on the concerns of local residents? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

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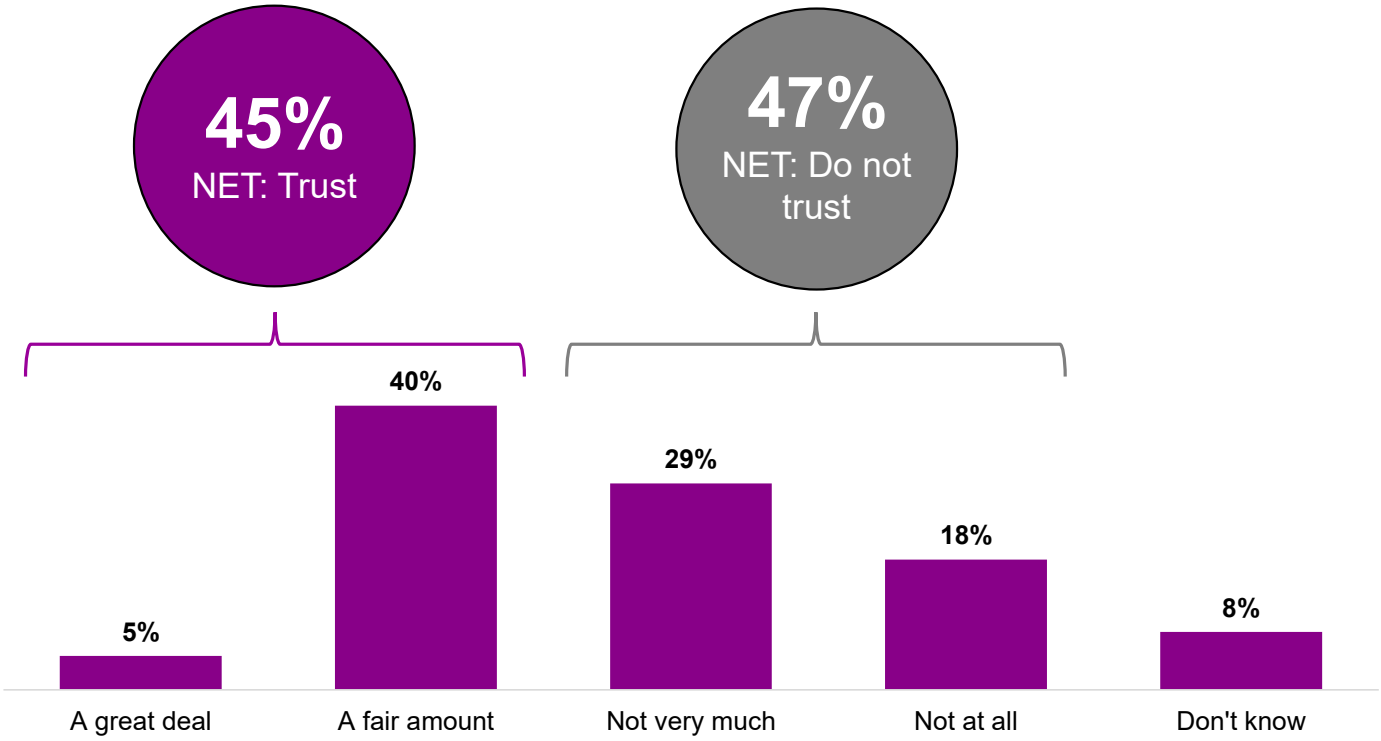
Trust in Croydon Council: Overall results

When it comes to trust levels, Croydon Council's performance is **10% points** behind the LGA benchmark, and almost half of residents report that they do not trust the council (**47%**).



LGA benchmark (October 2023)

55% Trust

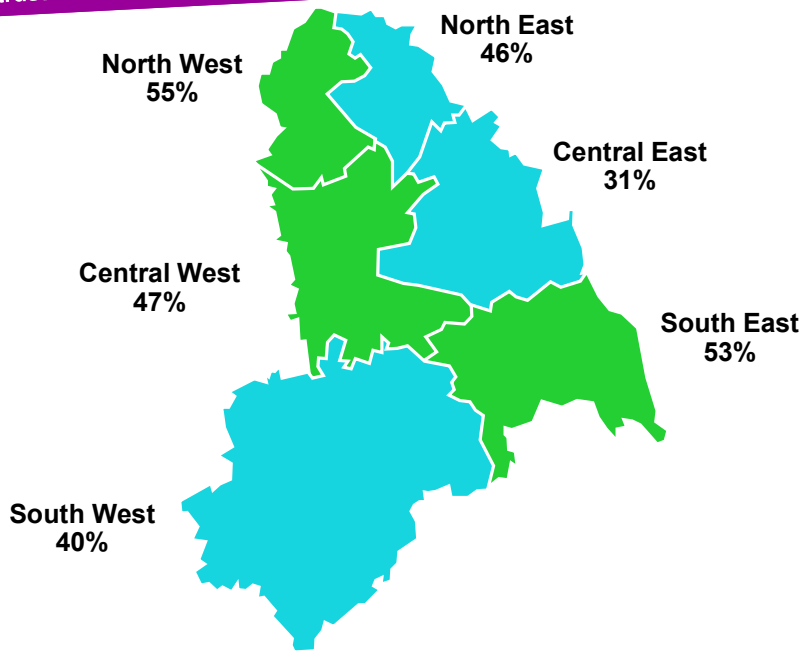
43% Do not trust

Q010. How much do you trust Croydon Council? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

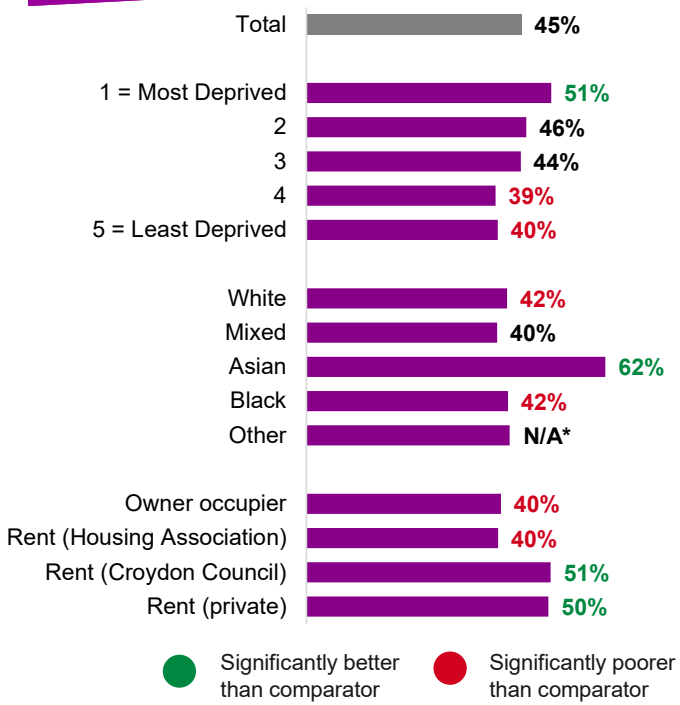
Trust in Croydon Council: Subgroup differences

Residents living in the North West of the borough are significantly more likely to say that they trust Croydon Council (**55%**). Similarly, those who are most deprived and those who rent directly from the council are also significantly more likely to be trusting, perhaps due to their increased contact with the council.

% trust – ward cluster differences



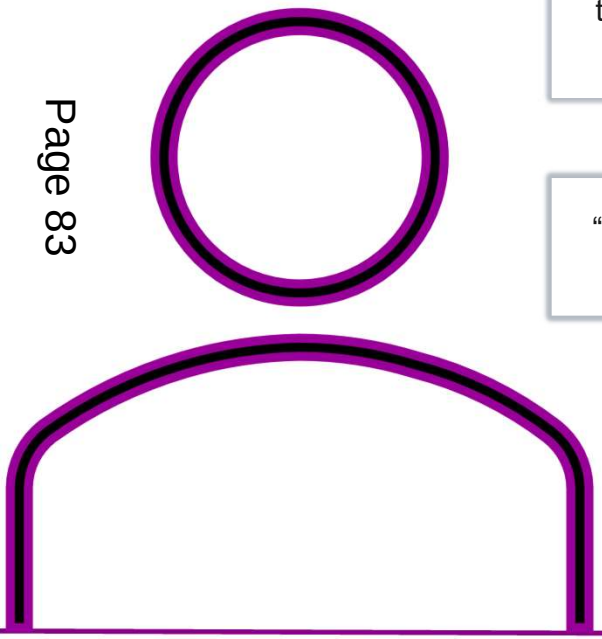
% trust - demographic differences



Q010. How much do you trust Croydon Council? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

Trust: Reasons for high scores

Reasons for high trust ratings often relate to residents having positive experiences / dealings with Croydon Council in the past. These residents feel that the council were polite and helpful when they needed their support. Other residents mention how the council does a lot for the community and its people…



"Whenever I have contacted them in the past their response has always been very positive."
Male, 65-74, Central West Croydon

"When I have rang them, they have been polite and helpful."
Male, 65-74, North West Croydon

"I think they help people as much as they can."
Male, 75-84, Central West Croydon

"They do a lot for our local community."
Female, 35-44, Central West Croydon

"Because they have policies to support the locals."
Male, 45-54, Central West Croydon

Q010a. Why do you say that? **Base:** All respondents who gave a valid response and are 'a great deal' (56).

Trust: Reasons for low scores

Council finances are a major contributing factor to low trust scores from residents. Previous financial problems i.e., bankruptcy, is commonly mentioned but residents appear to also be unhappy with current spending, with many saying they do not agree with how Croydon Council is spending its funds.

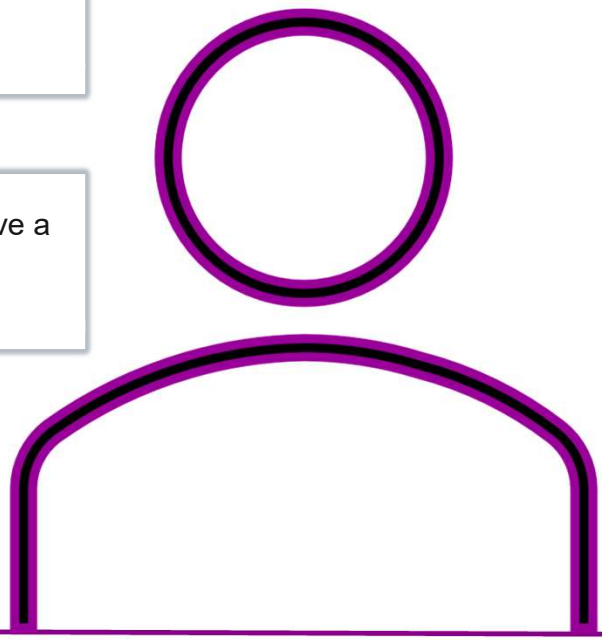
"It's quite corrupt, there is not a lot information to explain how money is spent."
Female, 16-24, Central West Croydon

"They rush into schemes that are not sound and waste money."
Female, 45-54, South East Croydon

"They do not do what they are meant to do. They get money and use it elsewhere."
Male, 35-44, South East Croydon

"They are not working for the public they have a different agenda."
Female, 35-44, South East Croydon

"Squandered all the money and put council tax up 15% and services not improved."
Female, 65-74, Central East Croydon



Q010a. Why do you say that? **Base:** All respondents who gave a valid response and are 'not at all' (295).

Likelihood to speak positively about the council

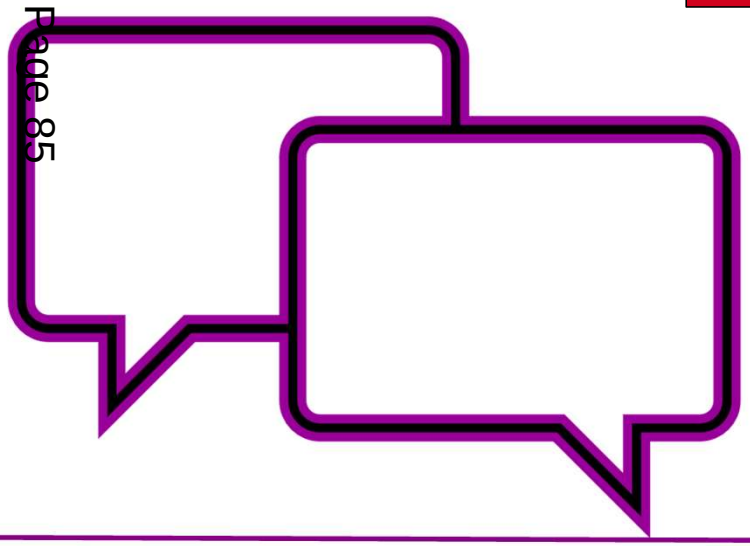
Almost three quarters of residents say that they are 'neither likely nor unlikely' or 'likely' to speak positively about Croydon Council (**74%**). Some residents do however say they are unlikely to speak positively about the council (**22%**).

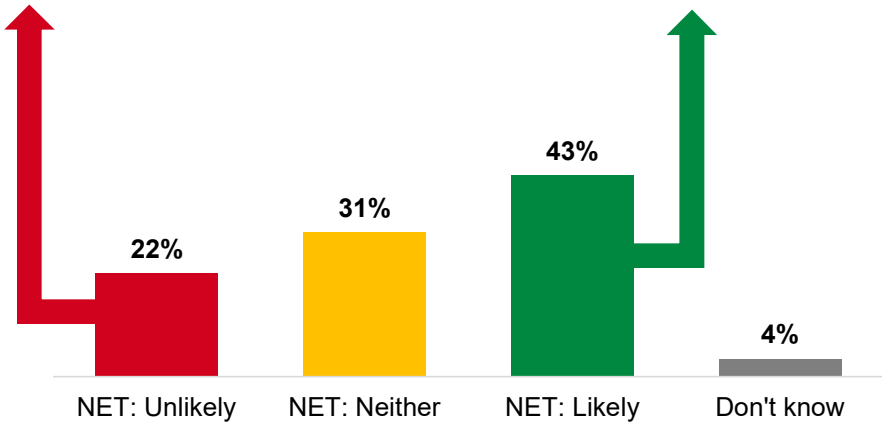
Residents more likely to say they are <u>unlikely</u> to speak positively:

- Those in Central East and Central West (**27%**)
- Those aged 55-74 (**27%**)
- Those who are economically inactive (**26%**)
- LGB residents (**32%**)

Residents more likely to say they are <u>likely</u> to speak positively:

- Those in the North West of the borough (**57%**)
- Those from an Asian ethnic background (**60%**)
- Those living in the area for 1-5 years (**53%**)
- Those who think the area has got better (**86%**)

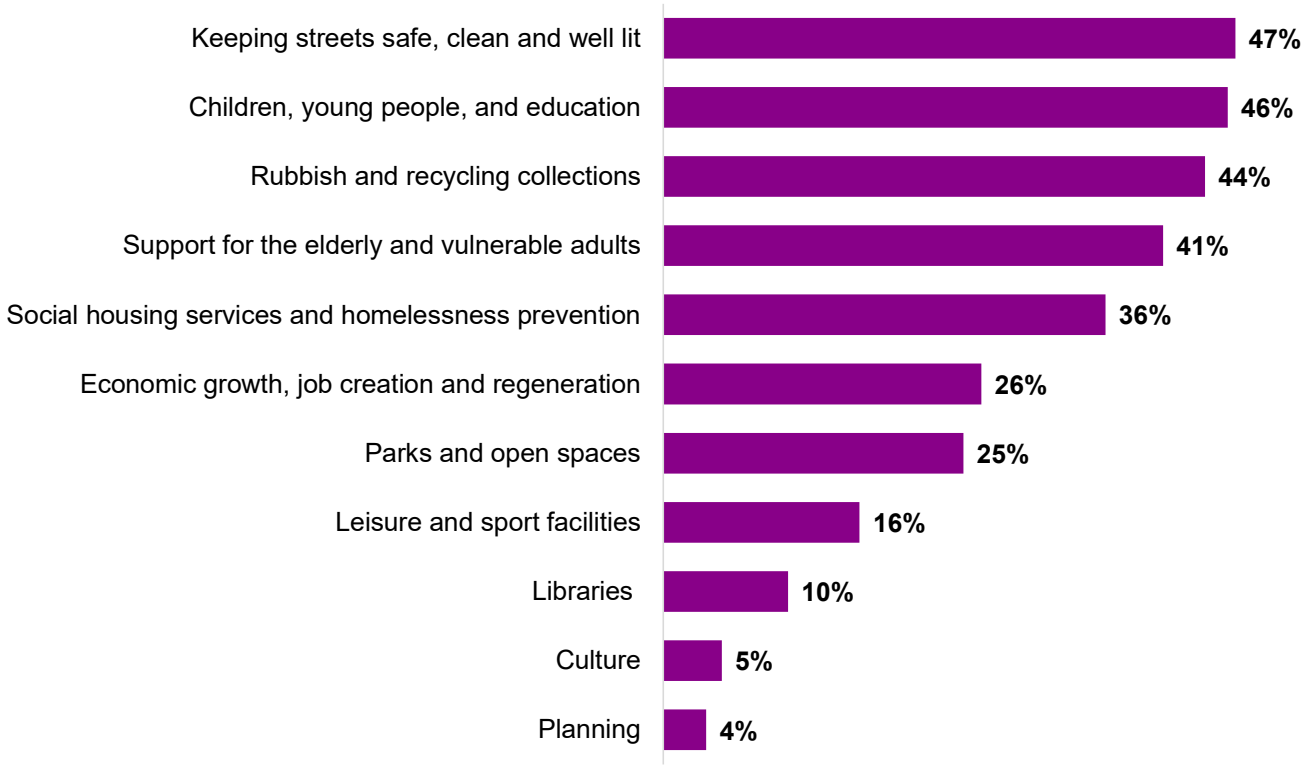




Q011. Overall, how likely would you be to speak positively about Croydon Council's services to a friend or family member? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

Importance of Croydon Council services

Keeping streets safe, clean and well lit is perceived as the most important service provided by Croydon Council (**47%**), whilst planning appears to be perceived as the least important service (**4%**).



Key takeouts

Keeping streets safe, clean and well lit is more important to residents aged 75+ in comparison to those aged 16-34 (**43% cf. 57%**)

Children, young people and education is more important to those in the South West compared to those in the North East (**34% cf. 52%**)

Rubbish and recycling collections is more important to residents aged 55-74 in comparison to those aged 16-34 (**53% cf. 35%**)

Q013. What are the most important services provided by Croydon Council? **Base:** All respondents who provided a valid response (1,650).

Council information sources

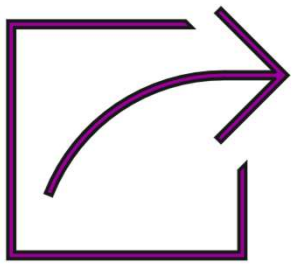
Residents express a keenness to be kept informed by Croydon Council…
The most popular current information source is the council's website (**51%**), and this is also residents' preferred information source for future information (**56%**). There is, however, greater preferred interest in receiving information from letters / leaflets (**36%**) and via the council e-newsletter (**24%**) than is provided currently.

Current
Council website
51%

Preferred
Council website
56%

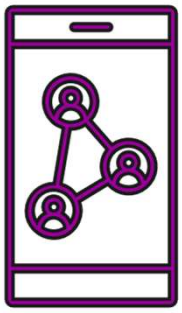
Current
Letters / leaflets
19%

Preferred
Letters / leaflets
36%



Current
Council e-newsletter
9%

Preferred
Council e-newsletter
24%



Current
Social media
8%

Preferred
Social media
18%

Current
Open House magazine
7%

Preferred
Open House magazine
10%

Current
Email
5%

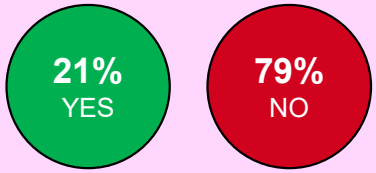
Preferred
Not given as a preferred option

Q014. How do you currently get information about council services? **Q015.** How would you like to get information and updates from the council in the future?
Base: All respondents (1,694). *Only showing responses 5% and above.

Awareness of borough officials

Resident awareness is highest for Croydon's local MP, with **35%** of residents stating they know who this is. Awareness of Croydon's local Ward Councillors is lowest, with **79%** of residents stating they do not know who this is. For each role, age has a clear impact upon awareness, with younger residents demonstrating significantly lower awareness.

Do you know who your local Ward Councillor is?

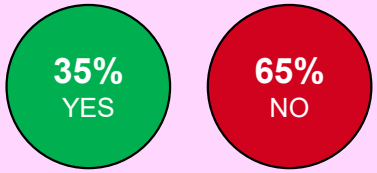


Awareness is highest amongst…

Residents living in the North West of the borough compared to those in the Central East or Central West (**27% cf. 18% and 19%**)

Residents who are aged 55-74 compared to those aged 16-34 (**35% cf. 9%**)

Do you know who your local MP is?

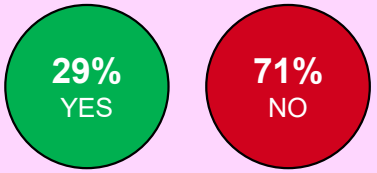


Awareness is highest amongst…

Residents living in the North West of the borough compared to those in the Central East, Central West or South East (**44% cf. 32%, 32% and 28%**)

Residents who are aged 75+ compared to those aged 16-34 (**58% cf. 22%**)

Do you know who the elected Mayor of Croydon is?



Awareness is highest amongst…

Residents living in the South West of the borough compared to those in the North West, Central East or Central West (**39% cf. 23%, 22% and 27%**)

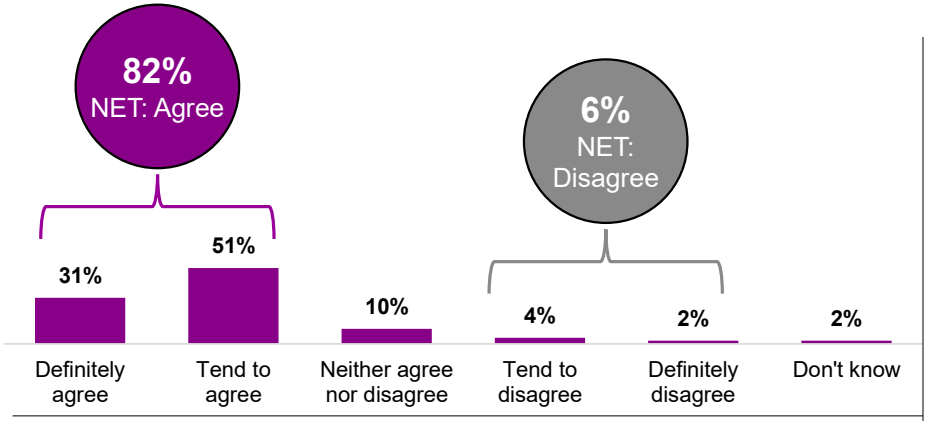
Residents who are aged 55-74 compared to those aged 16-34 (**44% cf. 16%**)

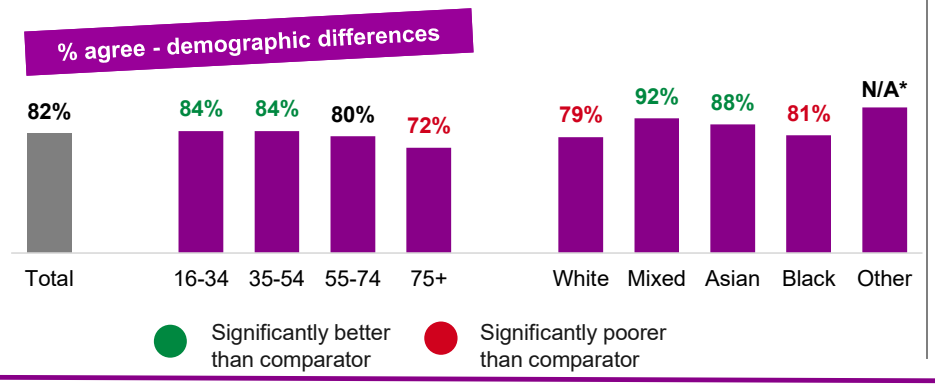
Q020a/b/c. Do you know who… is? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

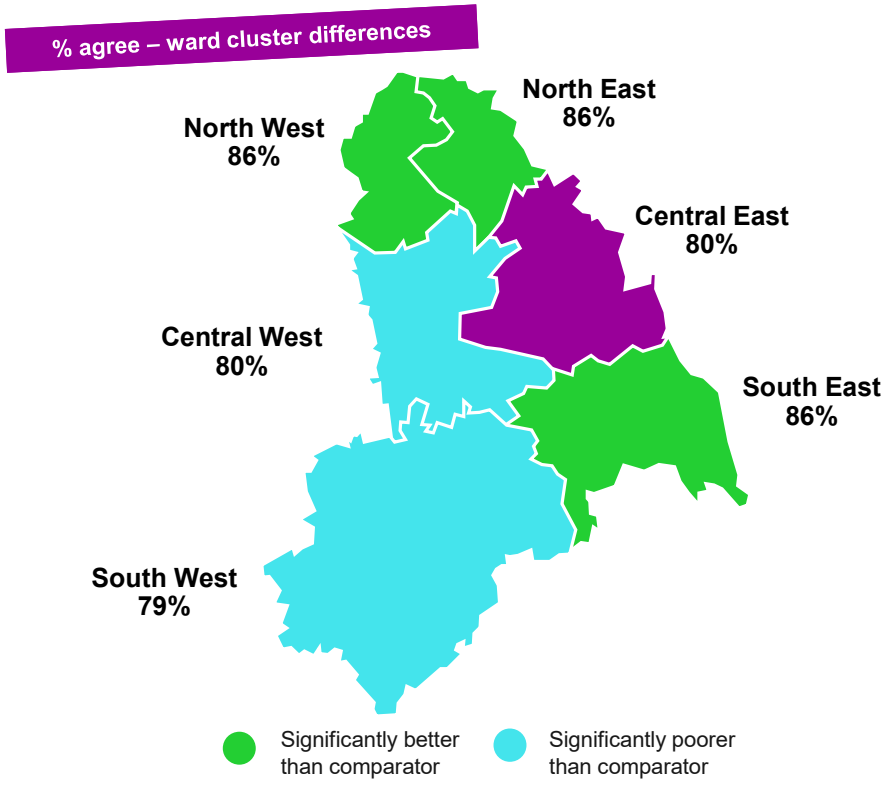
5. Community cohesion

Perceptions that people get on well together

The majority of residents (**82%**) agree that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, with those aged 16-54 and residents of a Mixed or Asian ethnic background being significantly more likely to agree with this statement.







Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *Caution low base size (<10).

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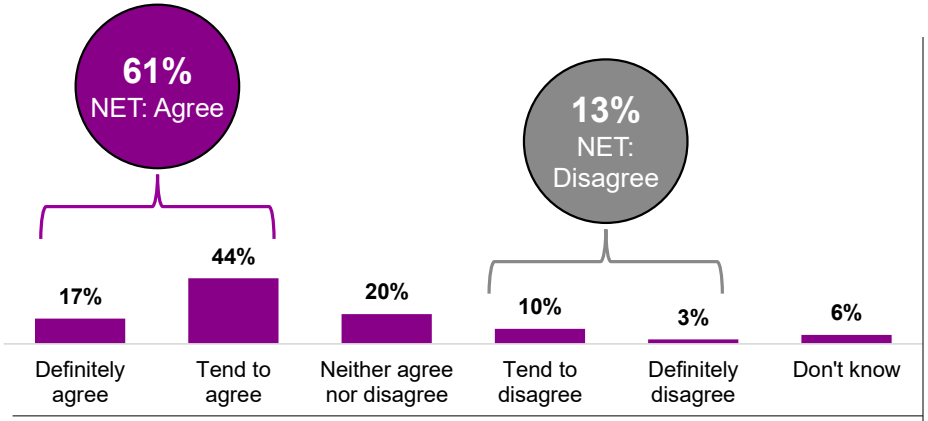
People pull together to improve the area

Just over three fifths of residents (**61%**) agree that people in the local area pull together to improve the area. Those who live in the South West of the borough, along with those aged 55-74 and those who own their home are however significantly more likely to agree.

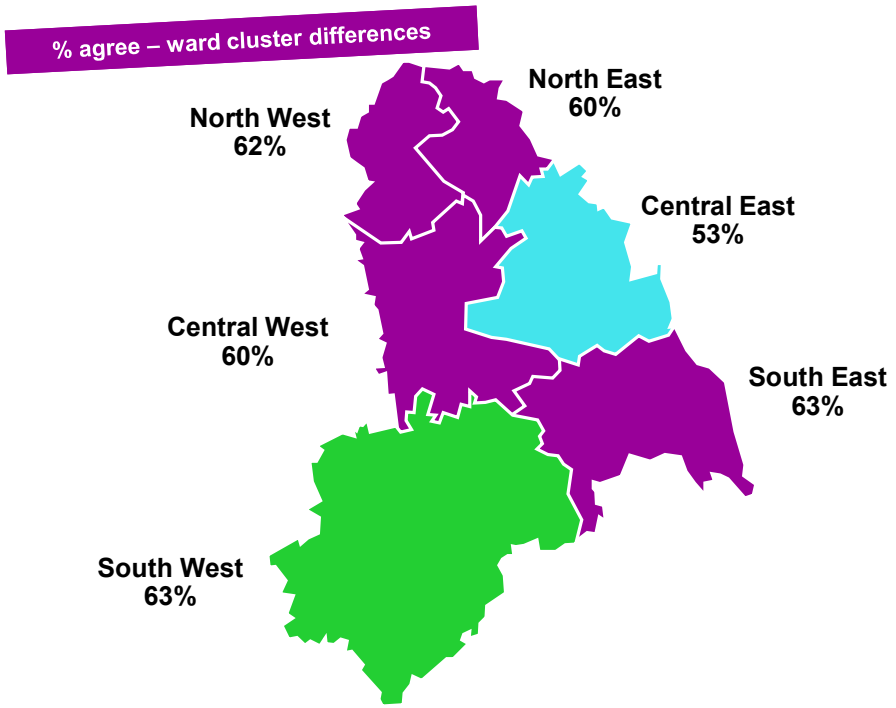


% agree - demographic differences

Aged 35-54 **58%**	Rent (private) **57%**
Aged 55-74 **65%**	Owner occupier **64%**

Significantly better than comparator

Significantly poorer than comparator



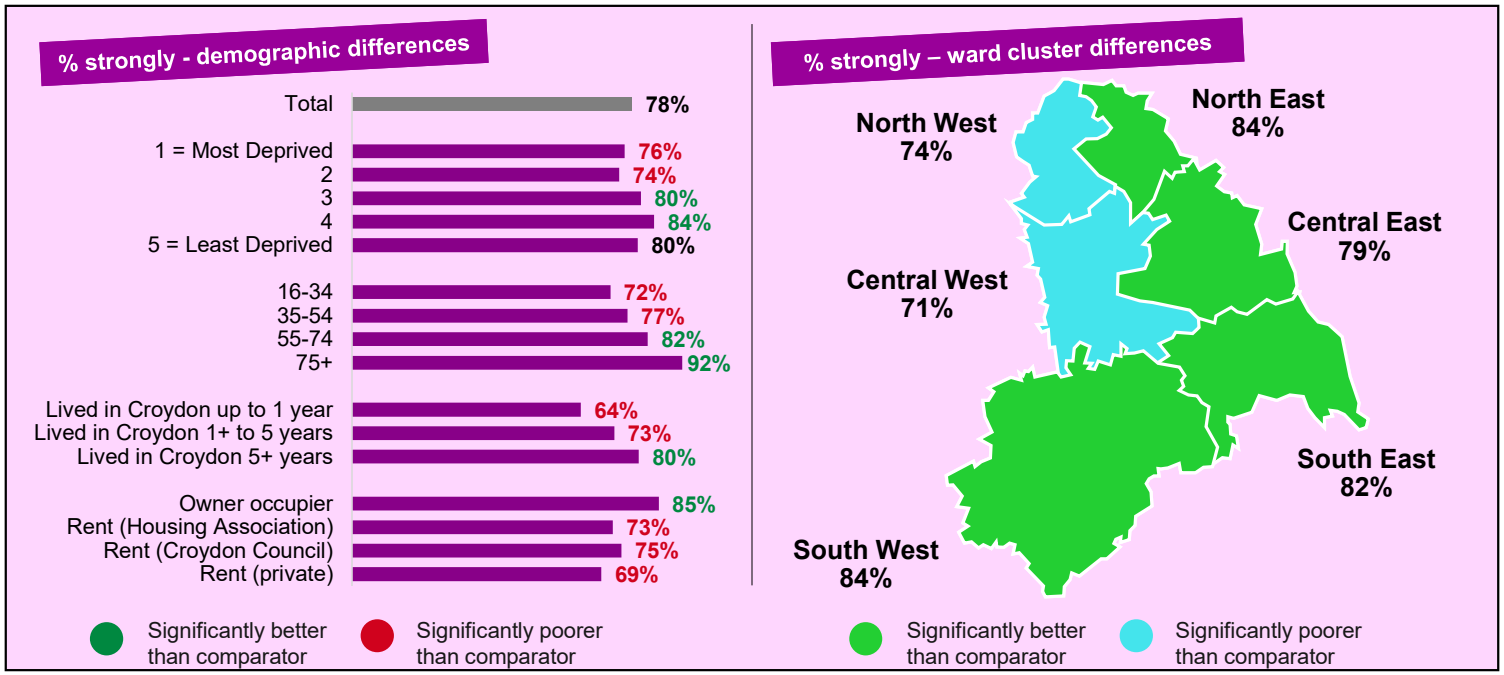
Q17. To what extent would you agree or disagree that people in your local area pull together to improve the local area? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

Perceived sense of belonging

The majority of residents (**78%**) feel that they strongly belong to their immediate neighbourhood. Older residents are however significantly more likely to feel that they strongly belong to their immediate neighbourhood (**92%**).

78%
NET: Strongly

22%
NET: Not strongly

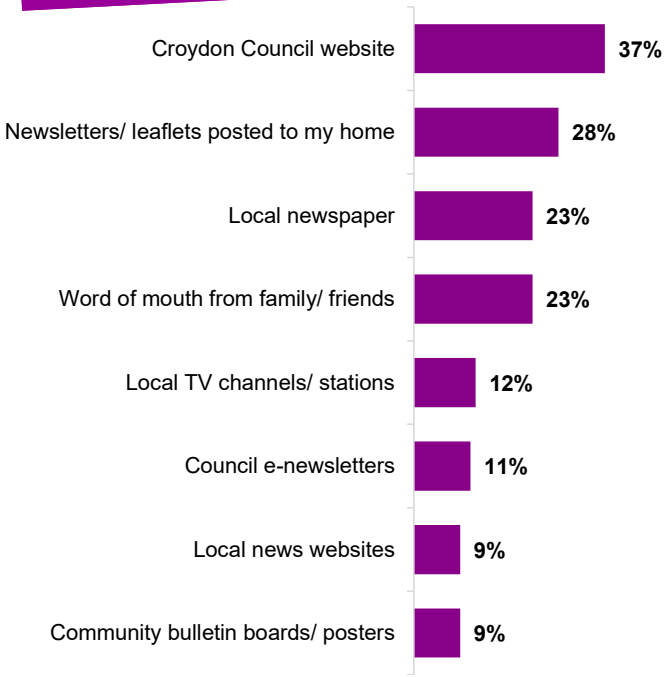


Q18. How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

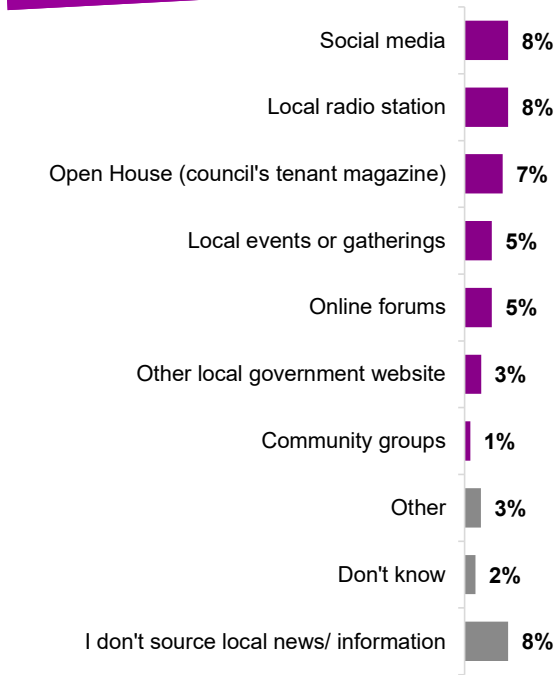
Local news information sources

The most popular local news information source for residents is the Croydon Council website (**37%**).
Community groups (**1%**) and other local government websites (**3%**) are the least frequently used sources of local news information.

Most selected information sources



Least selected information sources



Q024. Where do you get local news or information from? **Base:** All respondents (1,694).

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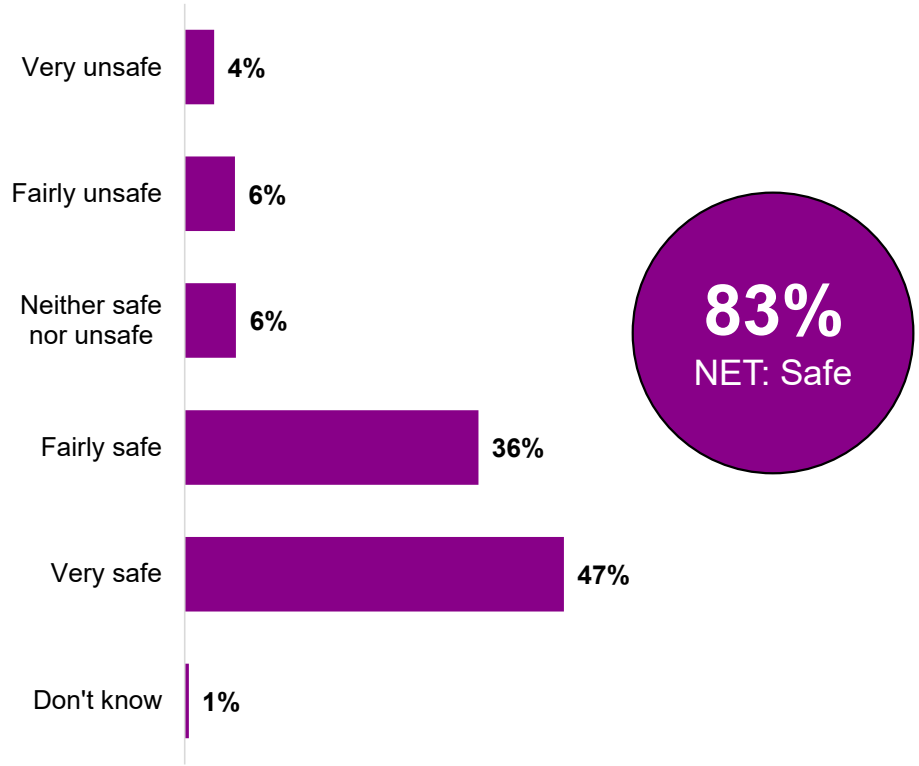
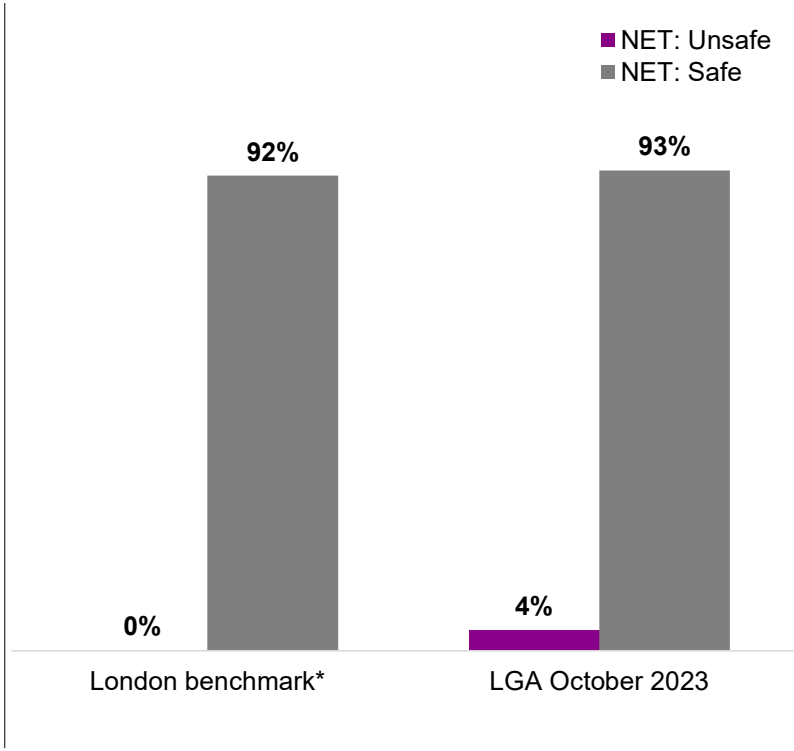
6. Feelings of safety

Safe from crime (daytime): Overall results

Over four fifths of residents (**83%**) report that they feel safe in their local area during the day. Despite this high score, this still places Croydon Council **10% points** behind the LGA benchmark and **9% points** behind the London benchmark.

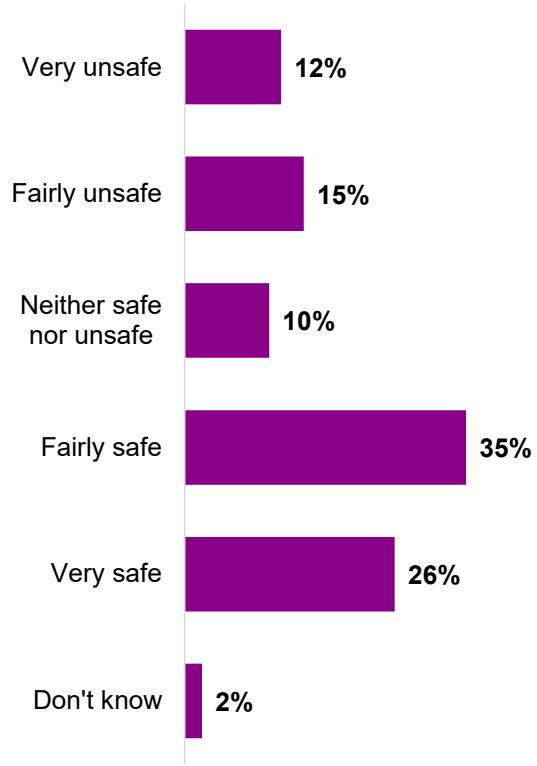




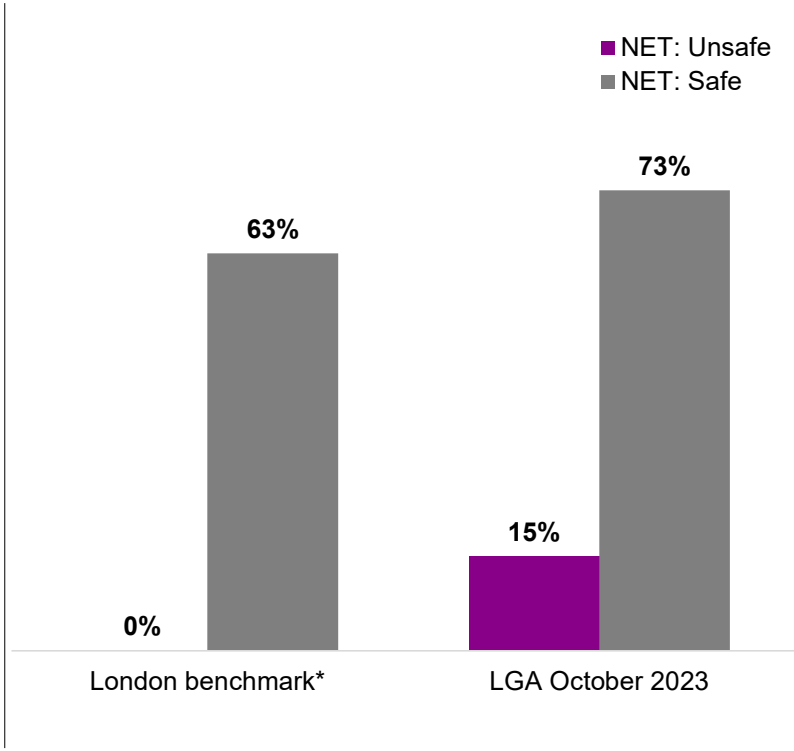
Q03. To what extent would you say you are, or would be, safe from crime when walking in your local area...? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *London benchmarking figures are an aggregate of available data from 2022 or 2023 residents' surveys carried out by other London boroughs (see detailed methodology for more info). Please note benchmarking figures are not perfectly comparable due to methodological differences.

Safe from crime (evening): Overall results

Just over three fifths of residents (**61%**) report that they feel safe in their local area during the evening. For comparison, the LGA benchmark for feeling safe during the evening is **73%** (**+12% points** higher than Croydon's NET: Safe score). The London benchmark is however lower and thus this places Croydon Council just **2% points** behind the London benchmark.



61%
NET: Safe



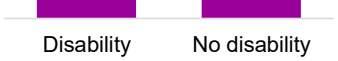
Q03. To what extent would you say you are, or would be, safe from crime when walking in your local area...? **Base:** All respondents (1,694). *London benchmarking figures are an aggregate of available data from 2022 or 2023 residents' surveys carried out by other London boroughs (see detailed methodology for more info). Please note benchmarking figures are not perfectly comparable due to methodological differences.

Safe from crime: Subgroup differences

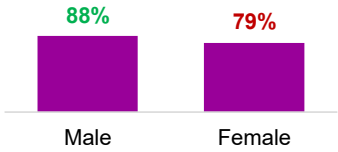
Residents who have a disability, are female or who live in the most deprived areas are significantly less likely to feel safe in their local area both in the daytime and in the evening.

During the day (% safe)

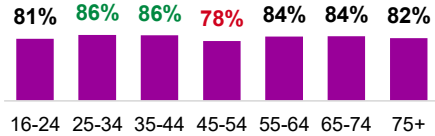
Disability status



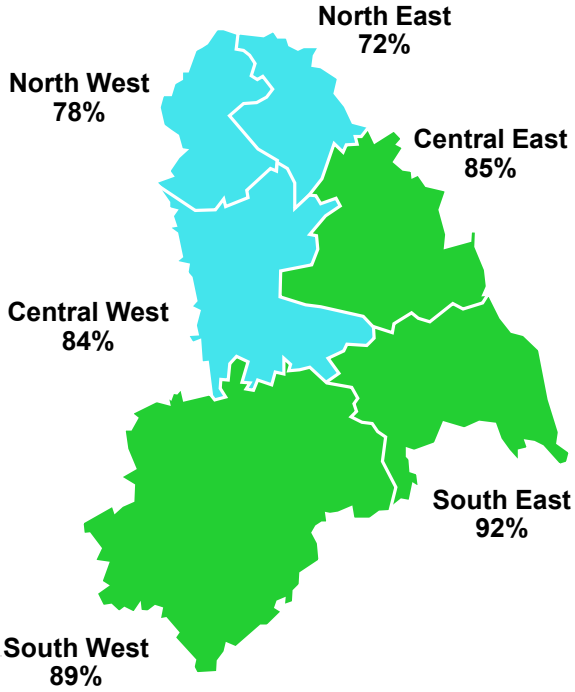
Gender

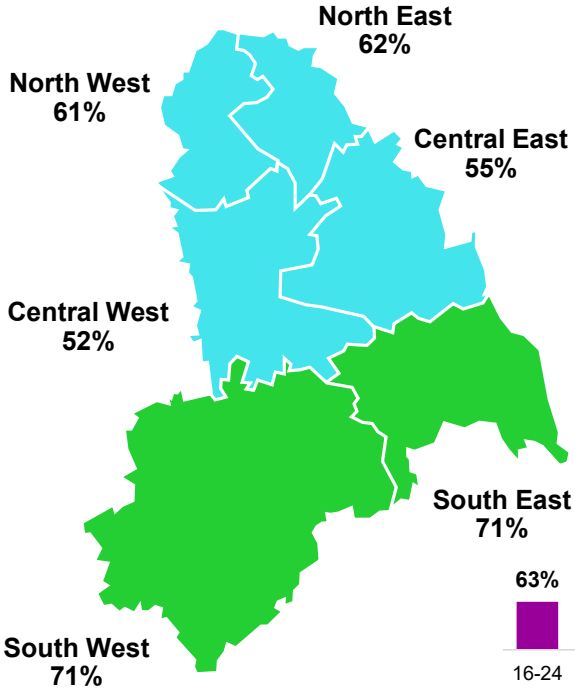


Age



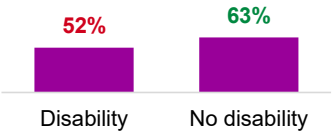
How safe do you feel from crime when walking in your local area…?



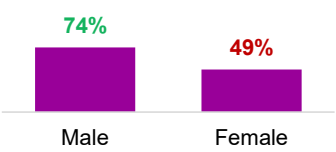


In the evening (% safe)

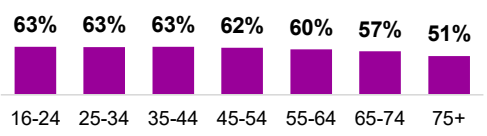
Disability status



Gender



Age



Q03. To what extent would you say you are, or would be, safe from crime when walking in your local area...?
Base: All respondents (1,694).

Significantly better than comparator

Significantly poorer than comparator

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7. Appendix 1: Detailed methodology

Appendix 1: Detailed methodology

Overview

The London Borough of Croydon ('Croydon Council') commissioned DJS Research to deliver its 2023 Residents' Survey. In 2023, a total of 1,694 interviews were completed using CAPI interviewing (computer assisted personal interviewing) between 18 September and 6 December 2023. The results are representative at a borough level by age, gender, ethnicity, economic status and disability.

Sampling

A random locational quota sampling method was used to ensure we achieved a representative sample. Random locations within Croydon's ward clusters (North East, North West, Central East, Central West, South East and South West) were selected as areas for interviewers to complete interviews.

To give a representative sample of the borough, target quotas were then set during fieldwork based on age, gender, ethnicity, disability and economic status, using the latest population statistics available.

Statistical reliability

A sample size of 1,694 gives a sampling error of +/-2.4% based on a statistic of 50% at a 95% confidence interval. This means that if we found a satisfaction level of 50%, we can be 95% confident that this figure lies between 47.6% and 52.4% had we interviewed every resident of Croydon.

Significance testing

T-testing has been performed for subgroup analysis within categories (e.g. economically active vs. economically inactive, male vs. female).

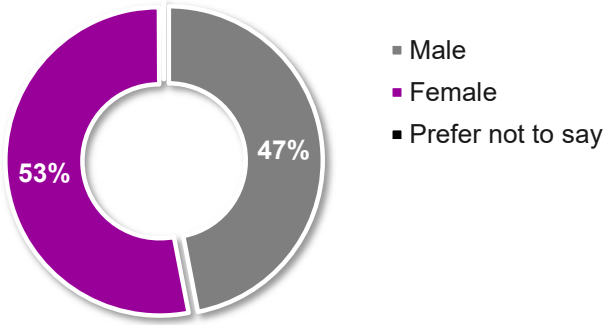
Benchmarking

Where possible, benchmarking against the LGA's resident satisfaction polling or an aggregate of results from other London boroughs has been provided. The London benchmark consists of publicly available resident survey data from 2022 or 2023 from the following councils: Ealing Council, Tower Hamlets Council and one other. Please note, comparisons are indicative only as there may be methodological differences.

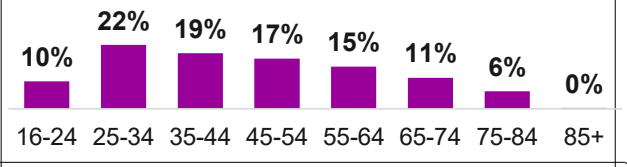
8. Appendix 2: Profile of the sample

Appendix 2: Profile of the sample (I)

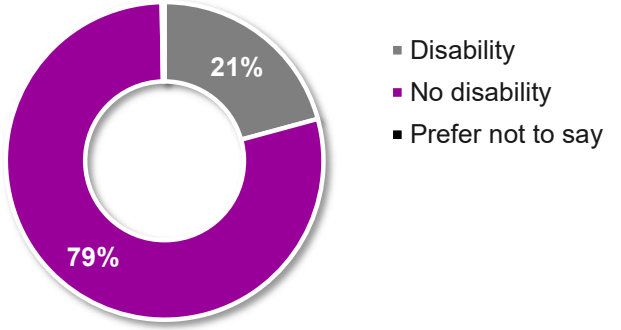
Gender



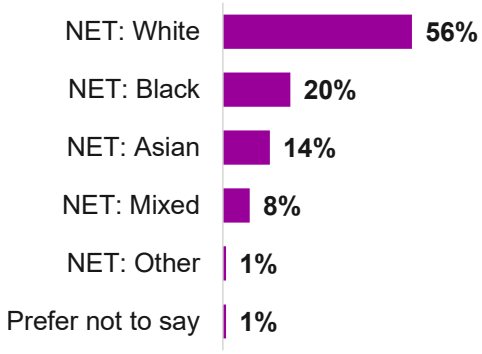
Age group



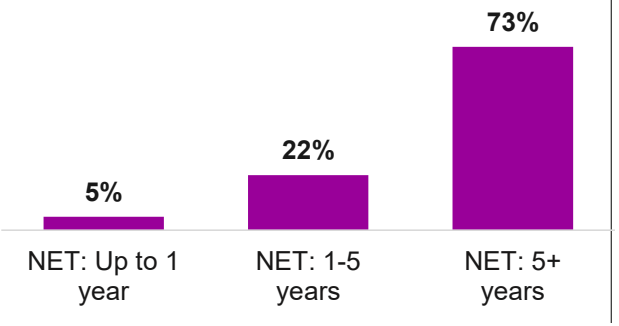
Disability status



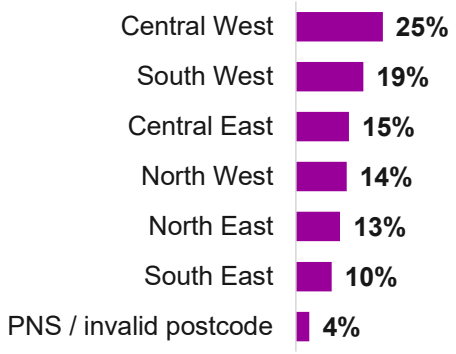
Ethnicity



Time in Croydon

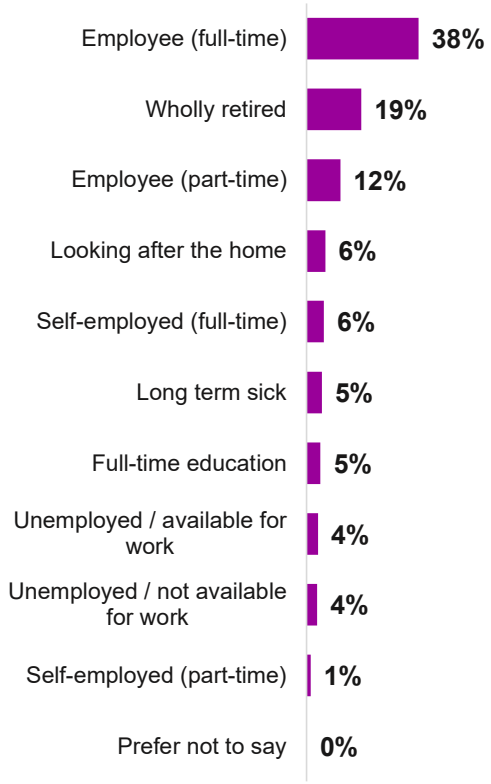


Ward cluster

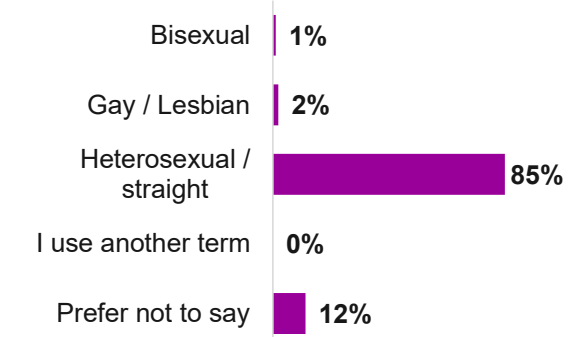


Appendix 2: Profile of the sample (II)

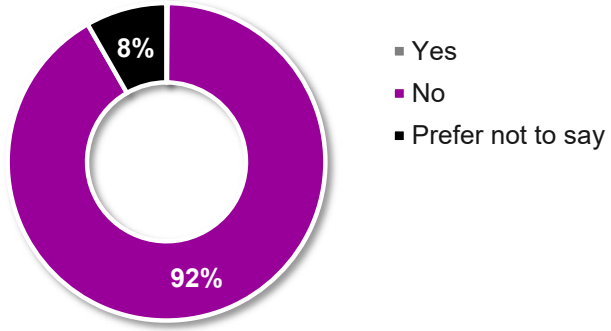
Working status



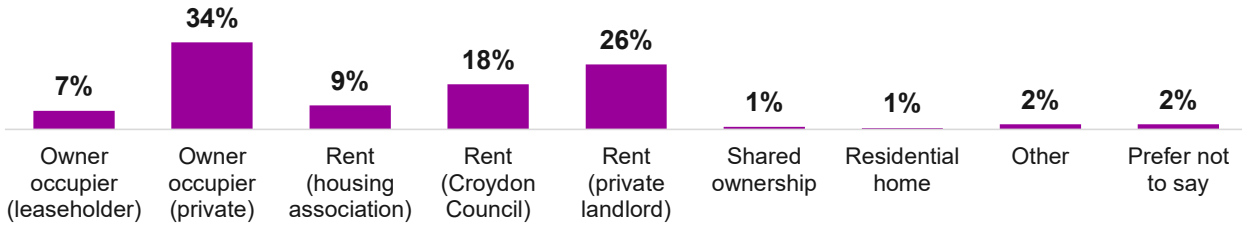
Sexual orientation



Identify as trans



Housing tenure



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djsresearch.co.uk

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Equality Analysis Form

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term **'proposed change'** broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria.

2. Proposed change

Directorate	**Assistant Chief Executive**
Title of proposed change	**Residents' survey**
Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	**Susie Rundle**

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

The council is reporting the findings of the recent residents' survey, which was conducted in autumn 2023, and proposing to run another survey in 2025. the protected characteristic groups. This was the first statistically significant residents' survey the council has conducted for some time, and doing this research has a positive impact for people with protected characteristics. It ensures that ensures the council is listening to its diverse communities and their feedback is informing service planning and the council's transformation plans.

In conducting the survey DJS Research's approach was designed to maximise response rates and quality of data from groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act, those with language requirements, and disadvantaged residents. Quotas were set in alignment with the borough profile.

They implemented a range of techniques to ensure the research was as inclusive and accessible as it can be, recognising that Croydon is a diverse borough in terms of ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, religion and language. These included:

All DJS face-to-face interviewers are Interviewer Quality Control Scheme trained and received comprehensive training on the project prior to it starting,

The survey questions were formally piloted before fieldwork commenced. A total of 30 interviews were conducted with residents, ensuring a good representation of age, gender, ethnicity, working status, disability and sexual orientation. The pilot tested the comprehension of the survey questions, the full survey process including the length of the survey, the impact of the introduction on response rates and non-response, and how well the script was working, including routing of questions.

Across their team of London-based face-to-face interviewers DJS has the capability of conducting interviews in more than 20 languages. During the design stages, they assessed the ethnic and language profiles of Croydon's communities and allocated interviewers based on their matched demographic profile.

Interviews are conducted at different times and days of the week to give everyone an equal chance of taking part in the survey irrespective of childcare responsibilities, employment, or religious commitments etc. Interviewers conducted at least a third of their interviews at weekends, a third in the week before 5pm and a third in the week after 5pm. This is monitored as a KPI for each interviewer.

DJS set a monitoring quota by disability to ensure a representative spread of responses from these residents. Interviewers provided large-font paper copies of the survey to be self-completed where required or paper copies to those who are hard of hearing. Libraries were also contacted and asked to provide a seat or quiet space for interviews as needed.

3. Impact of the proposed change

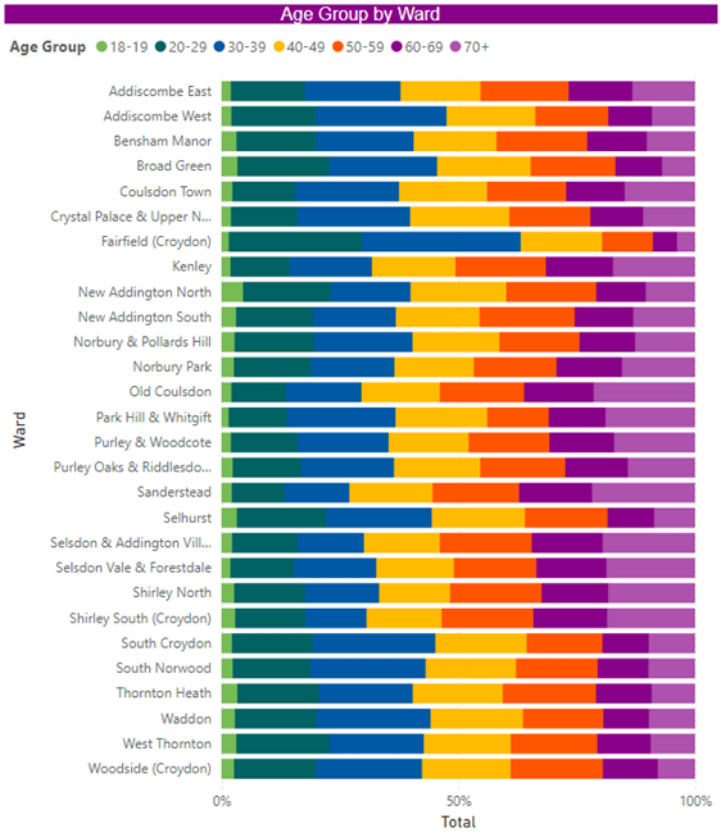
Important Note: It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic.
Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments http://www.croydonobservatory.org/ Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

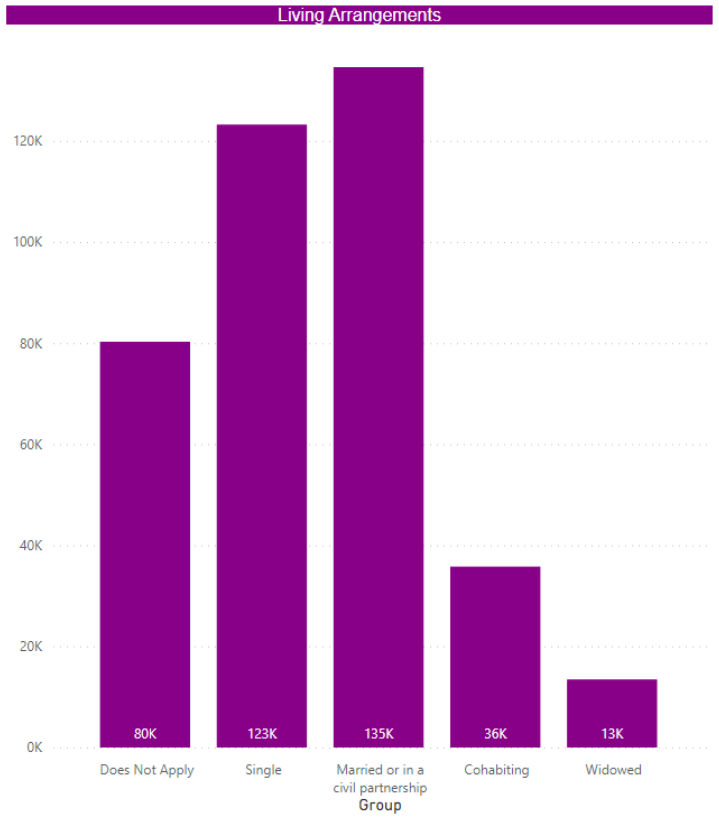
3.1 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

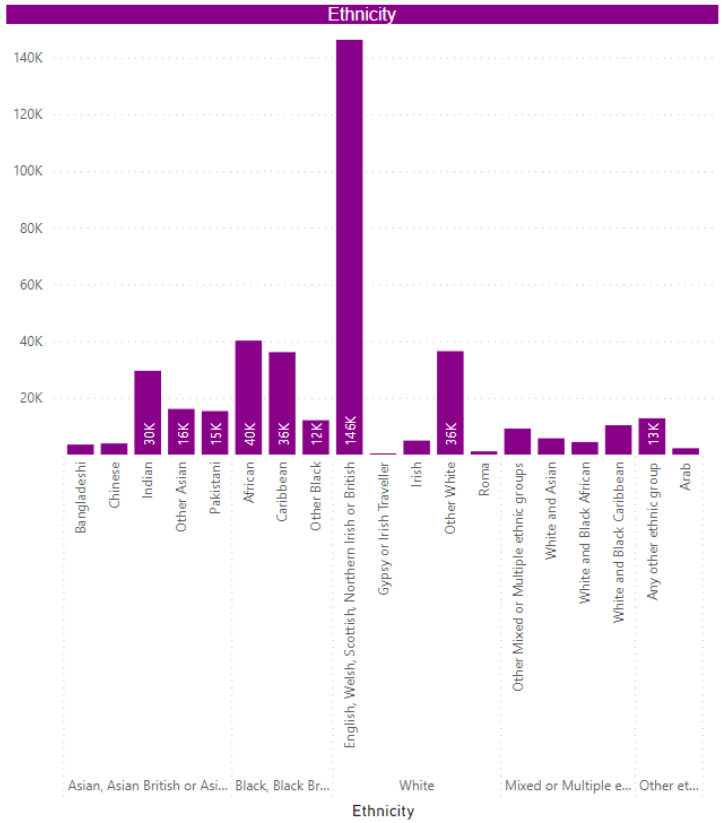
Table 1 – Positive/Negative impact

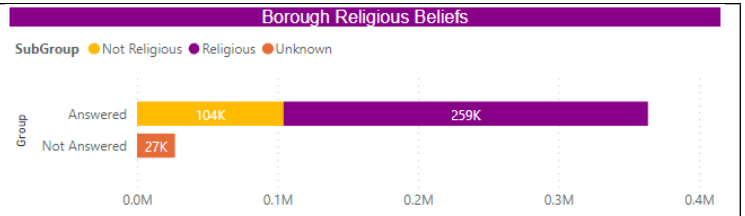
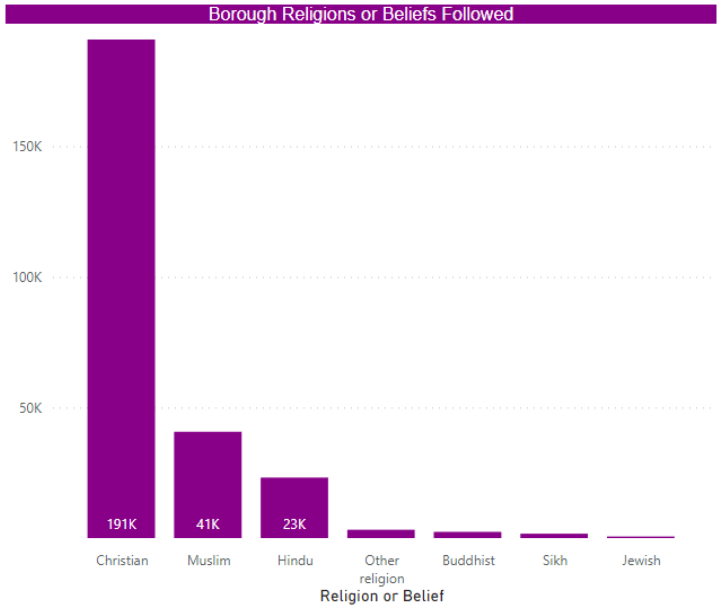
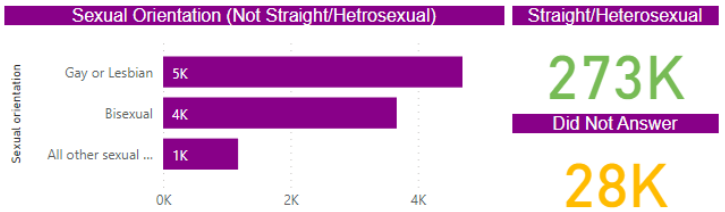
For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. . If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.

Protected characteristic group(s)	Positive impact	Negative impact	Source of evidence
Age	The survey sample was representative of the borough profile		Breakdown of ages surveyed for the residents' survey: 32% 16-34 19% 35-44 32% 45-64 17% 65+

			According to the 2021 census, the split of ages across all wards in Croydon are somewhat comparable with each other. An outlier to note is Fairfield has a considerably lower average age that the reset of the borough's wards. 
Disability	The survey sample was representative of the borough profile		The ONS Census 2021 states that 14.8% of Croydon residents are disabled, a population of 390k would put the disabled population at approximately 58k. 21% of residents surveyed had a disability
Gender Reassignment	This data was not recorded from interviewees at the time of the survey.		From that data 0.89% of Croydon residents identify as a gender different from sex registered at birth.

Marriage or Civil Partnership	This data was not recorded from interviewees at the time of the survey		From the below it can be seen that the majority of Croydon residents are married, in civil partnerships or co-habiting. 
Pregnancy and Maternity	This data was not recorded from interviewees at the time of the survey		The council does not have a way of identifying, or sizing, the number of residents that are pregnant or on maternity. This information was not recorded in the residents' survey.
Race	The survey sample was representative of the borough profile		The latest data from the ONS is set out in the chart below:

			 Of those interviewed 56% of the sample identified as white, 20% Black, 14% Asian, 8% Mixed, 1% other and 1% prefer not to say
Religion or belief	This data was not recorded from interviewees at the time of the survey		29% of Croydon residents have declared they are not religious. Compared with 71% (259k) of residents stating they do hold a religious belief. The chart below shows that breakdown and what religion or belief those that answered follow.

			 
Sex	The survey sample was representative of the borough profile		Croydon is split 52% female and 48% male according to the ONS Census from 2021. Of those interviewed in the residents' survey, 53% of the sample identified as women and 47% as men
Sexual Orientation	The survey sample was representative of the borough profile		The ONS Census from 2021 is the available data for Croydon on sexual orientation.  From this data a summary of Croydon is as follows:

			Of those interviewed in the residents' survey, 85% identified as heterosexual, 2% as gay or lesbian, 1% as bisexual and 12% as prefer not to say

3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:

Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings	Information source	Date for completion

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation

3.3 Impact scores

Example
If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact)
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood** (2) x **Severity** (2**) = 4**

Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

Severity of Impact				
	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	Likelihood of Impact			

Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
6 – 9	High
3 – 5	Medium
1 – 3	Low

Equality Analysis

Table 3 – Impact scores

Column 1 PROTECTED GROUP	Column 2 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **likelihood** of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 3 SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **severity** of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 4 EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE Calculate the **equality impact score** for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group. **Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.**
Age	**3**	**1**	**3**
Disability	**3**	**1**	**3**
Gender Reassignment	**3**	**1**	**3**
Marriage or Civil Partnership	**3**	**1**	**3**
Pregnancy and Maternity	**3**	**1**	**3**
Race	**3**	**1**	**3**
Religion or belief	**3**	**1**	**3**
Sex	**3**	**1**	**3**
Sexual Orientation	**3**	**1**	**3**

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Equality Analysis

4. Statutory duties

4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups ☐

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation ☐

Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups ☐

Important note: If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

Important note: Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

Table 4 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.

Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Age				
Disability				
Gender Reassignment				
Marriage or Civil Partnership				
Pregnancy and Maternity				

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Race				
Religion or belief				
Sex				
Sexual Orientation				

6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter **X** in column 3 (**Conclusion**) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.

Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. **If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision**. The survey results are likely to have some impact on people because they will inform future service planning and transformation planning – however this impact is unknown at the moment and will have to be determined as and when changes arise. The survey itself does not have an impact.	**x**
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. **If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form**	
Continue the proposed change	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. **If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.**	

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Equality Analysis

Stop or amend the proposed change	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet	Meeting title: Cabinet Date: 31 January 2024	

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision	
Equalities Lead	**Name:** **Naseer Ahmad** **Date:23/01/2024** **Position: Interim Senior Equalities Officer**
Director	**Name:** **David Courcoux** **Date: 23/01/2024** **Position: Director of Policy, Programmes and Performance**

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Cabinet	
DATE OF DECISION	31 January 2024	
REPORT TITLE:	Libraries Service Review	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Nick Hibberd, Corporate Director SCRER Kristian Aspinall, Director Culture & Community Safety	
LEAD OFFICER:	Stephanie Wilson, Head of Culture, Leisure and Libraries Email: stephanie.wilson@croydon.gov.uk Telephone: 07356104270	
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Andy Stranack, Cabinet Member for Culture & Communities	
KEY DECISION?	Yes	Community Impact Criteria – Affects one or more wards in the borough.
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report outlines the progress made to date on the Library Service Review (Community Hubs) transformation project and the options developed for improvements to the service model and for public consultation.

1.2 The proposals for change have been developed with consideration of the Council's statutory obligations to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service for people who live, work or study in Croydon. The proposed changes outline how improvements to the service can be made by the Council spending less on buildings and more on staff and services. The proposals do not involve any staff redundancies.

1.3 The review has also been undertaken in the context of the Council's current financial position including a debt burden of £1.6 billion. Future proposals for the service have been developed in line with the Executive Mayor's vision for the Council to operate in a financially sustainable and efficient way.

1.4 The project was approved by Cabinet as part of the transformation programme in Autumn 2022 with the intent to review the use of the borough's libraries and other Council and community infrastructure and work with residents and Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) partners to design improved services with a broader offer available to residents in centralised hub locations.

2 Recommendations

For the reasons set out in the report and the appendices, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet is recommended:

2.1 To note the methodology and activity undertaken to review the library service officer and develop proposals for an alternative model, outlined in Section 4

2.2 To agree to consult on the proposals for a new library service model, as outlined in Section 6.

2.3 To approve the commencement of formal public consultation on the proposals as outlined in Section 8

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Council always intended to undertake a review of the library service model, adopted in 2021, to assess how well it was working in meeting residents' needs. Since implementation in April 2022, the service has received feedback from residents that they are unhappy with the opening hours and service provision, and we are now seeking to undertake further engagement with residents through a consultation process.

3.2 We have also found that the current model is not sustainable during periods of staff absence and service points have unfortunately had to close to the public at times due to insufficient staffing.

3.3 The Council's financial position means it is difficult to justify maintaining so many buildings which aren't well used. There is a limited capital investment fund allocated for library building improvements, but this would not be sufficient to bring all 13 sites up to a good condition or to allow for more flexible uses and income generation opportunities.

3.4 The current library service model does not make best use of the 13 library buildings with most only open to the public two to three days a week. Whilst usage of the libraries is increasing following closures during the pandemic, it is still low when compared with library services in other similar boroughs and as a proportion of the Croydon borough population.

3.5 Footfall into the libraries for the first six months of 2023/24 is only 43% of the same period for 2019/20 whilst Active Users (members who have used their card in the last 12 months) are at 58% of the same point in 2019, amounting to less than 10% of the population. We envisage that the impacts of Covid-19 have contributed to this decline in addition to the reduction in opening hours, but more research is needed to clearly understand the change.

3.6 Whilst the need for library services remains high, as evidenced in levels of educational attainment, health inequality, isolation and digital exclusion, the reduction in opening hours and stretched staff capacity hamper the ability of the library service to reach the people and communities who need it most and to support the future generations for whom a thriving library service is a passport to a better life.

3.7 Without a change in the model and reallocation of the resources available, the service is unlikely to be able to meet the needs of Croydon's residents and in that sense it could be considered to be failing to serve its purpose to deliver services enabling people of all ages and backgrounds to learn, read, work, connect with others in their community and get involved.

3.8 We will continue to develop partnerships and co-location opportunities including with VCFS, education, family support, cultural and health partners to establish the libraries as community hubs within their localities and embed a library service offer alongside other community provision.

3.9 There is an opportunity to deliver an improved service by developing a model which provides a strong core offer for residents of all ages through a smaller number of accessible buildings, open five to six days per week with quality provision of books, Wi-Fi, reading, digital, cultural and health programmes, enabling the libraries to act as local community hubs.

3.10 A wider programme of community outreach and delivery of a library service offer from other community venues will help to reach residents who are not served by the current provision and will allow for flexibility and a locally designed service offer based on community feedback and need.

3.11 The proposals detailed in this report have been developed through engagement with library staff, members, the programme board, independent consultants, cross council services and community groups.

3.12 The Library Review programme has also been developed in alignment with the non-statutory guidance issued by DCMS, titled 'Libraries as a statutory service' (April 2022) This has included:

- Engagement with the DCMS libraries team to inform and update them on the work and seek their views on:
  The approach, during the development of the review project in March 2023

The initial findings during the research phase in August 2023
The emerging outcomes, options and proposals following their development in November and December 2023.

- Development of detailed options for consideration, outlined in Appendices B and C

- Detailed plans for extensive public consultation outlined in Section 8

- An open approach to the consultation welcoming all ideas and suggestions proposed for alternative service models and changes which will be reviewed and considered in detail ahead of any final recommendations for the service

- Analysis of local need and the capacity and performance of the library service in responding to this need in current and future models, detailed in Appendices A and C

- A detailed EQIA which will be reviewed and updated following the consultation period and used to inform any changes to the proposals and final recommendations included at Appendix D.

3.13 Consultation is a legal requirement for proposals to change library services. It is important that a robust and meaningful process is followed in developing and consulting on proposals for a new model to comply with our legal duty. This includes detailed consideration of need, equalities impact analysis, current and alternative provision options and mitigation for the impact of any changes.

4. BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

Current library service offer

4.1 Croydon Council currently delivers its statutory library services from 13 dedicated library buildings across the borough. These are: Croydon Central, Ashburton, Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Coulsdon, New Addington, Norbury, Purley, Sanderstead, Selsdon, Shirley, South Norwood and Thornton Heath.

4.2 The council also jointly owns Upper Norwood Library building with Lambeth Council and provides a small grant to support the provision of library services at that site which is in Lambeth.

4.3 The current staffed library opening hours are: one library open five days a week, one library open four days a week and the remaining 11 open between 2 and 3 days a week.

4.4 Selsdon and Norbury Libraries are additionally open for a further three days each via self-service access. A security guard is currently also present during these hours as a result of site security and fire safety assessments at these sites.

4.5 Self-service access is enabled through a system which requires members to activate their card in advance and enter the library by scanning their library card. It is increasingly being used by libraries across the country to extend opening hours but it doesn't provide access to people without a library card or under 16's who are not able to use the service without an adult.

Previous library service changes

4.6 In 2019 the library service was restructured and a budget reduction of £300k was made. This change did not result in a reduction of library opening hours but did substantially decrease the number of staff employed to deliver those hours, creating pressure in the service capacity.

4.7 On 25th November 2020 Cabinet decided to undertake a review of provision of library services to generate financial savings for the Council. Options were developed and the first public consultation took place between January and March 2021 on proposals to close five libraries or find a cost neutral alternative. Residents were encouraged to make suggestions for alternatives which were considered further in the next phase of consultation.

4.8 Following responses from the public, on 16th May 2021 Cabinet took the decision not to progress with any library closures but to explore alternative revenue saving options. A further period of public consultation was undertaken between June and July 2021 on three further options: a reduction in opening hours of 21%, transfer of five libraries to community operation or outsourcing of the library service.

4.9 On 11th October 2021 the Council took the decision to generate £504k savings by reducing library opening hours by 21% with a combination of fully staffed and self-service only access times and an increase in volunteering and partnerships. This budget saving was achieved with a reduction in staffing and the remaining team working across multiple sites.

4.10 It has not been possible to implement this decision in full as the planned mitigations have been more challenging to implement than anticipated. Due to the budget reduction of £504k from April 2022, the opening hours were reduced by 48%. With the introduction of self-service access at two sites in 2023, the total opening hours are now 39% less than in 2021/22.

4.11 The decision taken in October 2021 had sought to minimise the overall reduction in hours by introducing self-service access at a further three sites and using volunteers and partnerships to extend opening hours.

4.12 The implementation of self-service access hours was delayed due to the need for building adjustments which were more costly and complex than anticipated and saw delays to the procurement and supply of the equipment required. Site security assessments also identified a need for a security presence on site in the event of an emergency evacuation and to provide safe access in the absence of CCTV. This offer was introduced at Selsdon Library in May 2023 and Norbury Library in October 2023.

4.13 Though the service was soft launched, initial take up was disappointing with only 4% of Selsdon Library visits taking place during self-service access hours between May and October 2023. Usage of self-service access is now increasing and this number could likely be improved further through additional marketing of the offer which has been limited to date owing to staff capacity. Nevertheless, current trends indicate a strong preference from library users for face to face services from library staff.

4.14 Whilst deploying self service access with a security guard on site has also provided a basic level of customer service and assistance to library users, the revenue cost limits the extent to which access can be extended. For future self service access provision the Council will seek to implement technological security systems as a way to minimise costs and extend access further.

4.15 The use of volunteers to extend open hours has also been limited. Whilst volunteers have been effective in bringing additional activity and support to the libraries this has been primarily focussed on additional events and activity such as developing library garden spaces, rather than delivering core services. Lunchtime cover roles have been particularly challenging to recruit to, impacting library opening over staff breaks.

4.16 Partnerships such as with Croydon Music and Arts and local schools have introduced activity and enabled use of the libraries outside of core hours but this has failed to extend the offer to the general public.

4.17 As part of the decision to reduce hours, the Council also sought to engage with residents to design the opening offer based on their needs and preferences. However, it has also not been possible to do this as the budget reduction means staff teams have to work between groups of libraries. As a result, library opening hours and days have limited flexibility, particularly in regard to evening and weekend provision. We currently only have the staff capacity to open five libraries on a Saturday which is the most popular day.

4.18 As a result of the limited impact from volunteers, partnerships and self-service access in offsetting the impact of the reduction in staffed hours so far, we feel it is wise to undertake a review of the service model at this stage prior to committing further time and financial resource towards implementing a model which is failing to deliver what was agreed by the Council in October 2021 and failing to meet the needs of Croydon residents.

4.19 As part of the implementation process it was proposed that a review of the new model would be undertaken after a period of time to ascertain the impact and assess the outcome of the approach.

Croydon Library Performance and Benchmarking

4.20 Using the most recent benchmarking data available (21/22) Croydon ranked second lowest in London for book loans and visits. Benchmarking data for 22/23 is expected to be published imminently by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA).

4.21 When considering the number of libraries per head, Croydon currently ranks 22nd out of 33 London boroughs. Croydon also ranks lower when compared with many other metropolitan areas of a similar size outside of London, though these measures do not take into account different models of provision and opening hours.

4.22 With a few exceptions, the overall design and condition of the Croydon library estate is poor with most sites having an outdated fixed design, immovable shelving, a lack of accessibility and flexibility and a substantial maintenance backlog.

4.23 The current trend in the library sector is towards a reduced footprint but longer opening hours and days with more services co-located and self-service technology used to extend access without increasing staffing.

4.24 As outlined at 3.5 above, library performance is low and whilst loans and visits have increased this year, rates of recovery for visits when compared to pre pandemic data are well below average. Without a change in the model it is not clear that the service will be able to develop usage and reach those who need it most.

4.25 It is important to note that this is despite the professional and committed work of the library service staff and volunteers who continue to provide excellent customer care to Croydon residents but are limited in the impact they can have by the service model.

Library Review Process

4.26 The Council has an obligation to develop library services through engagement with residents and analysis of local needs. It is, therefore, important to follow

a robust process of research and meaningful engagement in developing options for the service.

4.27 The project team have commissioned specialist consultants to support this work to identify need, consider options for improvements and develop a proposed library service model to reflect the most impactful and best value service possible within the constraints of current budgets.

4.28 We have used the Library Universal Offers framework (developed by Libraries Connected, the national sector support organisation for public libraries) as a guide to exploring the impact and opportunity for the library service in Croydon. The Universal Offers are: Reading, Information and Digital, Culture and Creativity and Health.

4.29 The project delivery summary is as follows:

Phase	Timeline	Activity	Outputs
Discovery	August-October 23	Desk research of relevant datasets Library and neighbourhood tour and initial asset review	Research highlights report
Development	September-December 23	Interviews, workshops and group discussion with key internal and external partners and staff	Full research report EQIA Development of options for a new library service model Development of consultation document suite
Cabinet: 31st January 2024 – Approval to consult on proposals			
Consultation (10 weeks)	February – April 2024	Formal statutory consultation including surveys, public events and workshops	Consultation responses to surveys and feedback gathered through events
Review	April - May 24	Analysis of consultation responses and revisions to proposed new model	Revised model defining core statutory service for Cabinet decision
Cabinet: June 24 – Seeking decision on final proposals			
Implementation	June 24 – March 25	Review of staff locations and roles and consultation as needed Review of all retained assets and development of capital plan to undertake essential building improvements, enable self-service	Revised staff structure implemented

		access and increase flexibility for space hire and co-location of services Review of any non-retained assets and options for community managed services / community asset transfer or disposal	Capital investment programme developed to deliver best value Assets disposal processes initiated where relevant

PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.30 The consultants have undertaken an initial programme of primary research through interviews and group discussions with library staff, colleagues from services across the Council and representatives of community groups who were engaged in the last round of library consultations.

4.31 Common themes across the research discussions included:

•The current model isn't working well. Residents aren't able to access the library when they need to and the limited opening hours are a barrier for people, particularly older people, students and working families.

•Library staff feel unable to deliver a high quality, local service while constantly moving between locations. A lot of staff time goes on managing timetables and stretching resources instead of developing the service.

•The libraries are important local community hubs for wellbeing and support for local families, young people and elders in the community and residents want to see more of this type of activity and closer working between services.

•We need to improve publicity generally, especially communication about opening hours because the community is confused; some think their local library is closed.

•Self-service access can help extend provision but people value the face to face services delivered by library staff the most and this is important for addressing isolation and providing support for the community.

•Many of the library buildings lack fully accessible facilities such as toilets and need investment.

•The library staff are valued by residents and do a good job under difficult circumstances

•More work needs to be done to look at partnerships with other services and for accessing funding

•The Council needs to think about the local need in each area, including deprivation levels, and develop an offer which is responsive to this, there isn't one size to fit all communities of Croydon

•The service model needs to be resourced properly. Volunteers, partnerships and fundraising can all help but they also need resource to be done effectively.

SECONDARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.32 Secondary research was undertaken through review of relevant datasets on library usage and need in the borough with particular consideration to the potential impact and contribution of the library Universal Offers.

4.33 Key findings included:

- There are particular geographic areas of higher deprivation, greater health inequalities, lower literacy and lower educational attainment in the borough and the most effective approach would involve targeted work in these areas.
- Community led approaches have been effective in delivering services and engaging residents and partners to focus on local need and solutions.
- Libraries can play a supporting role within the cultural ecosystem by partnering with grassroots and smaller cultural organisations to build their skills and ability to reach audiences.
- There is an established audience for events in libraries but the current condition and design of the library buildings and opening hours limits the possibilities.
- There are opportunities to deliver a more impactful library service offer by establishing community hubs through closer partnership working with other services including the VCFS, adult education providers and the One Croydon Alliance.

4.34 Detailed analysis of the findings from this research can be found at Appendices A and E.

5 OUTCOMES AND OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

5.1 Our research has informed the development of the following draft outcomes and options for change.

In three years' time, we will be able to say that the library review has achieved the following:

Primary outcome	Supporting outcomes
1. We are reaching more people	• More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.
2. We have improved our service to the public	• We have a wide range of activities on offer. • People enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.
3. Our service is more efficient	• We are delivering better value within the resources we have • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.

5.2 A number of options have been identified and explored which would help to realise these outcomes. The options have been considered in the context of an initial cost benefit analysis and have informed the development of proposals based on our assessment of the best value approach. These options are detailed in full at Appendices B and C.

Given the financial circumstances of the Council it has not been possible to implement all the recommended options. The proposed new service is outlined at Section 6.

Details on the costings for the proposed service as a whole are included in section 8.

5.3 The following recommendations have been made, arising from the research findings:

Outcome 1: We are reaching more people

- to explore further the option of evening and Saturday opening if resources can be freed up within the service.
- to undertake a review of the performance of Open+ at Selsdon and Norbury Libraries and lessons learned in advance of further extension.

- to develop a long-term plan for improving library locations to be implemented as opportunities arise in consultation with local communities.
- that the Council consult formally on the option of closing poorer performing and less viable libraries in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours and improve the overall service.
- to explore and test the option of a 'library link' community-based outreach service provision (see Section 6)
- to explore the resourcing of marketing and outreach if the service in libraries can be improved by other options.

Outcome 2: We have improved our service to the public

- to develop the libraries as community hubs providing an extensive offer of services and extending a programme of improved events, working with partners if resources can be freed up by other changes.
- to explore an increase in community language provision if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.
- to pursue the option of improving signage, entrances and interiors
- to improve libraries' IT offer if the resources can be freed up.
- to explore the promotion of digital books and materials if resources can be freed up by other options and subject to Croydon's contribution being fair to The Library Consortium's other members.
- to pursue the option of training staff for to deliver a broader information, advice and support offer for residents

Outcome 3: Our service is more efficient

- to explore further co-locating libraries and other services and closer collaboration with other partners
- to pursue increased IT and checkout self-service in order to free up staff for a more interactive support role.
- to continue with in-house management of the library service and membership of The Libraries Consortium
- to consider any emerging opportunities for alternative models of library service delivery including community management
- to invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers.
- to explore further the introduction of a venue hire service in order to generate income from library spaces and to revisit café provision once attendances have increased at Norbury Library.

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6 PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION

6.1 To successfully pursue the recommendations outlined at paragraph 5.3 above and to achieve the three outcomes to improve the impact and efficiency of the library offer for residents, a change in the library service framework is needed to allow for the redistribution of funds within existing budgets.

6.2 The emerging library framework provides a model to deliver a comprehensive, efficient and sustainable service which responds to local need and feedback gathered through the research phase and enables delivery of the three project outcomes.

6.3 We are proposing that the new statutory library service offer is delivered over four strands of provision:

- **Library Hubs**

A smaller network of more accessible and welcoming buildings delivering an extensive offer of books, wi-fi, PCs, study space, events and a Library Universal Offers programme. Open 5-6 days a week including every Saturday with the majority of hours staffed and extended hours with self-service access available from at least four sites.

These sites will act as focal points for services in their local areas with a broad service offer of reading, digital, health and culture delivered by the Council and community partners. We anticipate that Library Hub buildings will also host other services and partners aligned to the library Universal Offers, with the library as the primary anchor service.

- **Community Hubs**

A library situated in a shared venue as part of a wider service offer for residents, for example as part of a Family Hub, Adult Learning Hub, Health and Wellbeing Hub or VCFS Hub.

These sites would include dedicated library space to hold a range of book collections for children and adults, provide Wi-Fi and public computer access and host events and activities. The service offer and opening times would be developed in response to local need and would include weekend provision.

We envisage that this model of embedded co-location and partnership would attract more people to engage with the library service offer and would provide a more holistic service for residents. The delivery of this offer could include developing existing library buildings into Community Hubs, relocating a library service into a different building or exploring different models of delivering the library offer through partnership with other services or groups.

- **Library Outreach**

Outreach activity is essential to reach people not currently engaged with the library service offer, to raise awareness of the library offer and to provide access to library services for residents who are not able to physically visit a Library Hub or Community Hub. We propose that this is delivered over three strands:

1. Library Links will provide a regular contact point with the library service in localities without a building based library service. Delivered from other community venues on a weekly basis, the offer would be developed based on local need but could include: an information service, community book collections, children and adults events, digital support sessions and support to access library services online.

   Service provision would be delivered through a combination of library staff, volunteers and grant funded partners to deliver library programmes and events in community settings. We propose commencing with a pilot phase of four initial Library Link services focussed on catering to communities most impacted by any library closures with a second phase of delivery focussed on a further four areas with low library engagement and high need across the borough.

2. Expansion of the Home Library service which delivers books and resources to residents who are housebound, resident in care homes or otherwise unable to access library buildings.

3. Library service visits and activities at other community provision including schools and education services, dementia cafes, health care centres, community events and festivals. This is an established way to promote library services and the benefits of library usage, register new members and support residents to access library services and information.

- **Library Online**

An extensive digital offer including e-books and magazines, online learning and training resources and access to the Museum and Archives collections available 24/7.

6.4 The new model will provide the same number of staffed opening hours in the service as at present but delivered from fewer buildings. This will enable the service to operate sustainably and for staff teams to deliver a more responsive local service. All sites will be open on Saturdays.

6.5 Open hours will be increased further through an extension of self-service access. All retained sites will be assessed for the viability and opportunity to

install self-service access and we plan to offer the service from at least four sites.

6.6 We will seek to use technology such as CCTV to manage self-service access efficiently, enabling library access to be extended further at minimal cost to the Council. This will save the need to invest in security staff at these sites. We will take learning from best practice in other authorities where self service access has been deployed in different ways including through remote CCTV monitoring, use of security guards and volunteers. The Council is currently reviewing and reprocuring it's CCTV provision enabling library provision to be included in an updated system.

6.7 Each site will be assessed considering building safety and security procedures and any potential risks to library users and staff to identify the best model to implement self-service and extend the offer for each library.

6.8 Although we won't be able to return to the level of opening hours from 2021/22, prior to the last budget reduction, all Library Hubs and Community Hubs will be open on Saturdays to maximise the opportunity for residents to be able to visit and we will engage with local users in developing opening hours most responsive to local need. This will be more achievable in the new proposals as core staff teams won't be stretched across multiple libraries.

6.9 We hope that through the new service model Croydon residents will be able to access the libraries at more convenient times and be able to access more services and events at the same time.

6.10 The outreach services will also help us to reach people less confident or able to visit Library and Community Hub buildings and enable them to benefit from the library service offer through access to events, books, information and digital support in other community spaces.

6.11 We will measure the quality and impact of the new service offer through library operation and usage figures and engagement with residents through satisfaction surveys and regular library engagement forums to continue developing the services with local people and partners.

Library Locations

6.12 The proposed map of provision and local offer for each of these strands has been developed based on analysis of the demand, need, demographics and engagement feedback to date. We will further test and explore these proposals through the period of public consultation and make any revisions following detailed consideration of responses.

6.13 We propose to retain and invest in the following existing sites as Library Hubs: Central, Ashburton, Thornton Heath, Norbury, Selsdon and Coulsdon.

6.14 These sites have been proposed as appropriate for Library Hubs based on their current usage by library members and community groups, their location and the condition of the buildings and the catchment area they are able to serve.

6.15 **Central library** is the largest and busiest library in the network accounting for half of all visits and a third of all physical issues. It is situated in the Croydon Clocktower complex alongside the Museum of Croydon and Croydon Archives but needs significant investment to upgrade access facilities such as the escalators, and to increase the flexibility to allow for more events and generate space for hire. The 1st floor of the library is currently being developed for refurbishment through funding from Arts Council England's Libraries Improvement Fund. This work is expected to be completed by summer 2024.

6.16 **Thornton Heath library** is the third largest library in the network and benefited from a substantial refurbishment in 2010. The library has good facilities for hire and delivering a community hub offer and a community garden to the rear but would benefit from some minor reinvestment to improve the condition of the rooms for hire.

6.17 **Ashburton library** is one of the largest and best performing libraries which serves a large catchment area. The library opened in 2013 and is in good condition but would benefit from some minor improvements to enable full delivery of the universal offers and community hub provision.

6.18 **Selsdon library** is part of the local Sainsburys complex and is the second highest performing library. The general condition and design of the library is good but investment in signage in the complex and on the exterior of the site is important to increase visibility of the library.

6.19 **Coulsdon library** is well located for the local high street and benefits from a large garden at the rear which is being developed by a local community group. The library performs well but it is in need of investment to the building to create accessible toilets and generate space for events, community hire and hub type services.

6.20 **Norbury library** is generally in good condition following a major refurbishment in 2020/21 but the library building has underutilised space including the café area and community hall. There is an opportunity to engage with local partners and residents to identify the best approach to activating these spaces and improving the overall offer for residents in this community.

6.21 We propose that **New Addington, South Norwood and Purley** become Community Hubs with a library service delivered as part of a wider offer. We recognise that there is a need for a library in these communities, but low usage

of the current library offer suggests that the service provision in these areas needs to be remodelled and the library buildings as currently configured may not be the most appropriate venues to meet local need.

6.22 We will undertake a programme of engagement and development in each of these areas with local residents, library friends groups, the VCFS, family support services, education and health partners to establish a more impactful library service provision in these areas situated as part of a wider service offer. This may include: collocating services to improve the offer for residents, closer partnership working to embed a library offer alongside other services, relocation to different sites within the localities or implementing different models of service delivery. The most impactful solution for each site will be developed with residents and partners as detailed above in response to feedback and opportunities emerging through the consultation.

6.23 These locations have been selected based on the population density, total population and need in the areas they serve, their accessibility and the opportunity to develop a library offer as part of wider partnership and co-location of services in these localities.

6.24 Library usage at **New Addington** is particularly low but the need for digital, cultural, learning and information services in the area is high. It is not clear that the current library building and service model is the best approach to meet need in the area and more work needs to be done to design a new service offer to reach residents in New Addington and Fieldway. This could include more partnership between the libraries, adult education, VCFS, heath, leisure and community services and a change in venue to better reach local people across the two wards.

6.25 Library usage is also low at **South Norwood library** but there is significant need in the area, high housing density and high levels of deprivation. The current library building and its design over five small levels limits the range of services which can be provided and requires significant investment to upgrade the facilities. The Brutalist Library building is held in high regard locally and has an active friends group but, when considered on its own, the library building has limited potential and viability to deliver the service outcomes and would not justify the investment needed solely for library services.

6.26 We propose a full site review with the library and the adjoining Samuel Coleridge-Taylor youth centre in order to generate a better overall facility, retaining the Brutalist architectural heritage. This facility could include co-located library, education and family services, space for community hire and a model of embedded partnership working with different services and community groups.

6.27 Though **Purley library** serves a catchment area of median deprivation overall, this includes Waddon to the north which does have higher rates of deprivation. It also serves a large catchment area in the South East of the borough and Purley itself has seen significant growth and development in recent years. However, the library building at Purley is not well located for local communities to access and requires significant investment and maintenance.

6.28 There is little value in investing substantially to bring the necessary improvements to the current library site when it is so poorly located and cut off from the main shopping area. However, there are strong community and business networks in the area including Purley Panel and Purley BID, in addition to other VCFS groups and health services. We will engage with these groups, local partners and residents to identify the best options for developing the library service in Purley which may include relocation or a change in delivery model through other local partnerships.

6.29 In order to release resources to extend and develop the offer in the above localities, we propose closing the library buildings in: **Shirley, Sanderstead, Broad Green and Bradmore Green.**

6.30 These sites have been selected based on their usage rates, the size and condition of the buildings, the size and deprivation of the catchment areas and their capacity to provide a more comprehensive library offer through partnerships with other services and events. The rankings given below are taken from the last full year of data (2022/23).

6.31 **Shirley library** is a small site which requires significant investment to improve and is limited in the flexibility and opportunity to deliver a more extensive offer. Library usage was ranked 11/13 for loans and 12/13 for visits. Parts of the catchment area are also catered to by Ashburton Library and West Wickham Library (Bromley).

6.32 **Sanderstead library** is another small site, though it performs better at 5/13 for loans and 6/13 for visits. However, the catchment area of the library is largely covered by the catchment area for Purley and Selsdon libraries and the local population is amongst the least deprived in the country. The library is also lacking in accessible toilet facilities and would require significant investment to expand in size.

6.33 **Bradmore Green library** is Croydon's smallest neighbourhood library serving a relatively small population in an area of low population density. The library performs well proportionate to its size ranking at 10/13 for loans and 7/13 for visits. However, the building is small and is unsuitable to deliver the full range of the library service offer. There is also overlap with Coulsdon's catchment area.

6.34 **Broad Green library** is the second smallest library in the network and ranked 12/13 for book loans and 13/13 for visits. It serves an area of high deprivation but there is significant overlap with the catchment areas for Central and Thornton Heath libraries. Equality impact analysis also suggests that there are significant local communities who are not represented in library usage data currently suggesting a different service model in this area could be needed to reach across the local community.

6.35 Following the outcome of the consultation, any assets no longer required to be retained for delivery of library services will be reviewed for alternative use by other Council services, voluntary sector and community groups subject to a viable operating model without any subsidy from the Council. Any buildings remaining after this process will contribute towards the asset disposal programme generating savings for the Council. Detailed site analysis of all of the libraries can be found at Appendices C and F.

6.36 As part of its joint ownership of the building, the Council currently makes a small financial contribution towards the building management and maintenance of the **Upper Norwood Library Hub**, otherwise resourced and jointly owned by Lambeth Council. Upper Norwood library provides an important service to residents in the north of the borough including areas of high population density and a number of LSOAs in the second highest decile for deprivation. This library service contributes to the Council meeting its statutory obligations. We propose to maintain this contribution in the new model as part of the Council's joint ownership of the building.

6.37 Some of the building operating costs from the facilities proposed to close would be reinvested in the service to support the Library and Community Hubs, and community outreach programmes with a particular focus to reach communities most impacted by the closures.

6.38 Through implementing these changes the library service would seek to mitigate the adverse impact of the closures through developing the outreach offer with local residents to meet local need, delivering focussed work with local schools and developing the home library service for residents with access needs. We will conduct further equality impact assessments to support this work and ensure the service is able to reach those who need it most.

6.39 Through the consultation process alternative options may be proposed to avoid the closure of the four libraries, or to improve the service offer. The Council welcomes all proposals and opportunities to deliver a more impactful library service for residents and all proposals put forward during the consultation will be carefully considered.

6.40 Alternative proposals for service delivery would need to be cost neutral to the Council and demonstrate a viable business and financial model of operation. Any proposals of a change in site management would be assessed by the Council's assets team in line with relevant policies and procedures.

Conclusion

6.41 We feel that this new model provides the opportunity to improve the impact of the service overall through a better offer, improved facilities and with flexibility and capacity to develop a targeted approach in partnership with local communities around the borough.

6.42 The model also establishes sustainability and flexibility to develop the opening hours in response to community need and demand which is not possible in the limitations of the current service.

6.43 Partnerships with other service providers, internally and externally to the council will also be central to achieving this approach with particular synergies and opportunities identified in a better connected offer between libraries and adult learning and family support.

6.44 Though the closure of library buildings can be a difficult loss for those who use and work in them, by reducing the physical footprint of the service we can invest in and improve the condition of the remaining buildings and reallocate resource to improve the effectiveness of the service overall.

6.45 We are now seeking to commence extensive public consultation on the library service model outlined above, the options for change being considered and the best model for delivery.

6.46 Further details on all of these proposals can be found at Appendix A, B and C.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The Council could seek to increase the library budget to in order to increase the staffed service opening hours. However, the Council is currently in £1.6 billion of debt and as such this is not practical and it would not address the weaknesses in the current library network.

7.2 The Council could choose to do nothing and not undertake this exercise, retaining the current offer and estate. However, this would not be viable economically as the Council would be operating and retaining a large number of buildings which are closed to the public for four to five days a week, which are not designed for alternative or flexible use and which require substantial capital investment.

7.3 This option would also fail to address demands from the public for extended opening hours and improved library services or address the vulnerabilities in the current model for staff absence or vacancy. Doing nothing would prevent the library service from reaching more residents and addressing the significant need and inequality in the borough.

7.4 The Council could also choose to undertake market testing for community operation of libraries and Community Asset Transfer prior to developing and consulting on the core offer. However, this could lead to a library service which was not resourced in line with resident need or designed through engagement with residents in contradiction of our statutory obligations.

7.5 Any emerging proposals are welcome, and the Council is open to the opportunity for community managed libraries should viable proposals come forward from the community during the consultation. However, it is unlikely that such proposals alone would be sufficient to deliver the service improvements required given the need for models to be self-sustaining without Council subsidy and considering the maintenance and site improvement needs across the network. We, therefore, recommend considering any proposals put forward by residents in the context of the wider consultation.

7.6 Outsourcing the library service as an alternative delivery model for the service has also been considered and rejected as not cost effective within Appendix B.

7.7 These proposals are at a formative stage and we remain open to further ideas generation and development through the consultation process.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Engagement activity has taken place in the development of the proposals including:

- A series of individual and group interviews with Council officers across the organisation including properties, adult social care, regeneration, health and children's services.
- Three workshops with library staff.
- Three meetings with 18 community partners who were active in the last library service consultation.

These sessions focussed on gathering reflections and learning from participants' experiences of the current library service model, ideas for improvements to the service and suggestions for key considerations that the Council should be factoring in as part of the review.

8.2 We are now able to commence wider formal consultation on the proposals developed for a period of ten weeks (2nd February to 14th April). We propose to undertake this through:

- An online survey with printed copies available in libraries.
- A series of public events held in libraries.
- A series of online events to gather feedback.
- Engagement with other community groups, partners and organisations such as resident associations including promotion of the survey and attendance at other community meetings to take feedback.
- A digital communications campaign to maximise the reach of the survey and ensure as wide a response as possible.
- Targeted engagement to reach library users and non-library users and to reach residents representative of the borough population and with regard to the Equality Act characteristics.
- Focussed engagement and service development workshops with communities and groups around South Norwood, New Addington and Purley.
- Engagement meetings to understand the impact of the library closures and further develop mitigations.
- Engagement with groups interested to operate libraries or become more involved in their governance.

8.3 The consultation activity will explore:

- Respondents' current library use and use of other community services.
- Their priorities and aspirations for a library service offer and that of other services relevant to the library Universal Offers.
- Their views on the proposals and the service model outlined above
- Ideas and partnership opportunities for the three proposed Community Hubs (New Addington, South Norwood, Purley).
- The views of those affected by the proposed library closures (Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley) including on potential mitigation measure and alternative options.
- Any other ideas to improve the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the library service.

8.4 A series of member briefing sessions will be held to ensure all council members and Croydon's three MP's have the opportunity to understand and respond to the proposals and the consultation plan. We will seek to engage closely with members representing wards which are served by libraries proposed to close in order to understand the impact and opportunities for mitigations.

8.5 We will also actively engage with the library friends groups and other local community groups to involve them in the consultation and service development process.

8.6 We will undertake regular equalities reviews on the consultation responses to ensure we are reaching communities and groups across the borough, including people of different ages, ethnicities, disabilities, gender and sexuality. Consultation activity and engagement will evolve in response to these findings to reach as widely and meaningfully as possible.

8.7 A framework has been established to collate all responses and contributions to the consultation which will be analysed and considered in the review of the proposals. The findings of the consultation and this analysis will be presented back to Cabinet alongside the final proposals for the service.

9. CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR'S BUSINESS PLAN

This project has the potential to support delivery of many strategic goals and priorities:

9.1 **The *council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good, sustainable services*** through development of a more impactful, sustainable and efficient library service which reduces the maintenance costs on buildings and targets resource where its most needed following engagement and consultation with residents

9.2 ***Croydon is a place of opportunity for business, earning and learning*** through a modernised library estate and community outreach offer which provides access to space, books, resources and support over six days a week with targeted employment, digital skills and business support programmes

9.3 ***Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential*** through open, accessible buildings and outreach programmes which support contextual safeguarding, literacy development, cultural and learning programmes and family support services.

9.4 ***People can lead healthier and more independent lives for longer*** with library hubs that provide health information, advice and programmes to support living well for longer including lifelong learning, physical activity and clubs which

promote social connection and reduce isolation and community-based initiatives to take library services beyond the buildings to reach people where they are

10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1.1 The libraries revenue budget was reduced by £300k in 2019 and £504k in April 2022. Following these reductions, the net expenditure budget for the library service is £2.8m.

10.1.2 Croydon's library service is already benchmarked as the lowest cost per head across London and further reductions could risk compromising delivery of our statutory obligations. We need to ensure that the service meets the Council's best value duty of delivering service outcomes in an efficient manner.

10.1.3 Approximately £1.9m of the budget is currently profiled for staff costs with the remainder allocated for buildings, digital infrastructure, soft facilities, transport and materials. The library stock budget is currently funded separately through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with £300k allocated per annum for three years (2022-2025).

10.1.4 Some costs and budgets of the library service building operations are held centrally for some utilities, some business rates, maintenance and repair of library buildings. The total figure for this is estimated at £0.8m.

10.1.5 The Council will look at opportunities to improve income generation (such as through room/venue hire) however this could require capital investment and would not provide significant extra income in the short term to improve or extend the library service offer. Therefore, the proposed model reinvests some premises related savings through closure of library buildings to increase the staffing budget to support the service being viable and sustainable. This total figure is forecast at £0.14m.

10.1.6 A potential saving of £54k could be generated from premises costs held centrally within the Council's facilities management budgets, depending on the final model adopted.

10.1.7 In addition to this revenue saving, the Council would generate further premise related efficiencies overall through a reduction in the asset base, liabilities and long term operating costs for the closed sites, many of which have a significant maintenance backlog. Modernisation of the

retained estate would also generate income generation opportunities for the Council in the medium to long term.

10.1.8 The proposed budget profile of the new service model is detailed below:

Subjective	Budget (£000's)
Staff costs	2,229
Other operating costs	738
Total expenditure	**2,967**
Library Income	**(16)**
Reinvested building costs from library closures to increase staffing, additional to existing budget	**(138)**
Grand total	**2,813**
Library Stock budget (CIL funding)	300

10.1.9 This budget assumes that the Council would continue to staff and manage the Library Hubs and Community Hubs though the latter would include sharing of costs with other co-located services and partners. There is potential for further savings to be generated if viable alternative delivery options such as community management emerge through the consultation. A revised service budget will be developed following consultation to consider the costs and savings implications of any changes to the model.

10.1.10 The income generation forecast above is conservative and based on current hires and general library income through printing and fines. It is likely that this figure would increase following a period of refurbishments and modernisation of the library estate to establish a more extensive offer of space for hire, yielding further savings in future years. Through engagement with neighbouring boroughs, we understand that the greatest contribution to library income streams comes through hires of space, both ad hoc and through leases. The proposals would also seek to maximise current income generation opportunities such as leasing on longer term

operating arrangements the café and community hall spaces at Norbury Library.

10.1.11 These figures also assume that the budget for library stock and reading materials can continue to be funded through CIL. A further proposal for the next funding period will be developed and submitted to the Infrastructure Funding Group in 2024/25.

10.1.12 A capital investment programme will be required to invest in the retained estate of statutory libraries to undertake essential improvements including rewiring, installation of accessible toilets and improvements to heating, cooling and plant equipment. £1.6m is currently allocated in the capital programme from 2024/25 with a further £0.7m allocated specifically to South Norwood Library through the capital programme and Shared Prosperity grant fund. By reducing the number of buildings retained by the libraries service we can ensure that this investment is targeted to locations of highest impact and reduce the need for further capital requests to improve the accessibility and condition of the full estate.

10.1.13 Some additional capital investment will also be required to extend the provision of self service access from more sites. The costs for this vary by site depending on the nature and design of the building, access points and emergency escape routes. There is a small revenue cost of approximately £2k per site for the access system. The Council will otherwise seek to minimise revenue costs spent on security for this provision by utilising CCTV and technological security systems where possible over security guards.

10.1.14 As noted above at 6.35, any assets no longer required to be retained for delivery of library services following the outcome of the consultation will be reviewed for alternative use by other Council services, voluntary sector and community groups subject to a viable operating model without any subsidy from the Council. Any buildings remaining after this process will contribute towards the asset disposal programme generating savings for the Council.

Comments approved by Allister Bannin, Director of Finance (Deputy s151 Officer) on 18/01/2024

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report sets out the proposals arising from the Council's review of its library services. Section 7 (1) of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 (PLMA) provides that it shall be the duty of every library authority, in this case the Council, to

"provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof….".

The duty applies to those who live, work or study full time in the authority's area. Section 7 (2) provides that, in fulfilling this duty, a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability–

"(a) of securing, by keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and

(b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and

(c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions."

11.2 The Act does not define "comprehensive" and "efficient" library service. However, the Courts have interpreted this as:

"A comprehensive service cannot mean that every resident lives close to a library. This has never been the case. Comprehensive has therefore been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough".

"The key is reasonable ability to access the service by all residents of the county. This means that distances and time taken to reach a library must be reasonable and any particular problems, whether physical disabilities, or created by age or family considerations, must be capable of being met" (Draper v Lincolnshire County Council in 2014 EWHC 2388 (Admin)

"the availability of resources is highly material to the question of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service. The section 7 duty cannot be exempt or divorced from resource issues and cannot in law escape the reductions which have been rendered inevitable in the light of the financial crisis engulfing the country." (R (Green) v Gloucestershire City Council [2011] EWHC 2687 (Admin)).[i]

11.3 Library premises are defined as:

> "(a) any premises which are occupied by a library authority and are premises where library facilities are made available by the authority, in the course of their provision of a public library service, to members of the public;
>
> (b) any vehicle which is used by a library authority for the purpose of providing such a service [ii1]and is a vehicle in which facilities are so made available; (Section 8(7)". Therefore, a library service does not have to be provided from fixed premises, commonly called a "library".

11.4 Section 9 of the Act permits a library authority to make contributions towards the expenses of another library authority "or of any other person providing library facilities for members of the public".

11.5 Section 20 of the Act permits library premises to be used for meetings and exhibitions, film shows, concerts and other events of a cultural or educational nature, for which the local authority may charge.

11.6 Under Section 1 of the Act, the Secretary of State (SoS) for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has a duty to

"superintend and promote the improvement of the public library service…and to secure the proper discharge"

by local authorities of their library functions. That is supported by the default power in Section 10 whereby, on complaint to the Secretary of State that a library authority has failed in its duties under the Act, or he is of opinion that an investigation should be made as to whether any such failure by a library authority has occurred, he can cause a public inquiry to be held and, if satisfied as a result that there has been a failure by the library authority in its duties, he can make an order

"declaring it to be in default and directing it for the purpose of removing the default to carry out such of its duties, in such manner and within such time, as may be specified in the order."

11.7 The DCMS has produced a non-statutory guidance for local authorities considering library service provision and titled 'Libraries as a statutory service' (April 2022) available at Libraries as a statutory service - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The guidance includes the following:

> ….Every council in England is required to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under the Act. It must do so in a way which meets the needs of local library users taking into account the resources available.

The public library service is not a national service, but a local service. What a comprehensive and efficient service means will differ between councils, and will depend on the needs of each area. It is therefore the role of councillors and officials at a local level to determine how much they spend on libraries and how they manage and deliver their service. This must be done:

- in consultation with their communities
- through analysis of evidence around local needs
- in accordance with their statutory duties

Councillors need to make decisions about how money is invested in the interests of the whole community. They will have competing priorities across a wide portfolio of local service provision and councillors and officers must reconcile these matters against the background of their legal requirements. Councils can take their available resources into account when deciding how to deliver their public library service.

Councils therefore have the freedom to design their library service, based on their analysis and assessment of local needs. There are no longer prescribed national standards, which risked ignoring the specific circumstances or needs of individual library authorities…."

11.8 The guidance encourages local authorities considering changes to their library service to: a) inform the DCMS Libraries team about their proposals before public engagement or consultation; b) demonstrate plans to consult with local communities alongside an assessment of their needs (including any projections of need), consider range of options (including alternative financing, governance or delivery models) to sustain library service provision in their area and a rigorous analysis and assessment of the potential impact of their proposals; c) evidence that proposals would continue to meet local needs and should engage with the community when designing the library service to meet local needs within the available resources; d) an assessment of the equality impact on all 'protected groups' as specified in the Equality Act 2010 and e) consider the use of the council's scrutiny process to better inform decision making.

11.9 The Council has a duty to consult with library users, residents, communities and other stakeholders that are likely to be affected by the proposals for the provision of library services in the borough. The consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at their formative stages. The Council must provide the consultees with sufficient information to enable them properly to understand the proposals being consulted upon and to express a view in relation to it. The information must be clear, concise, and accurate. The consultees must be given adequate time to consider the proposals and to respond. The Council must give genuine and conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees during the consultation before making its final decision on the proposals. The responses to consultation should be taken into account when finalising any proposal and an explanation given of how these responses have informed the proposal.

11.10 As part of its decision-making process on the proposals, the Council must have "due regard" to its equalities duties. Under Section 149 Equality Act 2010, the Council in exercise of its function to provide library service, must have "due regard" to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in order to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. The protected characteristics are age, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council is required to give serious, substantive, and advance consideration of what (if any) the proposals would have on the protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place. This exercise must be carried out with rigour and an open mind and should not be a mere form of box ticking. These are mandatory considerations.

Approved by: the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 28/12/2023)"

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Council has a statutory duty, when exercising its functions, to comply with the provisions set out in the Sec 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council must, in the performance of its functions, therefore, have due regard to:

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

12.2 A detailed EQIA has been undertaken to consider the service changes overall and the specific impact of proposals at each of the 13 libraries. The EQIA has also been used to consider mitigating provision to be implemented as part of any service changes.

12.3 The EQIA documentation can be found at Appendix D.

12.4 Comments approved by Naseer Ahmad on behalf of the Equalities Manager, (Date 15/11/2023)

13. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The libraries are currently used or connected to a number of other services within and external to the Council including but not limited to Croydon Music and Arts (CMA), One Croydon Healthy Communities hubs, Asian Resource Centre of Croydon (ARCC), Clear Community Web digital support, health partners, local schools and community groups who all use the library either inside or outside of current public opening hours. Changes to library services will naturally impact on the current reach and delivery of these organisations and services and impact the future capacity of the libraries to deliver a broader community offer and support smaller organisations and services to reach residents.

13.2 However, these proposals have been developed with the aim to transform the library buildings into vibrant community hubs which are designed and equipped to host a broader range of services. The new staffing model also establishes resource for the development and co-ordination of partnerships to strengthen and improve services for residents. Consequently, we anticipate that the new service would enable a growth in partnership working overall.

13.3 The delivery of this project continues to enable opportunities to connect and find shared solutions with other concurrent projects, most notably the Family Hubs development programme and the review of Croydon's adult learning services. Both services have synergies with the library offer and project teams continue to seek opportunities for co-location and a co-ordinated offer, particularly through the Community Hubs strand of the new framework

13.4 Proposals to change library services generally attract a lot of interest from the communities impacted and this was notable during the last period of consultation and change for the service in Croydon in 2021. We expect there to be significant interest in the proposals from resident groups, library friends groups and other VCFS organisations in addition to individual residents. We want to actively engage with and involve these groups in shaping the library service model to ensure it best meets the needs of people who live, work or study in Croydon.

Approved by: Kristian Aspinall, Director of Culture and Community Safety. (Date 27/11/2023)

14. APPENDICES

14.1 A Library Service Review: Phase 1 and 2 Report - Nov 2023

B Options for change

C Analysis of closure options

D EQIA

E Engagement findings so far

F Site profiles

15 Background Papers from past library service changes

Cabinet paper 17th May 2021 – Outcome of first libraries consultation

https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=183&MId=2174

Council paper 11th Oct 2021 – Outcome of second libraries consultation

https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=2535

15. Additional information on URGENCY

15.1 The project delivery timeline is tight but currently on track. Any delays in sign off will result in consequent delays to the consultation period, decision making, implementation and realisation of benefits for residents.

15.2 The libraries review is detailed in the Improvement and Assurance Panel's Exit Plan with the expectation that a new model is approved by September 2024 and implemented by March 2025.

ii

Library Service Review
Phases 1-2 report

Croydon Council

Activist Group

16 November 2023

This report was produced by Croydon Council and Activist Group.

Report details

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Version number	V1.0 - Cabinet
Date	16th November 2023
Revisions	V1.0 – Cabinet

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Executive summary

Introduction

1. **Croydon Council is facing significant financial challenges and must continue to drive improvements in the long-term sustainability of its library services and other assets.**

2. **The Council has launched a Library Service Review, building on the extensive feedback from previous consultations. The Council wants to understand the impact of the changes made to the service in 2022 following previous consultations and to better understand what residents truly need in the future.**

3. The review is based on a needs analysis and evaluation framework for assessing the impact of the current library service model and opportunities and options for improvement. **The Council wants to work closely with Croydon residents and partners to identify a set of future options for the services that can be positive and helpful**.

4. **The review started in July 2023 and it is planned to begin consultation in January 24 with a view to decisions being made on changes which would be implemented from May 2024 onwards.**

The library service

5. **Croydon's library service is currently delivered over 13 buildings grouped into three areas: North, Central and South**. The service also delivers a home library service and supports delivery of library services at Upper Norwood Library Hub, situated in Lambeth but jointly owned by Croydon and Lambeth and operated by Lambeth Council and the Upper Norwood Library Trust.

6. **Croydon Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museum Act (PLMA, 1964) to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof".** The Council also has a duty to develop its library services in consultation with local residents and undertake statutory consultation on any significant service changes.

7. **In 2021, the Council consulted the public on ways of saving £500k from the library service budget to help address the Council's financial position.** Feedback from two rounds of consultation rejected options such as closures, outsourcing, community management and favoured the option of reducing opening hours by 21%. **The Council decided to progress the reduction in staffed opening hours which were to be mitigated by introducing self-service opening ('Open+') with no library staff present and by other measures such as recruiting more volunteers.**

8. **These changes began to be implemented in 2022. The reduction in opening hours was much greater and Open+ and volunteering proved more difficult and slower to implement. Public feedback about the changes has been negative.**

The role of the library service

9. **While books and other reading materials remain central to Croydon's statutory library service, the service plays a much wider part in the life of the people who live, work and study in the borough**. To reflect this, it uses the Libraries Connected 'Universal Offers' as a framework for developing and delivering a comprehensive public library service:

   - Reading.
   - Information and Digital.
   - Culture and creativity.
   - Health and wellbeing.

10. These are supplemented by three other offers:

   - Employment and learning.
   - Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise.
   - Children's Promise.

11. **The performance of the library service in delivering these universal offers has been reviewed, taking into account the changes in the ethnically diverse borough and the severe deprivation facing parts of the population**. These challenges include:

   - **Income deprivation affecting children** leading to poorer levels of literacy and educational attainment.
   - **Health inequalities and mental health challenges** associated with isolation.
   - **Digital exclusion**, particularly affecting the most deprived for whom many public services now operate as 'digital by default'.
   - **Exclusion from arts and culture** among many children and young people who first encounter culture and creativity in a library setting.
   - Lower incomes in the borough compared with other London boroughs, particularly in the north of the borough leading to **a need for help with job search and study**.
   - **Additional language needs** in some communities.

Engagement findings so far

12. Engagement in the first two phases of this project have been limited to briefings with a number of interested groups and with Council officers and library staff.

13. **At the external briefings, people expressed unhappiness and frustration at the impact of moving to part-time opening, seen by some as 'disastrous'**. It was reported that it had particularly affected parents, children and people with traditional working hours and was impacting on people who need help and are struggling. Poor communication was cited and a lack of clarity on the offer and opening times.

14. **Library staff reported challenges faced with the new opening hours and the pressure it placed on them which was affecting their ability to provide the quality of service they wanted for their users.** They also reported the problems with technology and the physical fabric of some buildings. They came up with a range of ideas for change to help make the service a good one.

15. Across the discussions so far, there is a strong consensus that the changes made in 2022 are not working.

The impact of the changes made in 2022

16. **On one measure, the issue of all books and other materials, the service has increased slightly since before the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours, albeit against a low base of usage pre pandemic and when benchmarked against neighbours.** That increase has been driven by a greater take-up of digital books and materials to the point where they represent nearly a third of all issues. Digital issues do not depend on the opening hours of libraries.

17. **For all the library service's other functions which do rely on library opening hours, the combined effect of the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours has been devastating**. Visits have more than halved, active usage (including borrowing and using PCs) has nearly halved and PC usage and attendances at events have more than halved.

18. **What we do not yet know are the individual impacts of the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours.** Once the latest comparative performance data is published by CIPFA, we will be able to see the rate at which the performance of other authorities has recovered since the pandemic. This will then allow us to judge better the particular impact of the reduction in opening hours.

19. This will have had a serious adverse effect on many people's ability to take part in the digital world; on their health and wellbeing; on their participation in cultural life; and on their participation in the labour market. It will also have weakened people's sense of community.

20. Even more seriously, **the reduction in opening hours and stretched staff capacity hamper the ability of the library service to reach the people and communities who need it most and the future generation for whom a thriving library service is a passport to a better life.**

21. Through no fault of the skilled and committed library staff or of the users who are loyal and passionate about its value, the library service is now failing.

Options for improving the service

22. Based on the findings of this review and feedback so far, responding to these drivers will require radical change and it is proposed that the success of the review will be judged by a draft set of simple strategic outcomes shown below.

Table E.1: draft strategic outcomes for the review of library services

By three years' time, we will be able to say that the library review has achieved the following:	
Primary outcome	**Supporting outcomes**
1. We are reaching more people.	• More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community.	• We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.
3. Our service is more efficient.	• We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.

23. A set of changes have been developed designed to achieve those outcomes, but these are based on closing four poorer performing and less viable library buildings in order to free up resource to reinvest in the rest of the service.

Table E.2: options for improving the library service

Outcome	Options recommended for further work and consultation
1. We are reaching more people.	• Extend evening/weekend opening. • Review impact of Open+ in advance of further extension. • Move some libraries to better locations as opportunities arise. • Introduce 'library link' service points. • Introduce programme of outreach and marketing.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community.	• Extend programme of improved events, working with partners. • Increase community language provision. • Improve signage, entrances and interiors. • Improve libraries' IT offer. • Promote the library service's digital offer. • Train staff for more interactive role.
3. Our service is more efficient.	• Co-locate libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT. • Increase IT and checkout self-service • Continue in-house management of the service and explore community management of libraries at risk of closure. • Invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers. • Introduce income generation. • Invest in energy efficiency

Improving nine libraries by closing four

24. To free up resources for re-investing in the wider library service, all thirteen libraries have been reviewed. Nine libraries are recommended to be retained, with proposals for each library to be improved or remodelled, often working in partnership with other services and community organisations.

Table E.3: libraries to be retained

Library	Main changes proposed to the library
Ashburton	• Upgrade the interior design of the library.
Central	• Look for an alternative location in a more suitable building at the heart of the changing shopping district.
Coulsdon	• Explore the remodelling of the library. • Invest in refurbishing the library's interior.
New Addington	• Research the barriers to library use in New Addington and introduce active outreach. Explore new partnership model for services in the area
Norbury	• Review the operating model for the building including sharing or tenancy to generate income and footfall.
Purley	• Seek a better location and building for Purley Library and explore new partnership opportunities.
Selsdon	• Introduce improved signage and market its presence.
South Norwood	• Explore opportunities to develop plans for an improved community facility jointly with the Samuel Coleridge Taylor youth centre.
Thorton Heath	• Invest in minor refurbishment.

25. Four libraries are recommended to be considered for closure, subject to detailed consultation and further research and analysis and the development of mitigations of the impact of the changes.

26. An initial equalities impact analysis has been undertaken and this will need to be refined further through the consultation period, with a particular focus on areas affected by the closures. The impacts on people in need and with protected characteristics will require careful attention.

Table E.4: recommendations for libraries to be considered for closure

Library	Recommendations
Bradmore Green	• Consider targeted outreach work on the Tollers Estate. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.
Broad Green	• Research the barriers to library use in local areas of high deprivation for active outreach. • Assess the impact on the different ethnic groups in the catchment area and of the wider equalities impact. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.
Sanderstead	• Explore the level of community interest in retaining the building. • Explore the particular impacts on people with mobility issues that might prevent them making use of another library. • Explore options for Library Link provision to serve the community impacted by closure.
Shirley	• Consult Bromley Council over potential arrangements for Croydon residents to use West Wickham Library. • Explore the particular needs of residents in the most deprived LSOAs. • Explore potential mitigations for the older community in the catchment area. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.

27. **Saving money by closing some libraries would release significant resources which could fund many of the improvements recommended and transform the ability of the service to encourage more people to use the service, especially those that need it most.**

Next steps and consultations

28. **The last rounds of consultation demonstrated strong opposition to library closures and the libraries proposed for closure have strong local support.** There will need to be detailed engagement with local communities and community groups over their views of the proposals, the options considered and the alternatives.

29. **This will form part of a wider consultation with the public and voluntary and public sector organisations across the borough.** Sufficient time will be allowed and efforts made to reach residents across the borough, not just library users or those areas with a library building.

30. The Council will consider the feedback from consultation in 2024 before taking a decision drawing on wider information and further analysis of the options. **The proposals set out in this report are, at this stage, formative proposals. The process of consultation and further research and analysis is designed to improve them with the help of the public, staff and partner organisations.**

1. Introduction

Purpose of and background to the report

1.1 This report sets out the research findings from Phases 1-2 of Croydon Council's Library Service Review, with a set of key findings and recommendations to be explored further in the next phase. This report covers Phases 1-2 of the project (July to November 2023).

1.2 Croydon Council is facing significant financial challenges and must continue to drive improvements in the long-term sustainability of its library services and other assets.

1.3 Building on the extensive feedback of previous consultations, the Council wants to work closely with Croydon residents and partners to identify a set of future options for the services that can be positive and helpful, as well as help address the Council's financial situation.

1.4 Through the project's engagement activities, the Council seeks to understand the impact of the changes made following previous consultations and to better understand what residents truly need in the future. This is set against the difficult backdrop of the UK's economic situation and immediate 'cost of living' pressures on people.

1.5 Libraries are considered 'the front door' to Croydon's public services and they continue to be highly valued despite the ongoing cost pressures that the services have faced. These pressures are contributing to the ongoing need for service changes locally (and nationally) in recent years.

1.6 The Library Service Review has been tasked to explore and discuss a number of key areas, including:

- The emerging needs of Croydon residents post-Covid, building on the work of previous consultations.
- The future options for library service delivery that are sustainable long-term and will align with other transformational work underway.
- The current library service offer, including opening hour options and weekend opening potential.
- The physical estate, including the current costs/benefits per site, the benefits of targeted capital investment in physical fabric improvements, and the quantity of buildings in comparison to other Councils.
- Opportunities for more community managed buildings and/or colocation working with local partners.
- Opportunities for working more closely and efficiently with local partners to achieve common local goals.
- Opportunities for greater technology use and technology enabled access, including the potential for offering longer opening hours for residents.

- How a more resilient and locally tailored service offer could be delivered from a different physical and financial asset base, including the assignment of staff to particular sites and new income generation ideas.

1.7 The timetable for the review is summarised below.

Table 1.1: summary of Phases 1-4 and indicative timescales by month.

Phase	Summary of purpose and outcomes
Phase 1: Discovery (July-Oct 2023)	• Asking people to contribute their thoughts and ideas to help the Council continue to deliver the best services possible within the money it has available. • Talking to local politicians, senior leaders and key partners to help us explore their ambitions for these vital public services, as well as understand what has worked well (and less well) in the past.
Phase 2: Option development (Sept-Nov 2023)	• Taking the ideas suggested to us so far to help the Council develop a set of possible future options for the services. • These future options will be prepared ready for public consultation from January onwards.
Phase 3: Public consultation (Feb 2024 - April 2024)	• Speaking with Croydon's residents, politicians, senior leaders and key partners to seek their feedback on what they like, and don't like, about the future options
Phase 4: Implementation (May 2024 onwards)	• Informed by the Phase 3 feedback, the Council will review the proposals and options available and agree the new model for the service. • The new service option(s) will begin to be implemented from May 2024 onwards. • Croydon's residents will continue to be kept informed on the changes to services, with the intention of reflecting on the impact of these changes, again in discussion with Croydon residents, within the next 12-24 months.

Our approach and scope

1.8 The Council commissioned Activist Group, specialists in engagement, research and advice on library services, to provide independent support working in collaboration with the Council's project team.

1.9 This support covers the engagement and primary research element for Phases 1-2 of the project, exploring and analysing the views, ideas and aspirations of the people and organisations who live, work and study in Croydon. This includes identifying a wide range of perspectives of the Council's library offer, its ambitions, and people's ideas for the future, which are summarised in this report.

1.10 Activist have also developed a needs analysis and evaluation framework for assessing the impact of the current library service model and opportunities and options for improvement.

Introducing the Universal Library Offers

1.11 Libraries Connected is the Library Sector Support Organisation for public libraries in England, funded by Arts Council England. They are also a membership organisation, made up of every library service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

1.12 Their Universal Library Offers 'aim to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity' and can be used to describe what libraries or community centres can offer people.

1.13 We have summarised the Universal Offers in the table below. More detail about them can be read at https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers.

Table 1.2: Libraries Connected's Universal Library Offers

Offer and key principles	Summary
Reading • *Engage, Imagine, Discover*	To build a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.
Information and Digital • *Inform, Inspire, Innovate*	To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online.
Culture and creativity • *Explore, Create, Participate*	To enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences through local libraries.

Offer and key principles	Summary
Health and wellbeing • *Healthier, Happier, Connected*	To support the health and wellbeing of local people and communities through services that inform, engage and connect.

Employment and Learning

1.14 The current edition of the Universal Library Offers does not give sufficient space to communities' need for employment and learning support, a key theme in Croydon's Mayoral Business Plan (2022-26) and Croydon Libraries' own plan and current work with partners including CALAT. We have therefore included this as an additional 'offer' which we have analysed in our engagement and research.

1.15 The offer is summarised as:

- To enable people to realise their potential by accessing advice and learning that aids their employment prospects and skills.
- Through targeted advice to people looking for work or starting a business, including job clubs and CV support, start-up business support and shared workspaces.
- Through support for urgent needs, including access to rights advice and legal services, signposting to food banks and emergency information.
- Providing pathways into formal adult learning and vocational training.

1.16 The four core Universal Offers are also underpinned by the 'Children's Promise' (in partnership with the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL), and the 'Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise', developed by Share the Vision. The aims of these have been woven across our analysis of the four core Universal Library Offers.

Table 1.3: cross-cutting offers

Promise	Goal
Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise	• That the almost two million blind and partially sighted people in the UK can visit a fully accessible library service, that has a local collection of accessible reading materials and information in physical or digital forms.
Children's Promise	• Every child and young person in libraries is inspired to read for pleasure, has access to a diverse range of materials, can engage in a variety of digital activities and can take part in activities that improve their well-being.

How we've gone about the research

1.17 We used four main methods for gathering people's views and other relevant data:

- **Interviews** with key Council senior officers and service leads.
- **External briefings** with Friends Groups, community groups and members of the public.
- **Desktop review of previous consultation findings and feedback,** where members of the public were consulted on previous service options, ideas and proposals.
- **Staff 'idea generation' workshops** with a cross-section of library service staff.
- **Desktop analysis of performance data, other local data, benchmarking data and wider ideas from elsewhere about what works.**

How to read the rest of this report

1.18 The chapters of this report and its appendices are grouped together as follows:

- *Chapter 2 gives an overview of Croydon's library service and trends affecting the library sector.*
- *Chapters 3 to 7 assess how Croydon Libraries' are currently able to address meet local needs under each of the Universal Offer themes.*
- *Chapter 8 summarises the findings from our engagement and research.*
- *Chapters 9 and 10 provide our conclusions about the severe challenges facing the service.*
- *Chapter 11 sketches out a new vision and model for the service to address the problems we have identified.*
- *Chapter 12 summarises our conclusions and recommendations.*
- *The Appendices to the report contain full details of the options for change including addressing closures and full data from our engagement and research.*

2. An overview of libraries in Croydon

Introduction

2.1 In this section, to help set the scene, we provide an overview of Croydon's library service. We summarise the current service offer, how the services are organised, and explore broader trends that are influencing the library sector.

Summary of the service

2.2 Croydon's library service is currently delivered over 13 buildings grouped into three areas: North, Central and South. The service also delivers a home library service and supports delivery of library services at Upper Norwood Library Hub, situated in Lambeth but jointly owned by Croydon and Lambeth and operated by Lambeth Council and the Upper Norwood Library Trust. The library group type informs the opening hours and the extent of the offer available:

Table 2.1: Croydon's area, branch and local library locations

Type of library	North Area	Central Area	South Area
Area Library	Thornton Heath	Croydon Central Library	Selsdon
Branch Libraries	South Norwood Norbury	New Addington Ashburton	Coulsdon Purley
Local Libraries	Broad Green	Shirley	Sanderstead Bradmore Green

2.3 Croydon Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museum Act (PLMA, 1964) to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof". Though the precise definition of comprehensive and efficient is not specified, the authority must have regard to:

- providing adequate stock and resources for lending to the public, sufficient in range and quantity for the borough population of adult and children
- encourage use of the library service from both adults and children, providing advice and information to support this

2.4 The statutory duty is superintended by DCMS (the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) who have the power to intervene and call a local enquiry when a library service fails (or is suspected of failing) to provide the required service including the investigation of complaints that the library authority has failed to carry out its duties in line with the Act and to issue it with an order to carry out those duties.

2.5 The Council is also advised, under the non-statutory guidance for public libraries, to develop its library services in consultation with local residents and undertake statutory consultation on any significant service changes.

2.6 Croydon's statutory library service offer uses the Libraries Connected Universal Offers as a framework for developing and delivering a comprehensive public library service.

2.7 Through this project the library service have produced detailed site reports for each library outlining current usage and local information. The service have also produced a range of maps to explore the service reach and impact across the borough. (see Appendix F).

2.8 Some headline figures for the library service overall, current trends and benchmarking are detailed below. The most recent CIPFA performance data for comparisons with other library services is 2021/22 data. Further analysis will be undertaken when the next dataset is released covering performance for 2022/23.

2.9 Croydon libraries are currently open for 344 hours per week, with 296 of these a fully staffed service and 48 enabled through self-service technology.

2.10 When benchmarked for revenue expenditure per head Croydon is 15th out of 16 comparator services.

2.11 When benchmarked for number of library visits per head in the last year for which data is available Croydon ranks 15th out of 16.

2.12 When benchmarked for the number of library loans per head for which data is available Croydon ranks 17th out of 18

(NB the total denominators change depending on the number of services who have responded to that question)

2.13 Footfall into the libraries for the first six months of 2023/24 is only 43% of the same period for 2019/2 whilst Active Users (members who have used their card in the last 12 months) are at 58% of the same point in 2019, amounting to less than 10% of the population.

2.14 Whilst there has been an increase in library visits and issues in 2023/24 this is still at a low rate relative to other comparable boroughs and as a proportion of the population. Whilst the need for library services remains high, as evidenced in levels of educational attainment, health inequality, isolation and digital exclusion, the reduction in opening hours and stretched staff capacity hamper the ability of the library service to reach the people and communities who need it most and the future generation for whom a thriving library service is a passport to a better life.

2.15 Without a change in the model and reallocation of the resources available, the service is unlikely to be able to meet the needs of Croydon's residents and in that sense it could be considered to be failing.

2.16 Further detail on the libraries' performance data can be found in Section 9.

How we got here

2.17 Croydon's library service has undergone substantial change and transition over the last six years. Having been previously outsourced to Carillion, in 2018 the service was brought back in house following that company's collapse. A restructure was undertaken in 2019 with a budget reduction of £300k made.

2.18 In 2019 a new Library Plan was approved and the service joined The Libraries Consortium or TLC (at that time London Libraries Consortium), a network of 20 library services which share a library catalogue and book stock. Investment was also made in the digital infrastructure of the libraries and self-service access technology was installed.

2.19 In March 2020 the library buildings were closed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and government mandated lockdowns with a gradual reopening taking place across the network later in the year from July 2020 with Select & Collect services, and on 9 September, Central Library, then Selsdon, Ashburton, Thornton Heath, and New Addington opened for browsing & appointment only IT access. There was a further lockdown in November 2020 with libraries reopening gradually in April 2021. In this interim period, several libraries served as testing centres, including Broad Green which was closed until August 2021 and the last to reopen.

2.20 In November 2020 Croydon Council issued a Section 114 notice stating that it could no longer deliver a balanced budget. This necessitated a review of services across the council with a requirement to make significant financial savings. Proposals were developed to reduce the libraries service budget by £500k by closing five libraries. Consultation on these proposals was held between January and March 2021 with a decision taken in May 2021 to explore alternative approaches to make the savings.

2.21 Further consultation took place between June and July 2021 on the following options:

- Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough
- Outsource all libraries
- Reduce service hours (2 days per week) in eight libraries and create five community run libraries

2.22 Following consideration of the consultation responses, the decision was taken in October 2021 by Croydon's Cabinet to proceed with the first option including through increased use of self-service access, volunteers and partnerships.

2.23 From April 2022 the number of staffed hours was then reduced from 566 to 296. In May 2023 self-service access was enabled at Selsdon Library followed by Norbury Library in October 2023.

2.24 However, as will be analysed in more detail in chapter 9, these mitigations have not functioned as originally intended, significantly extending the reduction in opening hours

as experienced by residents. The severity of this impact has been reflected in the feedback from respondents during our engagement.

Management of the service

2.25 The Croydon Library Plan (2019-2028) sets out the strategic aims for the development of the service under three pillars:

- Inform – connecting residents to information, advice and services that will benefit them
- Involve – a service that is shaped by residents and easily adapts to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve
- Inspire – creative library spaces that offer residents opportunities to have fun, learn and connect with others

2.26 These strategic aims were underpinned by four outcomes. Though delivery of the plan has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council's financial difficulties, some progress has been made towards these outcomes, as highlighted below.

Table 2.2: Croydon Library Plan (2019-2028) – outcomes and achievements

Outcome	Achievements
A library service designed around the needs of our residents and communities	Joined the TLC in 2019 providing significant increase to available books and e-resources for Croydon residents
Croydon Libraries as the Front Door to the Council enabling services to be delivered locally	Improved the digital infrastructure of the libraries Strategic role for libraries as outlets for localities working including vaccination , consultation outlets for other departments, election stations and engagement points for Council and voluntary programme tours (Hate Crime, Fostering, Digital Safety, Warmer Homes etc)
Libraries at the heart of Croydon's cultural offer, celebrating the written and spoken word in particular	Regular author talks taking place and poetry programme delivered with Croydon poet laureate The libraries have also been used as venues for London Borough of Culture activity

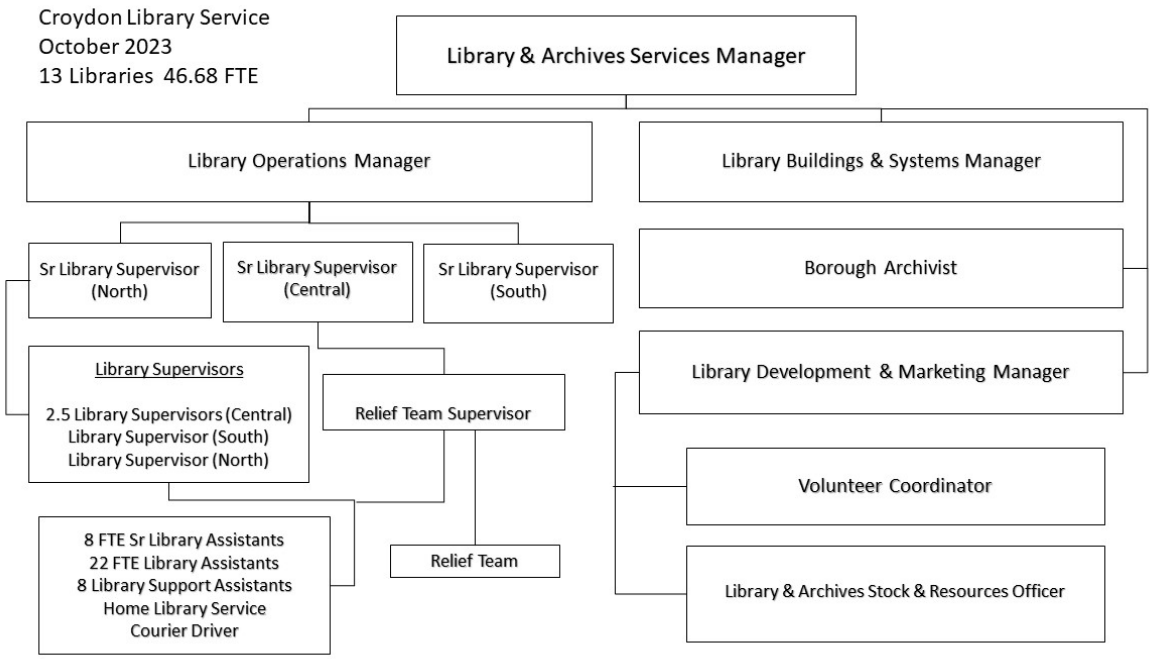
Modern, welcoming, inclusive and accessible library facilities and buildings	Self-service access implemented at Selsdon and Norbury Libraries Library app launched

2.27 Within Croydon Council the library service sits within the Culture and Community Safety department within the directorate of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery.

2.28 Reporting into the Head of Culture, Leisure and Libraries, the Libraries Services Manager leads the service. The wider management team includes a Buildings and Systems Manager, an Operations Manager, a Development and Marketing Manager and a Volunteer Co-ordinator. Responsibilities for the overall operations, premises, programme, strategic partnerships, outreach, marketing, stock management, performance management and service development projects sit with this team of five.

2.29 The frontline operational teams are made up of 3 FTE Senior Supervisors, 4.5 FTE Supervisors, 8 FTE Senior Library Assistants, 22 FTE Library Assistants, 1.52 FTE Library Support Assistants and 0.67 FTE courier.

Figure 2.1: Croydon library service – structure chart



2.30 The Croydon Archives service also sits under the management of the Library Services Officer and is staffed by 1 FTE Borough Archivist post and 0.5 FTE Collections Access Officer post. Library assistants also assist in staffing the archive Research Room on a rota basis.

The external environment and how libraries are responding

2.31 Below we summarise the main aspects of the external environment in which this review is taking place, with key trends affecting the public library and local government sectors, and outline some of the ways in which the public library sector has attempted to adapt.

Austerity and funding

2.32 Reductions in local government funding since 2010 have contributed towards spending on public libraries falling nationally by 47%. The current administration's Levelling Up programme has also sought to redirect resource outside of London, though some areas in London, including Croydon, have been able to benefit from funding under this scheme.

2.33 As noted elsewhere, despite the reduction in Arts Council England investment in London, libraries have become more central to ACE strategies, recognising the extensive reach of public libraries in communities, particularly among those who don't traditionally engage with arts, and have greater needs across a number of areas including health and wellbeing, and learning and skills, as well as libraries' role as trusted, free spaces.

2.34 Broadly, public libraries have responded to financial pressures with three strategies, not mutually exclusive, but with different implications. The first is to cut their cloth accordingly, or 'salami-slice' libraries' staffing, hours and sites. Pursued in a vacuum this generally leads to falling usage and a weakening of libraries' effectiveness and efficiency, making them a softer target for further cuts, and rendering local authorities liable to challenge under their statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

2.35 The second strategy is to move away from trying to be 'all things to all people', which has been a temptation in some places, leading to a dilution of service focus and quality. Such a strategy is probably no longer viable for many local authorities. Alternatively service reviews are increasingly targeting local need more precisely and tailoring each library's offer to its population's specific profile and needs.

2.36 The third strategy is to try and position public libraries more centrally within local frameworks for delivering corporate objectives for health and wellbeing, economic development, employment and skills, arts and culture etc, both for the specific benefits of activities within libraries, and as gateways to other specialist support. While this has proved effective in many places, public libraries often struggle to make progress because they lack the influence or recognition within existing national and local frameworks to make their case effectively, or robust data required by commissioners and decision-makers. However, library services which have focused on this strategy are more likely to be successful in attracting additional funding now available from Arts Council England than those merely retrenching.

Pandemic recovery and cost of living crisis

Communities are grappling with the social and economic consequences of the pandemic, inflation and cost-of-living crisis, which have all exacerbated inequalities and increased demand for support including mental health services, isolation and school catch-up.

The closure of public libraries at the beginning of the pandemic caused normal visits and usage to collapse. This had a huge impact on library strategies, income and relationship with residents, many of whom relied on libraries to maintain social contacts, use the internet, access services and take part in affordable activities.

However, libraries' response has emphasised their role as (often the only) free, universal social spaces left in communities, providing warm or cool spaces in extreme weather and social contact for those who are isolated, as well as vital access to the internet and specialist support.

Digital shift

There have been rapid advances in technology and its application to almost every aspect of daily life. The pandemic necessitated a rapid adjustment to online working, shopping, study and social interaction, and although for many things there has been an adjustment back to more personal, direct contact, the legacy of these changes is that many providers now prefer users to access online, but also many individuals have got used to this and find it more convenient.

Although 93% of UK households now have internet access at home[1], this means that 7% of UK households cannot access the internet at home, which represents some 4.6 million UK residents. Not everyone is equally confident or comfortable with using technology, or indeed wishes to. Hence there are still a significant minority of people who are excluded from this 'online world', not just for the activities where there remains the in-person option, such as shopping, but also to access a range of public services, to search and apply for jobs, or to look for a home to rent. Looking forward, rapid advances in technology including AI will no doubt render much of this picture obsolete in ways difficult to forecast.

Public libraries have exhibited strengths and weaknesses in adapting to digital technology both in the short-term and long-term since the introduction of computer and internet access as part of the core library offer. Public Library services (hampered by poor local government IT platforms and support) have been generally slow to catch up with the user-focused commercial environment of online retail and downloads. However, more recently and spurred by the pandemic, the online public library offer has been improving rapidly, demonstrated in the significant increase in users for ebooks and other digital material. Croydon's membership of The Library's Consortium has transformed its digital offer.

The pandemic has also emphasised that the public library's role is bridging the digital gap for those without access, devices, skills or confidence to use technology, as well as providing social space to avoid isolation for people of all ages otherwise using content online at home.

Retreat from the high street

Another long-term trend accelerated by the pandemic and the move to remote working and online shopping has been the decline of high street retail. This has affected the mobility patterns of citizens, usage of public amenities and the viability of many existing library sites.

Many local authorities are reviewing their existing library network in light of these changes, or alternatively seeking to anchor public libraries in a high street experience more focused on 'experience' than 'retail', or alongside new housing developments, but implementing such far-reaching changes to urban planning are complex and long-term.

Comprehensive and efficient, and non-discriminatory

Over the last decade, local government proposals to manage collapsing budgets by reducing library services has highlighted the statutory duty on Councils to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under the 1964 Public Libraries Act, and to ensure that changes are compliant with more recent equalities legislation. Although the definition of 'comprehensive and efficient' is less than clear, both the DCMS duty to superintend the Act and campaigning groups' potential to initiate independent legal proceedings puts additional emphasis on the process of needs assessment, consultation and equalities impact assessment.

Climate action

The climate crisis response and challenge to meet net zero commitments weighs heavily on local government and its physical estate particularly at a time of financial crisis.

Public libraries have responded nationally by creating the Green Libraries Partnership, which, as well as supporting library services to address their own responsibilities to reduce the carbon impact of library buildings have a mission to put public libraries at the heart of environmental action in their communities.

About Croydon

2.37 Croydon is the largest of all the London boroughs in terms of population, with approximately 390,800 residents (ONS Census 2021) and the population is growing. The borough population recorded in Census 2001 was 330,587 and in the 2011 Census it had increased to 363,378. Census 2021 estimates 390,800 Croydon residents and this is expected to increase to just under 500,000 by 2050.

Table 2.3: Summary of key demographics, includes (ONS Census 2021):

- Nearly a quarter of Croydon's population (23.1%) are aged 17 years and under compared to the average for London of 21.6%. In Croydon, 63.3% of its residents are in the 18-64 years age band compared to 66.6% in the same age band in London. Croydon has a higher proportion (13.6%) of residents 65 years or over compared to the average for London which is 11.9%. Employment and prosperity (and poverty).
- Croydon is an ethnically diverse place with 51.6% of the population from a global majority background with the largest groups being people of Black ethnicities at 22.6% and people of Asian ethnicities at 17.5%.
- 82.4% of people reported feeling in very good health of good health overall, though 15.9% reported that their daily activities are limited a little or a lot by a long term health problem or disability. There are also significant health inequalities within the borough which we will explore further below.
- While the overall level of deprivation has fallen between the IMD 2015 and the IMD 2019 there are five neighbourhoods in the borough which fall within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country. These are situated in Thornton Heath, Broad Green, Selhurst, New Addington and Shirley North. The North and East of the borough continue to be more deprived than the south overall.
- The job density level in Croydon is 0.58. This is much lower than the London average of 1 and the average for Great Britain which is 0.85.
- Croydon is a major economic centre in London and a primary retail, leisure and cultural destination for the South East. It is also a major contributor of labour and skills to the London economy and is recognised in the London Plan as an important strategic location for business activity and transport infrastructure.
- Over the last decade Croydon's economy has been hampered by an overdependence on retail, business services and public sector jobs and a surplus of lower grade office accommodation. The latest economic development strategies and regeneration plans recognise the need to focus on supporting local business, driving economic growth, and facilitating new business and inward investment.

- Croydon's cultural economy has also been severely impacted by the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, both of which have affected audience numbers and behaviour. The funding landscape for culture in London is also more challenging following strategic decisions by central government to redirect funding support outside of the city.
- Croydon is the current London Borough of Culture and the Council is delivering a cultural programme between April 2023 and March 2024 under this award. This programme is creating opportunities to explore new partnerships and ways of delivering and enabling culture in the borough but further funding beyond the year will remain a challenge for the Council and the cultural sector.

The Council's transformation plans

2.38 Croydon's finances, like those of the wider local government sector, are under strain from inflationary pressures and increasing demand for essential social care, housing and welfare services. Croydon's financial challenge is also compounded by significant, and independently well documented, local historic legacy (governance, financial, service delivery and structural) issues.

2.39 The Council first issued a Section 114 notice in November 2020 with further notices issued in December 2020 and November 2022. Additional support measures were introduced following the last notice and the Council is not currently under Section 114 restrictions.

2.40 However, the financial position of the Council remains serious and the current Medium Term Financial Statement (MTFS) reports that before allowance for savings, efficiencies and any further government support, there is a budget deficit of £75m forecast for 2024-25, increasing to £137m by 2027-28

2.41 The Council has initiated a wide-ranging transformation programme to review operations and costs across the organisation and to improve efficiency and bring service costs in line with benchmarking of nearest neighbours.

2.42 One of the workstreams for the transformation programme is a review of the library service offer to consider if the current model of operating thirteen buildings on a part time basis provides best value and to explore alternative service models to generate better value and higher impact with the resource available. This project is not forecast to generate significant revenue budget savings for the Council but to improve the overall efficiency of the service and the Council's asset base.

2.43 Following the issuing of the first Section 114 notice the Council has been working with an Improvement and Assurance Panel, appointed by central government to support the Council to address their financial difficulties. In July 2023 the panel's role was made statutory and strengthened to allow them the power to intervene should they feel that the Council was not delivering its Best Value Duty for residents.

2.44 The panel has produced an exit strategy which sets out the panel's plan for leaving Croydon in July 2025. The exit strategy has been developed by the panel, in close partnership with the council, and highlights the strong commitment by both to resolve the challenges.

2.45 The content of the Exit Plan closely aligns with the Mayor's Business Plan (2022-2026), the overarching strategic document for the Council services. The priority outcomes in this plan are:

- Outcome 1: Getting our finances right
- Outcome 2: A place of opportunity,
- Outcome 3: Children and young people,
- Outcome 4: Cleaner, safer and healthier,
- Outcome 5: Living healthier independent lives,

2.46 The Mayor's Business Plan commits that the Council will listen to, respect and work with partner organisations, Croydon's diverse communities, the voluntary sector, and develop our workforce to deliver the outcomes and though challenging the current circumstances do enable the organisation to work in new ways with partners to respond to need and demand in the borough.

Summary of findings

Key findings

2.47 In the table below, we have summarised our key findings from this section:

Table 2.4: Introducing libraries in Croydon - our key findings

• The social and economic changes of recent years have created challenges for library services but they also generate opportunities to reach new audiences with a library offer and make sure libraries are relevant to more people's lives • Croydon's levels of deprivation and population wellbeing have improved overall but entrenched inequalities remain, particularly in the North and East of the borough and this needs targeted attention • It's important to build a wide coalition of partners and residents to deliver services which understand and respond to local need and can deliver best value with limited funding available • Population growth and demand will continue in the borough. We need to be creative about how a library offer can have the greatest impact and recognize it wont be possible to do everything • The reductions made to the library service budgets in 2021 have impeded recovery of library usage and services post Covid-19 with rates of use recovering more slowly than in neighbouring boroughs

3. Reading: what our analysis tells us

Context

3.1 The aim of the Reading Universal Offer is: '**To build a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries'**.

3.2 Research has indicated that reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than their family circumstances, their parents' educational background or their income (OECD 2011). It also builds confidence, empathy, language and communication skills and positive wellbeing.

3.3 However, reading for pleasure is at its lowest levels in 18 years; fewer than one in two (47.8%) children aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in 2022, the lowest level since 2005[5]. This is even lower for children growing up in poverty with one in ten children eligible for free school meals reporting that they don't own a single book (NLT, 2022).

3.4 Literacy is also a key functional skill which is integral to people's independence, health, education, employment and life outcomes. In England 16.4% of adults (7.1 million people) can be described as having "very poor literacy skills." (NLT, 2022)

3.5 Support for literacy in English is also particularly important in diverse communities where English is spoken as an additional language, to support access to services, employment, educational outcomes and enable independent living.

Need in the Borough

3.6 According to the National Literacy Trust's literacy score mapping (2017) which measure literacy need in each constituency in England, Croydon North and Croydon Central were ranked 131 and 135 respectively out of 533 placing both in the top 25% of highest need in the country. Croydon South was ranked at 319, indicating the inequality in literacy levels between the north and central areas of the borough and the south.

3.7 Croydon has the highest population of children and young people of the London boroughs with one in four (23.1%) of the population aged 0-17 years (ONS Census 2021). This figure is expected to continue growing in line with the population creating further pressure on education and school services. The borough also has the highest number of children with experience of care in London.

3.8 21.7% of the Croydon population are students and whilst attainment levels at Foundation are good, levels at KS2 KS4 and KS5 are below London averages.

3.9 Take up of funded early years education places is also below London average and the borough is seeing an adverse impact from the Covid-19 pandemic on school readiness.

3.10 65% of children in Croydon fall in to the in bottom five deciles for income deprivation affecting children index with 15,578 under 16 year olds living in relative low income and 24.4% of primary and secondary children are eligible for free school meals.

3.11 The overall census data shows that 16% of people in the borough have a main language other than English but less than 3% either cannot speak English well, or at all. However Croydon has a substantial refugee population who may not have been well represented through the Census.

3.12 Generally, educational attainment and literacy trends correlate with areas of deprivation in the borough with people with no qualifications concentrated in areas around Central Croydon and the south-eastern edge of the borough.

How we are currently addressing these needs

3.13 The collection of physical and digital material available to Croydon residents has been significantly expanded by our membership of The Libraries Consortium. However, certain types of material are in higher demand and current investment limits do not keep pace, particularly board and picture books for younger readers which naturally have a higher rate of attrition.

3.14 Digital resources including e-books and e-audio are incredibly popular in Croydon making up 31% of all loans in 2022/23.

3.15 Reading and literacy events taking place through our libraries include:

- 20 weekly sessions for under 5's and a weekly reading club for children up to aged 8.
- Summer Reading Challenge in partnership with The Reading Agency which reached nearly 2,000 children in 2023.
- Adult reading groups including specialised groups dedicated to Crime, Non-Fiction and LGBTQ+ relevant texts.
- Shared Reading Groups, also known as Reading Aloud (from The Reader Organisation) where ability to read is not required to join. This has received additional Arts Council funding.

3.16 The reduced opening hours since 2021 severely limit the capacity for outreach and targeted engagement of those most in need. This has been raised as particularly challenging for working people generally and families with working parents.

3.17 Staff and volunteers have recently undergone training to develop the reading aloud programme further with the Reading Retreat scheme. This programme also supports the libraries health offer as the sessions provide reading activity for people who may struggle to read independently as a result of health conditions and disability.

3.18 The library also regularly host celebration events and author talks to generate excitement around books and reading and to showcase new and diverse authors. This has recently included hosting the London stop of the Black British Book Festival tour.

3.19 The library service has also worked in partnership with care homes and VCFS services to deliver the home library offer and enable access to books for those who are unable to visit a library or are unaware of the offer.

3.20 The library service has also recently been awarded some public health grant funding to deliver a targeted programme of early years and family support to develop a shared reading habit and promote the links between reading and school readiness in 2024.

What others have done

3.21 The National Literacy Trust have piloted a targeted model of place-based reading development through their Literacy Hubs. Piloted in three areas of low literacy (Middlesborough, Bradford and Derby) the Hubs use four pillars to deliver an improvement in reading and literacy rates in the locality which provides a useful model to replicate:

- Auditing the need and identifying local priorities and key stakeholders.
- Developing a strategy for the long-term goals and identifying the resource needed.
- Delivering a targeted marketing and information campaign matched to key demographics.
- Developing partnerships with local businesses, the VCFS, education and local authority bodies.
- Delivering a range of interventions to test different approaches to literacy development with different demographics and groups.

What people have told us

3.22 In the table below, we have summarised what people have told us about Reading, based on our desktop review of the previous consultations, our interviews and external briefings.

3.23 Our full analysis and more detailed findings are in Appendix E.

Table 3.1: Reading – what people have told us

• Feedback to the March 2021 consultation told the Council that one of the most important library services offered to respondents was browsing and borrowing books. Lack of Resources (books, newspapers) and a demand for more to be available ('better resources, including books') were main concerns. • Many interviewees have cited a need for greater book stock availability and choices (especially more copies of the most popular books), as well as a growing need for stock in different languages as Croydon's communities continue to grow and diversify.

- We have heard how extended opening hours, particularly evenings and weekends outside traditional 9-5 working hours, would enable greater access to libraries by working families (especially fathers and male carers) to have early years reading and literacy experiences with their children.

Summary of findings

Key findings

3.24 In the table below, we have summarised our key findings from this section:

Table 3.2: Reading - our key findings

- There are particular geographic areas of lower literacy and lower educational attainment in the borough and the most effective approach would involve targeted work in these areas
- There is a trend of a drop off in attainment from Foundation stage to the later Key Stages
- Many children are not benefiting from the funded early years childcare provision
- Whilst the growth in loans of digital resources may have helped to offset the impact of the reduction in hours it is not clear that these resources are being used by those who need them most

Recommendations

3.25 In the table below, we have summarised our recommendations for Phase 2:

Table 3.3: Reading - recommendations

- Reading campaign work should include a focus on school readiness to reach the families not currently accessing formal early years education.
- Reading interventions and programmes should be prioritised in areas of highest need and work needs to be done to understand the barriers to engaging in these areas.
- Further research is needed to determine the literacy and reading support required for the borough's refugee population whose needs may not be represented through the official Census statistics.
- A change in the library service model or resourcing will be needed to undertake this work as there is currently no capacity for outreach and targeted reading development

4. Health and wellbeing: what our analysis tells us

Context

4.1 The aim of the Universal Health offer is: 'To support the health and wellbeing of local people and communities through services that inform, engage and connect'.

4.2 Croydon Libraries' health offer is driven through partnership with other local bodies and groups with the libraries providing safe, accessible spaces for people to access health services. There has been significant change in the health landscape in Croydon over recent years with a strong emphasis on partnership and community leadership. There is untapped potential within the library service to play a more active role in this work.

Need in the Borough

4.3 An ageing population impacts on the demand for a range of services as people live longer with more complex needs. For example, over the last 5 years, the estimated dementia diagnosis rate for 65+ years has been increasing and has been higher than the rate in London and England for the past 2 years.

4.4 Childhood immunisation rates continue to be lower in Croydon than across London and England.

4.5 Croydon's proportion of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese is similar to the London average but it is a priority to reduce this further to reduce the risk of obesity related health conditions.

4.6 The inequality gap between life expectancy in the most and least deprived areas in Croydon is 6.2 years for females and 5.8 years for males, placing Croydon seventh and fifth highest respectively in London. (DPH report, 2022)

4.7 The impacts of Covid-19 continue to cause adverse mental health outcomes for people in the borough, particularly those from already marginalised or disadvantaged groups. (DPH report 2022).

4.8 There are a number of health inequalities between the most and least deprived wards in the borough (Selhurst and Sanderstead respectively) including prevalence of obesity, preventable deaths, emergency hospital admissions for children aged 0 to 15, low birth weight of babies and long term unemployment. (DPH report 2022).

4.9 Under the One Croydon Alliance, each locality has been given a health score using the Acorn Wellbeing type. Using this metric the South East (including the two New Addington wards) and the Central West (including Broad Green and Selhurst wards) localities had the highest number of households with health challenges.

How we are currently addressing these needs

4.10 Croydon libraries deliver a range of activities with health and wellbeing benefits. These include:

- Games clubs, knit and natter groups, befriending activity and a men's discussion group which all work to combat social isolation and promote community connection
- A Home Library offer for 150 residents unable to physically access library buildings
- Community gardening initiatives which provide opportunities for residents to meet new people, work outdoors and cultivate growing space
- Hosting health partners for delivery of vaccination clinics and health information events
- Stocking the 'Reading Well' book collections which helps citizens to better understand and manage health conditions and benefit from mood boosting fiction books.

4.11 Each of the One Croydon locality areas has a Local Community Plan which has been developed through the Local Voluntary Partnerships of residents, community groups and health and social care professionals. The plans are place based, strengths-based, outcomes-focused plans designed to tackle health inequalities in the locality. These plans then inform the delivery of commissioning, funding and community health provision and activity in each locality.

4.12 Croydon NHS Health Services published an Integrating Care in Croydon strategy (2023-28) including a commitment to open more community wellbeing hubs to expand capacity in early prevention, provide more support for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and further develop the locality based work in each of Croydon's areas.

4.13 Croydon Libraries will also be part of a new three year public health funded programme delivering universal and targeted interventions with creative and physical activities to promote mental wellbeing using the 5 ways framework. This programme will enable more health activities to be delivered in libraries, strengthen the library outreach offer and develop an evidence base for the library health offer in Croydon.

What others have done

4.14 There are many innovative models of integrated health offers in library services around the country. Merton libraries have installed health information stations in their libraries which allow visitors to take a basic health care check including BMI and blood pressure with an ancillary programme of health activity delivered in partnership with Nuffield Health.

4.15 Hillingdon Libraries have pioneered dementia inclusive design and programming into their libraries through an initial funding programme from their public health team which enabled staff training, delivery of dementia inclusive activities and engagement with the local Dementia Action Alliance and the installation of interactive Tovertafels which stimulate cognitive and social functions through digital activities.

4.16 In November 2022 Manchester City Council opened a new education and health hub in Gorton, integrating the library service with a GP surgery, job centre and adult learning service creating a one-stop-shop for local people to access health and social care services, employment support and a café.

What people have told us

4.17 In the table below, we have summarised what people have told us about Health and wellbeing, based on our desktop review of the previous consultations, our interviews and external briefings.

4.18 Our full analysis and more detailed findings are in Appendix E.

Table 4.1: Health and wellbeing – what people have told us

- Feedback to the July 2021 consultation told the Council that respondents saw libraries as a 'lifeline' that were 'important for wellbeing' and that this should be recognised.
- Croydon's library staff offer compassionate in-person support that was highly valued by consultation respondents. Residents of all ages do not want to lose access to this support in any future service changes.
- There is understood to be a significant and growing need for more mental health support across Croydon.
- Libraries also offer warm socialization spaces to people. A library is somewhere they go to be helped, or to receive signposting to wellbeing advice from other services.
- There is a growing local interest in environmental and climate-related activities, perhaps as part of any future wellbeing support offer for residents.

Summary of findings

Key findings

4.19 In the table below, we have summarised our key findings from this section:

Table 4.2: Health and wellbeing - our key findings

- There are a number of health inequalities across the borough and between demographic groups. New Addington and Broad Green consistently feature as the areas with the highest prevalence of inequality
- Community led approaches have been effective in delivering services and engaging residents and health partners to focus on local need.

- There are opportunities to deliver a health offer which allows for both universal access and targeted support through libraries. However more work needs to be done to integrate the library offer with Croydon's public health strategies and make better links with health services such as social prescribing provision.

Recommendations

4.20 In the table below, we have summarised our recommendations for Phase 2:

Table 4.3: Health and wellbeing - recommendations

- Undertake further research work to understand the intersectional health inequalities particularly in regard to ethnicity.
- Advocate for long term strategic planning for alignment and accessibility of services in new developments.
- Develop relationships with local health networks including Croydon public health, One Croydon Alliance and Local Voluntary Partnerships to embed library services across community health provision.

5. Information and digital: what our analysis tells us

Context

5.1 The aim for the Universal Offer on Information and digital is: '**To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online**'.

5.2 Universal basic digital skills are now essential to address growing inequality, financial exclusion and social isolation as services and communication become increasingly online only. Digital literacy is also crucial in the context of rising misinformation in the news and advances in AI technology. Libraries continue to be one of the most trusted sources of information and they have a key role to play in addressing these challenges.

Need in the Borough

5.3 The London Office for Technology and Innovation (LOTI), an initiative from the Mayor of London published a research report on Digital Inclusion in London in 2022. This mapped digital exclusion across London using demographic data to identify concentrations of people most at risk of digital exclusion based on 24 personas developed to represent different risk factors for digital exclusion.

5.4 The Croydon map identifies the greatest risk in the South and East of the borough with a small corner in the North West near Norbury. This correlates to risk factors associated with older people who make up a larger proportion of the population in the Southern wards and areas of the East such as Shirley.

5.5 The south of the borough is also more rural and therefore has potentially less developed infrastructure.

5.6 Croydon has more digital exclusion than all of its neighbouring boroughs with the exception of Bromley.

How we are currently addressing these needs

5.7 Across Croydon's library network there are 200 PCs available for use at a total of 2,506 PC hours per week and free Wi-Fi in all libraries. The highest usage of available time is at the Central Library, followed by Norbury and the lowest usage is at Bradmore Green

5.8 Residents can also access the online library on the library app or online discovery portal with extensive collections of eBooks/eAudio, eMagazines and eNewspapers (in 130 languages). As previously mentioned, demand for digital materials has increased and now makes up 31% of total loans.

5.9 The online library also provides access to free training courses, reference resources and learning materials for different age groups.

5.10 In 2023 the service was awarded funding from Arts Council England (ACE) to deliver Connect Croydon, a three year partnership programme delivered with Clear Community Web (CCW) to deliver a public programme of digital skills events and a staff training programme to develop their skills and knowledge and improve the wider service offer for the public.

5.11 In 2023 the library service was awarded funding through the Libraries Improvement Fund to establish a Digital Discovery Space in the Central Library. This new facility will host creative digital skills programmes with a particular focus on reaching young people, delivered with partners. Residents of all ages will also be able to access the space to engage with events, exhibitions, the online library and the digital catalogues for the Croydon Museum and Archives. The area will also include a podcast studio to support creative expression and development in this format.

5.12 The Council's Digital Croydon team have produced three A4 printed 'How to Get Online' guides that cover a range of step by step internet basics such as connecting to the internet, understanding Wi-Fi, searching the web, creating social media accounts, and using Zoom. These guides have been distributed to over 1,000 digitally excluded residents via library service as well as local VCS organisations in the borough like Age UK Croydon, Croydon Voluntary Action, and Clear Community Web.

What others have done

5.13 Whilst a basic digital offer has existed in libraries for some time, recent changes exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic have inspired further innovation to deliver a targeted offer for those most in need.

5.14 Merton Libraries initiated a laptop lending scheme along with mobile broadband devices (dongles) for those who do not have access to data. The devices are loaned for up to three months and one to one support is available from library volunteers to build confidence and knowledge in using the device.

5.15 In July 2020 Newham established Digital Inclusion Hubs in their libraries. They developed this model because the libraries "represented an existing infrastructure of public buildings embedded in local communities across the borough, because residents tend to stay relatively local to where they live to access this kind of support, and because libraries were well placed to take on the role as they were already a place where a lot of digital inclusion work has happened before." (LOTI report 2022).

What people have told us

5.16 In the table below, we have summarised what people have told us about Information and digital, based on our desktop review of the previous consultations, our interviews and external briefings.

5.17 Our full analysis and more detailed findings are in Appendix E.

Table 5.1: Information and digital – what people have told us

- Responses to the March 2021 consultation highlighted that residents recognised the role of the library service in helping people in most need to 'bridge the digital divide'. One of the most important library services offered to respondents was 'Using computers' and that one of the main things that would make libraries more relevant was 'more digital resources'.
- In response to feedback on the July 2021 consultation, it was indicated that the Council would ‘incorporate’ the ‘recurring theme’ of digital support sessions into the library service’s ‘new operating model to improve services’.
- We note the supporting information accompanying the previous consultations, where the Equalities Impact Assessment recognises that adults without digital access would be disproportionately affected by any reductions in library service provision.
- Our engagement has highlighted that people are experiencing data poverty challenges locally and need access to library buildings in order to access the free Wi-Fi. Anecdotal examples were shared with us of people sat outside locked library front doors trying to access the free Wi-Fi still available from within the building during closed hours.
- People have told us there is a growing need for more translation and ESOL support, especially to support refugees and asylum seekers, including the provision of information and advice in different languages.
- Attendees at the external briefings recognised that Open+ may offer opportunities to extend opening hours further, but told us that this should not be at the expense of professional library staff. Both residents and library staff will require technical support and training to make any extended use work smoothly and with reassurance.
- Officers recognise that any retained library buildings network will require targeted investment in its internal infrastructure, including IT hardware and software.

Summary of findings

Key findings

5.18 In the table below, we have summarised our key findings from this section:

Table 5.2: Information and digital - our key findings

- There are digital exclusion risk spots highlighted in the east and south of the borough but more comprehensive local data is needed to understand the reality of the need and priorities for support.
- Partnership working models have been effective in developing the library service offer as evidenced through provision of digital skills training for staff and residents through working with CCW
- The digital offer needs to keep evolving to match the changing digital and technological landscape.

Recommendations

5.19 In the table below, we have summarised our recommendations for Phase 2:

Table 5.3: Information and digital - recommendations

- Undertake more detailed research and analysis on digital exclusion to better understand the need.
- Explore device lending programmes to better address digital exclusion and reach more widely. This might involve training and recruiting more volunteers to support.
- Explore embedding the digital inclusion principles in the programme for the new digital discovery zone – allowing for the different needs between people of different ages and demographics in the borough.

6. Culture and creativity: what our analysis tells us

Context

6.1 The aim of the Culture and Creativity Universal Offer is: '**to enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences through local libraries**'.

6.2 Libraries have increasingly become recognised as a gateway into the arts in local cultural landscapes. Libraries are often more local, accessible and welcoming spaces than traditional arts venues. As a result they do not carry the same barriers to access that can prevent people feeling at ease in galleries, theatres or other formal cultural venues. Many children and young people first encounter culture and creativity in a library setting and there is a huge opportunity for libraries to inspire and create confidence and a love for the arts and creativity throughout people's lives.

6.3 The development of culture and creativity in libraries has also been enabled by the move to place libraries development under Arts Council England's remit in 2012. This has more closely aligned library services with other arts and culture partners in regards to accessing funding and from 2018 library services have been included in the ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) programme, reflecting their strategic significance in delivering cultural and creative opportunities and experiences and for supporting the development of arts and culture in the country. There are now 16 library services with NPO status with culture and creativity embedded in their work (including LB Merton).

6.4 The cost of living crisis has also limited the amount of recreational and leisure spending many households are able to make, creating further barriers to accessing cultural experiences. A strong, affordable cultural offer delivered through libraries can ensure that everyone is able to benefit from arts and culture and to help reduce inequality in this area.

Need in the Borough

6.5 Creative opportunities for young people is a key priority within Croydon's cultural strategy and for the Council as a whole. This has also been embedded in new statutory guidance from DCMS (Sept 2023) on provision of services to support the wellbeing of young people which states that local authorities must provide or enable: "A sufficient quantity of educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being and sufficient facilities for such activities and a sufficient quantity of recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities"

6.6 In 2019 Croydon Council was successful in bidding for the London Borough of Culture award to deliver a year long programme of activity intended to bring a lasting legacy of creative opportunity and sector development for people in Croydon. This Is Croydon is being delivered between April 2023 and March 2024 with over 70 events and projects taking place across the borough and over 40 commissioned partners.

6.7 Learning from cultural programme delivery and development in 2023 includes:

- There is a disparity of cultural infrastructure in the borough with most venues and activity situated in Central Croydon and South Norwood.
- Audience behaviours have changed significantly following the Covid-19 pandemic and it is more challenging and resource intensive for the sector to market events and reach new audiences.
- There is a lack of financial resilience in the sector, particularly for the smaller organisations who need to invest significant staff time and resource on fundraising and development.
- There is a development need amongst the grass roots and smaller organisations for fundraising, marketing and evaluation support and clarity and knowledge of practical processes to put on events and activate spaces.
- It has been more challenging to attract and retain volunteers and this has had an adverse impact on capacity in the smaller organisations to continue delivering work and to remain sustainable.

How we are currently addressing these needs

6.8 Croydon Libraries deliver the culture offer primarily through talks and performance events on an ad hoc basis. Financial restrictions on spending have limited the ability of the service to programme or seek grant funding for cultural projects without matched resource. The library buildings are also ill equipped to host a cultural programme with limited events or exhibition space.

6.9 In addition to the 13 libraries, the Council's cultural offer also includes the Museum of Croydon and Croydon Archives which all sit within the Croydon Clocktower building. These services deliver exhibitions and events programmes directly delivered and through partnership with other groups. They also deliver skills workshops for cultural and community partners and an outreach offer with handling collections, reminiscence and learning activities. However budget reductions in recent years have also limited the opening times and operation of the museum services.

6.10 The David Lean cinema is also situated in the Clocktower building, delivering an extensive programme of art house and independent film screenings, relaxed showings and talks.

6.11 This Is Croydon, the Croydon London Borough of Culture programme is testing new ways of delivering creative programmes in the borough and generating insight into audiences, spaces and methods of engaging residents with culture and creativity.

6.12 Within the libraries this has included creating a gallery space at Thornton Heath Library to host Constable's The Cornfield as part of the National Gallery touring programme and delivering an evening of discussion with LGBTQ+ writers at Purley Library in partnership with Bold Mellon, as a companion event to their Queer Joy exhibition.

What others have done

6.13 Libraries Unlimited which operates 54 libraries across Devon and Torbay are an Arts Council NPO, now receiving £700k funding. Projects delivered under this programme have included the A to Z of creative wellbeing, an online portal showcasing every day creative acts, writers in residence programmes and touring film festivals.

6.14 There have also been a number of library refurbishments in recent years which have successfully embedded the cultural and creative offer in the library design. These include the Storyhouse in Chester which opened in 2017 and incorporates the library with a theatre, independent cinema, community cultural space and a restaurant and the Library at Willesden Green which opened in 2015 with an integrated professional art gallery, performance space, museum and archives, heritage exhibition space, classroom and a flexible design to allow for a range of dance, performance, promenade and aerial arts to take place in the main library areas.

What people have told us

6.15 In the table below, we have summarised what people have told us about culture and creativity, based on our desktop review of the previous consultations, our interviews and external briefings.

6.16 Our full analysis and more detailed findings are in Appendix E.

Table 6.1: Culture and creativity – what people have told us

- Responses to the March 2021 consultation told the Council that one of the most important library services offered to respondents were 'Rhymetimes / children's activities'. Respondents also told the Council that one of the most important things missing from the current service offer and would help make libraries more relevant were more 'Activities (‘Improved and additional activities for all’)' and that the promotion of activities could be improved.
- In response to feedback on the July 2021 consultation, it was indicated that the Council would ‘incorporate’ the ‘recurring theme’ of better publicity about activities into the library service’s ‘new operating model to improve services’.
- There is understood to be a growing need for access to free (or highly affordable) spaces for various community groups, and people, to 'do their own thing'.
- Officers recognise that any retained library buildings network will require targeted investment in its internal infrastructure, including the activity spaces and physical fabric to enable greater access and use of buildings (e.g. for security access and/or keyholder permissions to get into rooms).
- We were told that any new service offer should not take a 'one size fits all' approach across Croydon and must have locally tailored elements. This could include offering a revised programme of enriching cultural activities and events that reflect the local communities living in proximity to each library branch.

Summary of findings

Key findings

6.17 In the table below, we have summarised our key findings from this section:

Table 6.2: Culture and creativity - our key findings

- There is a geographic disparity in cultural infrastructure with the south and east of the borough particularly underserved.
- Libraries can play a supporting role within the cultural ecosystem by partnering with grassroots and smaller cultural organisations to build their skills and ability to reach audiences.
- There is an established audience for events in libraries but the current condition and design of the library buildings limits the possibilities.

Recommendations

6.18 In the table below, we have summarised our recommendations for Phase 2:

Table 6.3: Culture and creativity - recommendations

- Detailed audience research and engagement work undertaken across the borough to better understand demand and need.
- Capital libraries investment undertaken to increase facilities and capacity for events and cultural programmes to be delivered.
- Libraries should actively engage with the cultural network and legacy groups emerging from This Is Croydon to build relationships and opportunities to develop the culture offer.

7. Employment and learning: what our analysis tells us

Context

7.1 Employment and Learning services are not recognised by Libraries Connected as a distinct Universal Offer theme, though aspects of it sit elsewhere, particularly Information and Digital. That said, the provision of learning opportunities was central to the founding intent behind public libraries, and the role of libraries continues to be highly valued, particularly for lifelong learning.

7.2 Whilst formal employment and learning programmes sit with specialist providers, libraries have a contribution to make within a wider offer. Many library services deliver focussed employment support such as job clubs, CV writing workshops and mentoring and through partnerships with job centres and other employability services.

7.3 The focus on this section is on employment and skills related to employability rather than general skills and learning covered elsewhere in this report.

Need in the Borough

7.4 The proportion of out of work claimants is falling in Croydon but is still higher than the regional and national averages. The job density figure for Croydon is 0.58 (2021). The desired rate would be 1.00. The Croydon rate is still much lower than London (1.02) and Great Britain (0.85)

7.5 Latest figures (2021-22) show that three quarters (77.3%) of Croydon residents aged 16-64 years are in employment. This is a slightly lower proportion than in London and nationally.

7.6 Croydon has an average score of 0.136 for the income domain, which places it as the 97th most deprived local authority out of the 317 lower tier authority districts in England or 73rd out of 151 upper tier authorities. Croydon is ranked 18th most deprived out of 33 London boroughs; 41 LSOAs out of the 220 LSOAs in the borough (18.6%) are in the top 20% most deprived LSOAs in the country. These deprived areas are mainly in the north and east of the borough. One neighbourhood area in the ward of West Thornton is in the top 5% most deprived areas in the country.

7.7 The average score for the Employment domain was 0.092, placing Croydon as the 143rd most deprived LSOA out of the 317 lower tier districts or 87th out of 151 upper tier districts. Croydon is 15th most deprived out of 33 London boroughs.

7.8 Overall educational attainment in the borough is below London averages and many young people travel outside of the borough to access higher and further education.

7.9 The Council is undertaking economic analysis research to gain a current insight into the opportunities and challenges in the sector which continues to be in recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.10 Croydon has historically been known for having a strong retail sector though this has declined post Covid. As the employment created through retail is often lower paid with fewer opportunities for progression and a lack of diversity in senior management, there is an opportunity to develop other sectors in the local economy to generate better quality roles in the borough as part of the pandemic recovery.

7.11 This includes positioning Croydon as an employment and business hub between London to the north and to the counties to the South, including the economic growth around Gatwick Airport.

7.12 Croydon's universal credit and unemployment rates are amongst the highest across south London and there is perceived to be a negative cycle of few opportunities in the borough leading more people to look elsewhere in the city and the South.

7.13 Rates of unemployment are higher in the north and east of Croydon than the south with particular densities around Thornton Heath, New Addington and Old Coulsdon.

7.14 Workspace providers in the borough are reporting 80-90% occupancy but companies are using facilities in different ways and looking more at meeting space and agile work/home learning hybrids.

7.15 Development trends in Croydon are generating more transient populations with a high volume of build to rent housing targeting young professionals. The appeal of relatively affordable housing compared to other areas of London and good transport links into central London are part of this attraction.

7.16 Croydon's cultural vibrancy and creative activity and enterprise is also a strategic attraction for the creative industries and young professionals more generally and this is a priority area for the Council to develop further.

How we are currently addressing these needs

7.17 Research commissioned by Arts Council England in 2022 describes how England's public library services deliver a unique employment support offer through three strands: Human help, Digital and learning resources and a Desk-work environment. The report found that 100% of libraries deliver to these options in some way with 65% offering CV and application support and job clubs and 46% offering job clubs.

7.18 Croydon libraries delivers human help through staff support for people to get online, search for jobs and develop basic digital skills and a volunteering scheme which enables people to gain experience in the workplace.

7.19 Digital and learning resources are available through free to use public PCs, Wi-Fi, digital skills programmes and access to online training resources through the digital library.

7.20 A desk-work environment is provided through dedicated spaces for quiet computer use and the provision of computers in children's libraries to provide a safe space and activity for children while their parents and carers look for work online.

7.21 Croydon libraries also previously delivered the British Library programme supporting start-ups in London Libraries (SILL). A project officer provided mentoring and IP support, and workshops were delivered in the library for people looking to set up their own businesses. The Council currently has grant funding to restart this programme based at the Central Library.

7.22 Job Centre Plus are looking to establish a youth hub in the borough to support young people to develop job skills and find employment through job clubs and employment support officers.

7.23 Croydon Works is a free job brokerage service which targets those furthest away from employment. The service is successful in placing over 200 people with London Living Wage employment every year with a current focus on health, care and construction roles.

7.24 The Council's adult learning provider CALAT are collocated with the libraries in the central Croydon Clocktower campus and New Addington. The service provides a broad adult learning offer with particular impact in ESOL, community and family learning programmes. The service is currently in transition and looking at focussing on entry level 1 and 2 key skills provision and reviewing the reach across the borough outside the two core learning hubs in central Croydon and Thornton Heath.

7.25 The Council's economic development programmes include Start up, Scale up which is supporting SMEs in brough to focus on innovation and growth and the new Creative Digital Lab opened in 2023 with Start Up Croydon to support creative enterprises in the borough.

7.26 Covid recovery is focussed primarily on supporting businesses in Croydon town centre where the previously strong retail offer has been adversely impacted by changes in behaviour following the pandemic. This work will help inform a new strategy for Croydon town centre improving and diversifying the offer for residents to increase footfall and investment.

7.27 The Shared Prosperity grant funding programme is also delivering local business support and regeneration across the borough with a particular focus on Selsdon, Purley, Thornton Heath and West Croydon.

What others have done

7.28 Between 2016 and 2023 Leicestershire Libraries were involved in delivering the GREAT project funded by National Lottery and EU funds to support families into employment, education and training through a partnership of eleven local and national specialist organisations. The programme reached 901 participants who were disadvantaged and/or long term unemployed and who received support from an employment support officer and access to job clubs and employment support programmes in the local libraries.

7.29 The partnership approach created a holistic support offer for participants through specialist employment and skills support and an enabling, accessible environment in the libraries.

7.30 Tower Hamlets council remodelled their library service to foreground education and integrate classrooms and learning provision with library services, relaunching the libraries as Idea Stores in 2002. This programme invested in the library buildings and relocated some libraries to areas of higher footfall with sites remodelled to integrate education, employment and cultural programmes alongside a traditional library offer.

What people have told us

7.31 In the table below, we have summarised what people have told us about Employment and learning, based on our desktop review of the previous consultations, our interviews and external briefings.

7.32 Our full analysis and more detailed findings are in Appendix E.

Table 7.1: Employment and learning – what people have told us

- Feedback to the March 2021 consultation told the Council that one of the most important library services offered to respondents was 'Space to work or research'.
- There is understood to be a growing need for safe out of hours study space for students. There are also growing concerns locally at the post-Covid legacy and its unknown longer-term impact in years to come on the borough's current generation of under 18 year olds.
- There are also a number of opportunities to be explored for the library service's co-location, partnering or integrating the library service with other services and voluntary sector organisations, including (but not limited to) CALAT.

Summary of findings

Key findings

7.33 In the table below, we have summarised our key findings from this section:

Table 7.2: Employment and learning - our key findings

- There is a need for more targeted support for young people to develop skills and access employment.
- There are particular areas of need within the borough to target support and resource towards addressing unemployment.
- Some funding is available through grants and development schemes to support employment and economic development and there is an opportunity for the library service to play a more active role in these projects.

Recommendations

7.34 In the table below, we have summarised our recommendations for Phase 2:

Table 7.3: Employment and learning - recommendations

- To explore a joined up approach with CALAT to provide employment support, advice and training
- To link with the Job Centre Plus youth employment support hub to develop the library support offer for young people in parallel with other services and develop referral pathways
- To make links with town and district centre regeneration programmes to explore opportunities to embed library services within new developments and programmes
- To explore other successful models of integrating libraries, learning and employment services such as the Idea Stores

8. Engagement findings so far

Introduction

8.1 In Chapters 3 to 7 we reported highlights of the engagement findings most relevant to the Universal Library Offers. In Chapter 8 we expand on what people have told us about Croydon's library service through our desktop review of the findings from the previous public consultation exercises held by the Council in 2021, the interviews and the external briefings.

8.2 We have summarised our findings in the tables below. Our full analysis and more detailed findings are included in Appendix E.

2021 consultations summary

Key findings

8.3 In the tables below, we have summarised the key findings from our desktop review of the existing analyses of the two consultation exercises in March and July.

Table 8.1: Public consultation March 2021 (Phase 1)

- The four most important library services to respondents were: 'browsing and borrowing books; 'Rhymetimes/children's activities'; 'Space to work or research' and 'Using computers'.
- The three most important things that respondents felt were missing were: Resources (books, newspapers); Activities ('Improved and additional activities for all'), and Opening Hours ('Lack of evening & weekend opening hours').
- Many respondents pointed to the importance of the library service helping to reach the digitally excluded.
- Additional suggestions from respondents included: more books; refreshments; longer opening hours; improved promotion of activities; and contactless/card payment.
- Respondents said the following would make libraries more relevant: 'more comfortable modern spaces', 'better resources including books', 'more digital resources', 'a café', 'better local promotion and more activities'.
- The quantity of responses (2,510), indicated the strength of local respondent feeling.

Table 8.2: Public consultation July 2021 (Phase 2)

- There was a significant drop-off in response rate from the March consultation (1,411 responses), indicating possible consultation fatigue and cynicism about the process.
- Of those responding to the options, 56% agreed, or strongly agreed with the option to reduce library hours by 21%; 37% disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

- 70% disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the option to outsource the management of all 13 libraries
- 58% disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the option for five community run libraries and reduced opening hours for eight libraries.
- The Council committed to 'incorporate' the 'recurring themes' of better publicity about opening hours and activities; digital support sessions and more volunteering to support libraries into the library service's 'new operating model to improve services'.
- Respondents were concerned about: the comprehensibility of the options presented for consultation and the supporting information; Covid lockdown closures being permanent; lack of recognition by the Council of the role of libraries as a 'lifeline' that were 'important for wellbeing' locally.
- The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies that specific user groups (especially families with young children; adults without digital access; unemployed people; seniors, and school children) were likely to be disproportionately affected by any reductions to Croydon's library service offer.

Autumn 2023 external briefings – summary of responses

8.4 Short briefings were arranged for library friends' groups and other organisations who had been actively involved in the consultations in 2021. On the whole, people expressed **unhappiness** and **frustration** at the impact of moving to part-time opening, seen by some as '**disastrous**'. There was a clear understanding that the impact of the changes was **far worse than the nominal 21%** reduction in hours proposed, given how poorly Open+ and extending volunteering were perceived to have worked so far.

8.5 The importance of reviewing the opening hours was highlighted with various **examples of parents, young children and people with traditional 9-5 working hours being unable to access libraries**. Several people told us how the lack of '**opening on a Saturday'** was **an issue**, as well as a lack of **evenings** and **after school**. We even heard reports of **people sitting outside libraries on closed days trying to access free Wi-Fi**.

8.6 There was a majority feeling amongst the groups that there had been a 'one size fits all' approach adopted for the whole service, which didn't work in Croydon. One person told us there was a need for local '**bespokeness'** in the library offer.

8.7 We also heard how perceived **miscommunication** and **poor signage** had confused some residents. There were several anecdotes shared with us of **people didn't understand 'the hours the library was open'**, thought their local library had completely closed and simply 'don't understand' why their library was now open part-time. One person stated that the usage figures showing a recent decline in library usage 'doesn't surprise me'.

8.8 Some people felt the cuts to the service, understood to have driven the requirement for such significant changes, were '**short-sighted'**. One person asked whether 'the savings have now been achieved once and for all?'. Another individual expressed their frustration at having observed local politicians 'celebrating at local events' without acknowledging the cuts to the library service, and at the likelihood of further library building closures being stated unofficially to members of the public.

8.9 A number of people described how residents 'are **struggling'** and '**need more help'**. A handful of people **rued the loss of 'community and family space'**, and that **access to Wi-Fi and computers** had been taken away from '**those who need it most'** – one person felt that access had been especially reduced for '**deprived'** areas in Croydon.

8.10 People described to us how they perceived **the library workforce to be 'spread'** across the borough. Several individuals **queried the financial logic** of 'getting rid of staff, then putting in a machine, then paying a security guard', telling us that 'there should be a librarian, not a security guard' in place. A number of people perceived there were library service **volunteer recruitment and retention challenges** in Croydon.

8.11 There were some **individual views** (a minority) where **the change had had a positive impact**. A handful of people told us they felt their local library was 'thriving' or similar, and that 'things were picking up' after taking a little while for residents to 'become familiar with the new hours'. One person told us they felt 'the online system for loans' was 'working quite well'.

Staff 'idea generation' workshops

Our approach

Croydon library service staff were invited to participate in three 'idea generation' workshops. The workshops were intended to offer staff an opportunity to take stock of the impact of previous changes to the library service and to contribute their ideas to help shape the future service.

What good looks like

8.12 Staff told us that Croydon's libraries need to be accessible, providing free services in comfortable, warm and safe environments that have a welcoming atmosphere and 'buzz'. The library buildings should feel modern and be well embedded within their communities. Internally, they must be 'well organised', with plenty of spaces set out for different activities and user groups. The libraries need to be 'well resourced', with 'knowledgeable' and 'friendly' staff on hand to provide clear advice and support to people about what is on offer – reading, especially, should be celebrated, and the IT infrastructure throughout must be 'reliable'.

Gap analysis: how far is our service from 'good'?

8.13 Staff shared their thoughts on how far they felt the current service was from 'good', using a 'balanced scorecard' approach focused on four core perspectives – *customer, processes, staffing, finances* – plus '*anything else'* that felt was key.

8.14 *Customer*: staff told us there is a need for more book stock. We heard how opening hours and staffing levels needed overhauling in order to help meet shifting customer expectations, including people experiencing homelessness, IT support and more study space. The internal fabric of buildings and IT infrastructure require investment. There are also pockets of challenging customer behaviour to be managed.

8.15 *Processes*: staff told us of various IT infrastructure and reliability issues, including IT support, photocopier issues and frustrations at a lack of card payment options. Customers expect support with other public services that staff are not trained for. Inflexible policies are frustrating staff, particularly opening hours, recruitment and Internet usage.

8.16 *Staffing*: staff told us that opening hours, staffing levels and a perceived 'reliance on their good will' were of particular concern and required addressing urgently. Staff are loaded with 'additional responsibilities' and are frustrated at not being able to provide continuity at some sites. Staff perceive they are doing well in spite of the challenges they face but understand they could do more if there were more resources available.

8.17 *Finances*: staff are extremely frustrated at the lack of funding available for them to do a good job, including available stock, events and activities, physical fabric and materials.

8.18 *Anything else*: staff particularly referred to the 'state' of the physical fabric in libraries and the various accessibility issues, including the need for improvements to the comfort of buildings. The combination of all these challenges was affecting the morale of a number of staff.

Suggestions and ideas for change

8.19 Staff were invited to offer their suggestions and ideas for change for the future library service offer.

Table 8.3: Staff workshops – ideas for change

Ideas for change
• Appearance and physical fabric of libraries: including improved accessibility, comfort, and physical fabric repairs. • Career development: more opportunities for staff redeployment and secondment. • Events – revised offer: including social media use and marketing approach. • Funding – new approaches: fundraising and ideas for income generation. • IT: improved infrastructure reliability; up to date payment systems. • Location of libraries: accessibility improvements. • Opening hours: to be overhauled; reducing branches to expand staffed hours. • Outreach: explore the potential to reach more respondents. • Safety and security: improve accessibility; equipment and security reliability.

Ideas for change
• Staffing: improve job security, development, training and progression; support staff morale; communication improvements; working patterns and staffing levels. • Stock: more copies of popular stock; staff input into stock choices. • Van deliveries: quicker and more frequent deliveries to library branches.

The need for more detailed consultation

8.20 **The views summarised above are expanded upon in Appendix E.**

8.21 This is just the start of the engagement process. Extensive detailed conversations will be needed with the public, library friends groups and other interested organisations and staff will continue to be engaged.

8.22 We particularly also want to reach residents who are not currently library users to understand their priorities, needs and barriers to access.

8.23 Plans for consultation are set out at the end of this report.

9. What we've found out about our library service and what's gone wrong

What's driving change

9.1 The Council always intended to undertake a review of the library service model to assess how well it was working following the decision to reduce opening hours. In the time since, the service has received feedback from residents that they are unhappy with the opening hours and service provision.

9.2 The library service have also found that the current model is not sustainable during periods of staff absence and library and archives service points have unfortunately had to close to the public at times due to insufficient staffing.

9.3 The nature of the Council's financial position also means that it is not able to maintain so many buildings which aren't well used. The ongoing pressure on Council budgets necessitates that it gets the maximum usage out of the buildings which are retained to provide services for the public.

9.4 The current library service model does not make best use of the 13 library buildings with most only open to the public two to three days a week. Whilst usage of the libraries is increasing, it is still low when compared with other library services and as a proportion of the population.

9.5 The planned mitigations for reducing opening hours have had a disappointing impact. Open+ self-service access was introduced to two library sites in May and October 2023 and whilst it is still a relatively new service model for Croydon, over the first five months only 4% of visits to Selsdon Library have been during self service access days. However usage figures are now gradually rising at both sites.

9.6 Increased partnership working and use of volunteers were also planned mitigations for a reduction in library opening hours. However the service has struggled to recruit and retain volunteers particularly to cover key roles and shifts including lunchtime support in the smaller library branches. Partnerships have helped to bring activity to the libraries but the service has not been able to develop a model which would increase opening hours.

9.7 The current service model also does not create any capacity for outreach or marketing and engagement to let residents know about the library offer and opening times. Some residents are unclear when the libraries are open, what's available and are less likely to visit and use services as a result.

9.8 Our library usage data indicates that there is a loyal cohort of library users who are committed to borrowing items from the library and have adapted their visiting patterns to attend on open days. However the service cannot be sustained without reaching more people and would be failing in its duty to enable as many residents as possible, and particularly those with the greatest need, to benefit from the library service offer.

What needs are we meeting?

9.9 The current model does provide a geographic spread of local library buildings with a basic core service available to people around the borough at least two days a week providing books, computers, Wi-Fi, information services and events.

9.10 All libraries are also able to deliver at least one weekly activity for children aged under 5 and their carers, which is a popular aspect of the service.

9.11 Multiple reading groups are also offered at different locations, days and times supporting delivery of reading development and engagement with a broad range of texts.

What needs aren't we meeting?

9.12 There are groups for whom the current opening hours prevent their accessing services when and where they need them, particularly working people and working families and students who need space to work, especially during exam periods. For these groups the limited Saturday and lack of evening openings is a barrier.

9.13 The opening hours also currently limit access for children to visit after school on closed days when the library could be a safe place to stop and study before going home or for younger children to come with carers for shared reading time.

9.14 There are also residents in pockets of the borough who are underrepresented in our usage figures including communities in estates such as Shrublands and Tollers where there are no library services in the immediate vicinity and the service does not have the resource to deliver an outreach offer.

9.15 The current library buildings limit the capacity of the service to deliver a comprehensive universal offer programme through fixed layouts, a lack of accessible facilities, no exhibition space and few event spaces or rooms for hire to collocate services together. We are therefore unable to deliver on the full potential of the library services to meet local needs for health information, health improvement activity, digital support and creative activity.

9.16 The libraries are also generally not well located for the local population they serve which also presents a barrier to access and meeting need within the locality.

9.17 It is challenging to reach people and raise awareness of the library service offer without any dedicated marketing and engagement resource.

9.18 The current model, including the staff capacity, fixed library locations and design is orientated towards a more traditional library service. This does not create capacity for the service offer to adapt to population changes in the borough, shifting demand or need.

How efficient and effective the service is

9.19 The comparative data for library services in England has been disrupted in recent years by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and a reduction in the number of authorities reporting. The most recent available datasets provided by CIPFA take data from 2021-2022 and are therefore flawed as a benchmark. The next datasets for 2022 to 2023 will provide a much more accurate picture and are expected to be published in early 2024.

9.20 Croydon's ranking position on standard performance measures in these years is very poor, reflecting the similarly low level of spending in comparison with other London Boroughs. The Council's performance was in the bottom decile (in 28th place out of 30) for loans both in 2019/20 (before the pandemic) and in 2021/22 as services emerged from the pandemic. The number of visits were nearly as low compared with others.

Table 9.1: CIPFA comparative ranking information – 2019-2022

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
No of loans per 1000 population	28th out of 30	21st out of 25	17th out of 18
No of visits per 1000 population	24th out of 30	23rd out of 23	15th out of 16

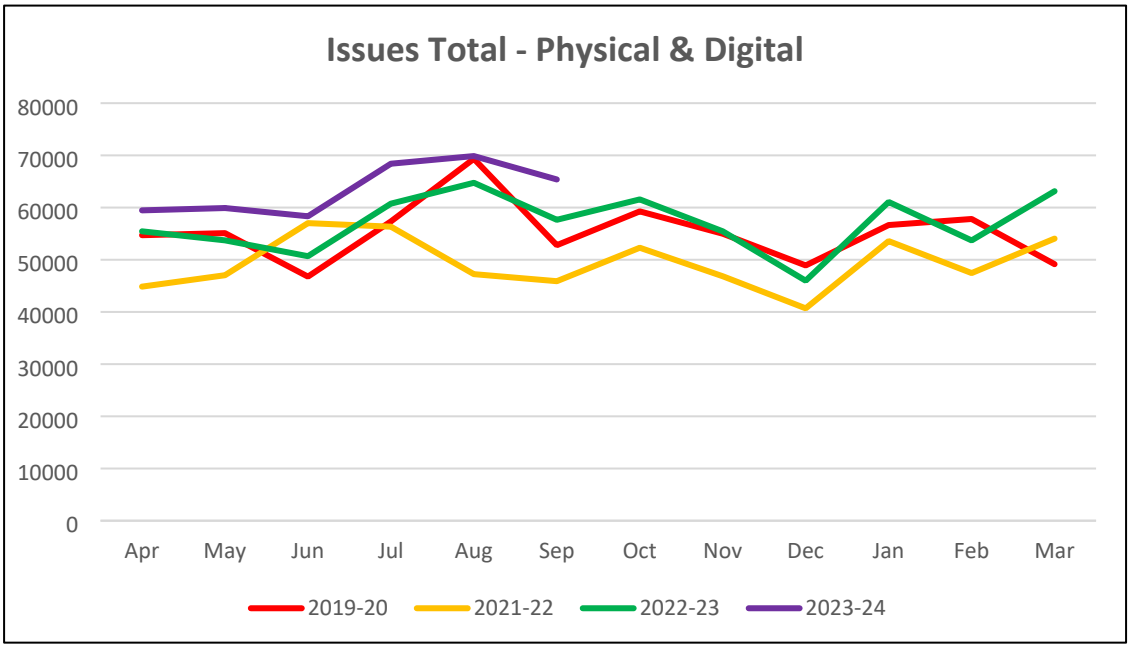
Recent trends in Croydon's performance

9.21 Like most library services, the pandemic had a severe impact on library usage. The comparisons above suggest that the poor performance of Croydon's service in the past has remained poor after the pandemic.

9.22 Most of Croydon's performance figures show a slow and, in some instances, stalling recovery from the pandemic and it is likely that Croydon's recovery has been slower than others' due to the severity of the reduction in opening hours in Croydon in 2022.

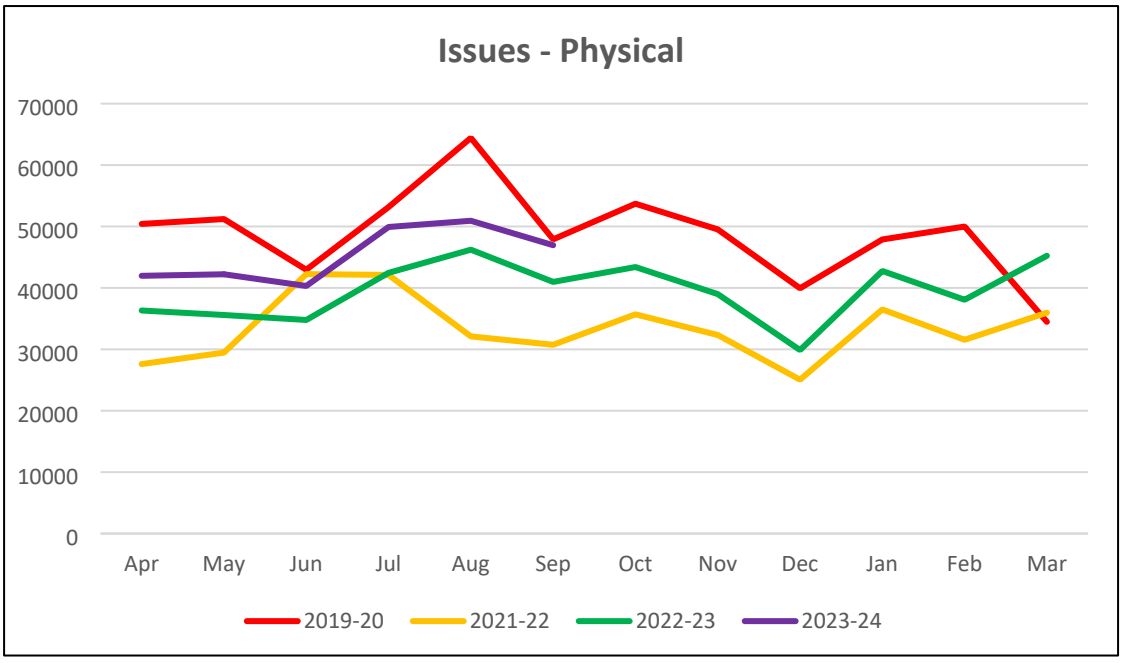
9.23 There is one exception to this pattern. **The total number of loans of books and other materials has actually risen by 13% for the first six months of this year compared with the first six months in 2019/20** (ie in a period before the pandemic).

Figure 9.1: trends in issues of books and other materials



9.24 This is the result of two trends. First, the number of physical issues has recovered steadily since the pandemic and for the first six months of 2023/24 has reached 88% of the level for the same period in 2019/20.

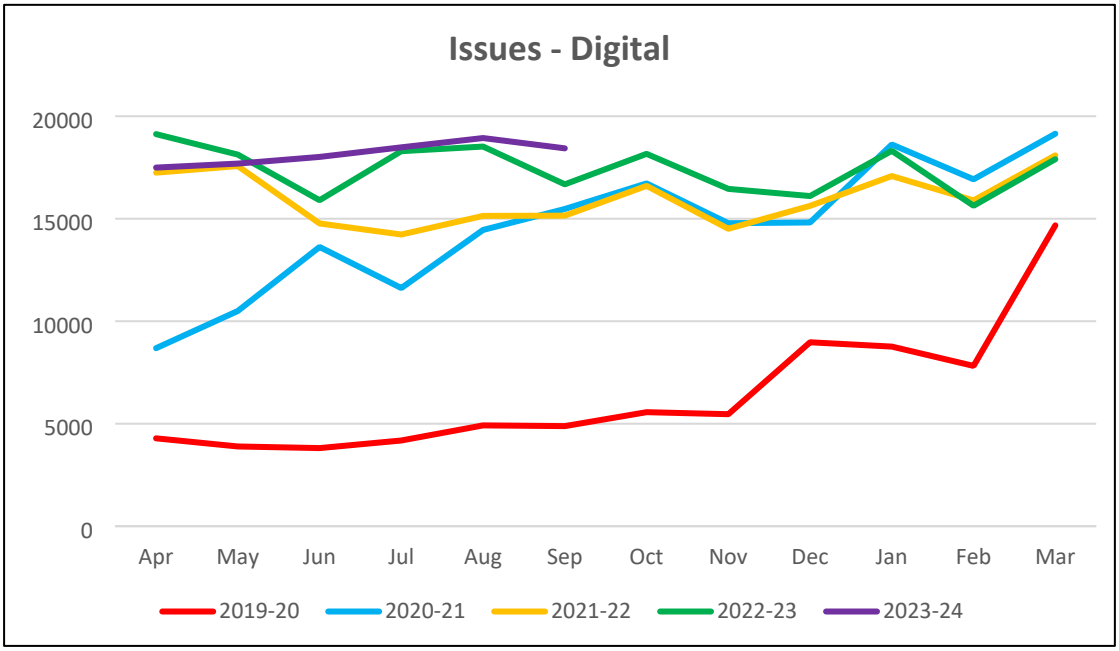
Figure 9.2: trends in issues of physical books and materials



9.25 The trend driving the overall increase in issues is **a dramatic rise since the pandemic in the number of digital issues which now make up 29% of total issues[2].** Digital issues rose rapidly during the lockdowns and have steadily grown.

[2] For the period of the first six months of 2023/24.

Figure 9.3: the trend in issues of digital books and materials



9.26 This is very encouraging and reflects the benefits brought by the library service joining The Libraries Consortium (TLC) in 2019. Through the apps provided by TLC, users can now borrow digital books and material from the entire stock of the other TLC member authorities.

9.27 The scale of the shift towards digital books and materials might suggest that the library building is becoming a less important part of library usage. However, it may be that the balance between physical and digital books in library usage is simply mirroring shifts in the retail market. After a surge in eBooks and audiobook sales over the last decade it appears that they may have settled (even if temporarily) at a level of just under a third. One market report suggests that digital books had a share of about 29% in 2022[3] (ie a similar level as the share of digital books and materials in Croydon's library service).

9.28 It is not yet clear what has driven this shift in borrowing patterns, eg:

- Have users who are determined to borrow physical books and other materials simply adjusted the timing of their visits to fit within the reduced opening hours?
- Have users who would have preferred physical items, but who can no longer fit in a visit, resorted to digital items instead?
- Have users of physical items chosen to switch to digital items as they prefer them *or* are digital users *new* users?

9.29 **Despite this encouraging increase in total issues since the pandemic, it is worth bearing in mind that Croydon's comparative performance in the number of issues per head of population has been very low.** The release of CIPFA's comparative data for 2022/23 will show whether there has been much, if any, change in Croydon's position in the league table.

[3] Nielsen BookData: Books & Consumers Monthly Survey, April 2023

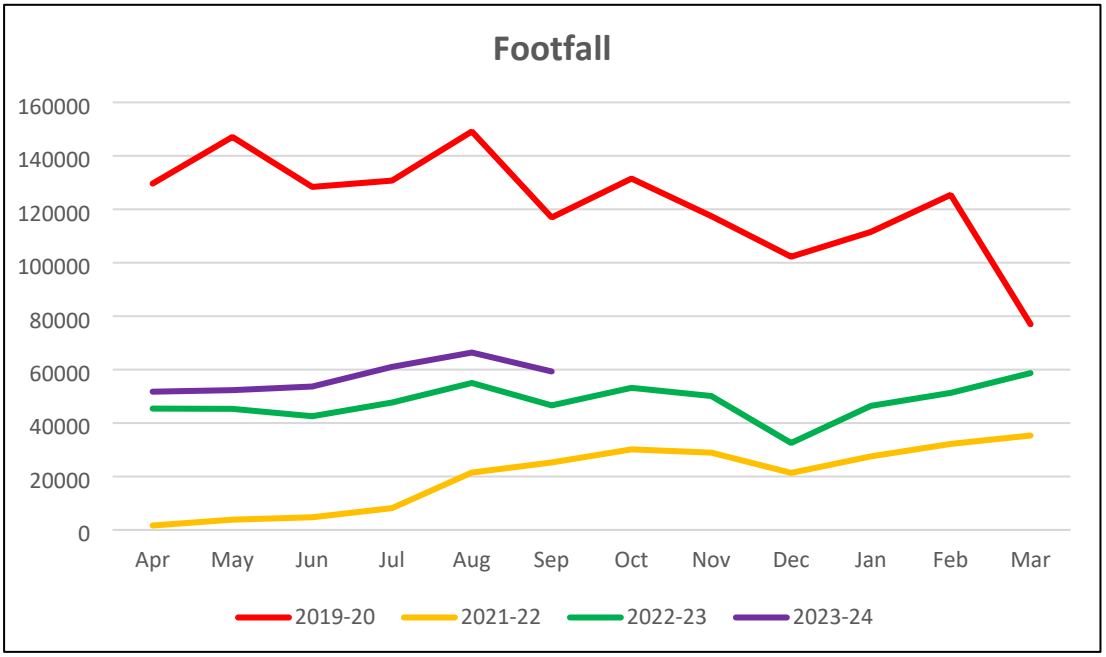
9.30 Reading remains a core part of the role of the library service, but the other Universal Offers described in earlier chapters illustrate the much wider role that libraries play, eg:

- Supporting health and wellbeing and reducing social isolation.
- Providing opportunities to enjoy cultural experiences.
- Giving people access to the digital world.
- Supporting learning and providing study space for young people.
- Providing help for job search and applications.
- Supporting community resilience and cohesion.

9.31 Two performance indicators can help to inform whether the library service is effective in supporting the full range of universal offers: how many people visit the library and how many are 'active users' (either as borrowers and/or users of IT).

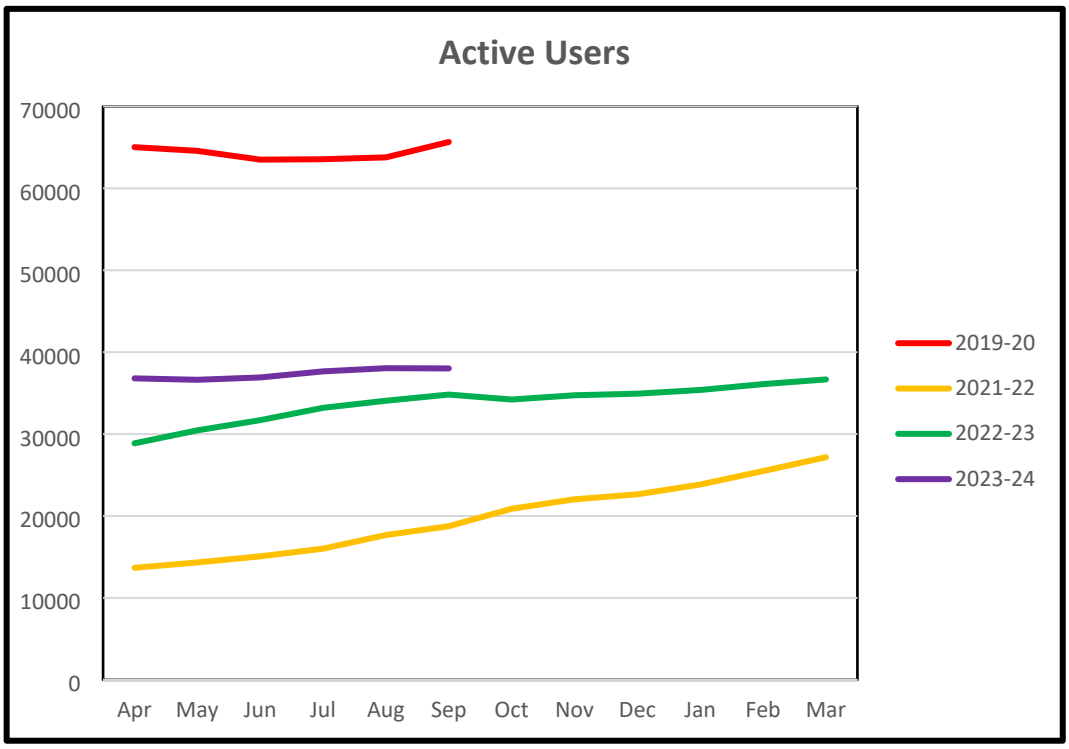
9.32 First, **the footfall into the libraries has more than halved since the pandemic and remains stubbornly low**. Footfall for the first six months of 2023/24 is only 43% of the level for the same period in 2019/20.

Figure 9.4: the trend in footfall in libraries



9.33 **Second, the number of 'active users' has nearly halved compared with pre-pandemic levels and for the month of June 2023 it remains only 58% of the level for the same month in 2019.**

Figure 9.5: the trend in active users of the library service



9.34 The definition of 'active user' is a library member who has used their library card *at least once* in the preceding 12 months to borrow, renew, or request items, or use a library computer, so it includes people who use a library several times a week and people who have used it just once in the past year.

9.35 **In September 2023 there were 38,016 active users, ie fewer than 10% of the population of the borough[4] used their library card for borrowing books and other materials or using a PC or printing and scanning at least once in the previous 12 months.** It should be noted that people can visit a library to browse, sit and read, use study space and Wi-Fi or attend an event without using their library card, but 'active user' remains an important indicator.

9.36 Other indicators are equally telling for the first six months of 2023/24 compared with 2019/20:

- The number of hours of PC use has more than halved at 37%. This has risen from 26% for the same period in 2022/23.
- The number of attendances at events has more than halved at 46%. This has risen from 27% for the same period in 2022/23.

[4] Croydon's population was approximately 390,800 residents according to the ONS Census 2021. Source: 'Croydon Borough Profile June 2023', Croydon Council.

9.37 For both indicators this has been a positive trend, but it is probable they will begin to plateau as there are now only very limited hours in which people can access PCs and attend events. This is reflected in the feedback we have received which highlights the difficulty faced by users unable to access PCs and Wi-Fi for most of the week and the problems in scheduling more activities within just two or three days of opening.

A summary of what we have found

9.38 The pandemic disrupted the ability of the library service to provide a full offer of services to the public. In the period since, that service has been severely impacted by the decision to reduce opening hours to two or three days a week for 11 of the borough's 13 libraries.

9.39 **On one measure, the issue of all books and other materials, the service has increased slightly since before the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours, albeit against a low base of usage pre pandemic and when benchmarked against neighbours.** That increase has been driven by a greater take-up of digital books and materials to the point where they represent nearly a third of all issues. Digital issues do not depend on the opening hours of libraries.

9.40 **For all the library service's other functions which do rely on library opening hours, the combined effect of the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours has been devastating**. Visits have more than halved, active usage (including borrowing and using PCs) has nearly halved and PC usage and attendances at events have more than halved.

9.41 The indicators for PC usage and event attendance are improving for now, but this trend is likely to be 'capped' by the limited opening hours and stretched staff capacity. The other main indicators, including borrowing, visits and active usage are plateauing.

9.42 **What we do not yet know are the individual impacts of the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours**. Once the latest comparative performance data is published by CIPFA, we will be able to see the rate at which the performance of other authorities has recovered since the pandemic. This will then allow us to judge better the particular impact of the reduction in opening hours.

9.43 **In the meantime, the testimony of community groups, library staff and the feedback to staff from users has been clear: the reduction in staffed opening hours across the network has had a serious impact on the service and those who have relied on it.**

9.44 This will have had a serious adverse effect on many people's ability to take part in the digital world; on their health and wellbeing; on their participation in cultural life; and on their participation in the labour market. It will also have weakened people's sense of community.

9.45 **Even more seriously, the reduction in opening hours and stretched staff capacity hampers the ability of the library service to reach the people and communities who need it most and the future generation for whom a thriving library service is a passport to a better life.**

Things cannot continue as they are

9.46 **Through no fault of the skilled and committed library staff or of the users who are loyal and passionate about its value, the library service is now failing.**

9.47 The budget cut made in 2022 envisaged a reduction in opening hours of 21% thanks to the use of open+ self-service opening (ie without library staff) and other measures such as an increase in volunteers. As outlined earlier, neither measure has worked:

- The plan to extend open+ to five libraries has proved much more difficult than envisaged with only two complete. Where it has been implemented for longer (at Selsdon Library) take-up has been low. Even when implemented, unstaffed libraries cannot host events and activities, nor can they provide active support to people who need it or unaccompanied children aged under 16.

- The number of volunteers has also remained low and it is difficult to recruit and retain them, a difficulty faced by public and voluntary organisations across the country in recent years.

9.48 As a result, the reduction in opening hours has been far worse than envisaged: 48% excluding open+ opening hours and 39% if open+ opening hours are included (for the two libraries in which it has been implemented so far of the five planned).

9.49 **This review of the library service is designed to review the changes made in 2022 and to address these drivers for change**:

- The need to address the drivers for change, weaknesses and limitations of the current library service model summarised above.

- The ambition to deliver the highest quality and most impactful library service for Croydon residents with the resource available.

- The Council's strategic ambitions to establish Croydon as a place for learning and opportunity, where children and young people are able to flourish, residents live healthier and more independent lives and the Council is able to operate on a sustainable financial basis.

9.50 Based on the findings of this review and feedback so far**, responding to these drivers will require radical change and it is proposed that the success of the review will be judged by a draft set of simple strategic outcomes shown below.**

Table 9.2: draft strategic outcomes for the review of library services

By three years' time, we will be able to say that the library review has achieved the following:	
Primary outcome	**Supporting outcomes**
1. We are reaching more people.	• More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community.	• We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.
3. Our service is more efficient.	• We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.

9.51 These draft strategic outcomes will be used to generate options for change and then to assess, evaluate and prioritise those options. Once adopted, the strategic outcomes should be kept under review to ensure they reflect the right ambitions for the future.

10. Options for the future and potential closures

Introduction

10.1 In this section we explore the potential options for delivering the strategic outcomes for the review.

10.2 We begin by summarising **the gap is between the current position and the strategic outcomes.**

10.3 **Then we review the ideas suggested by staff and community organisations and previously by the public** which are most likely to impact on the strategic outcomes. This longlist of options are analysed in full in Appendix B and summarised in this section.

10.4 **We then examine the impact of one of the options: revisiting the idea of closures**. Most of the options to improve the service depend to some degree on additional financial resources. Indeed, one of the options examined is increasing the library budget, but given the Council's financial position, we have concluded that this option is unrealistic.

10.5 On the other hand, **it has been assumed that some savings resulting from closures could be used to fund options for improving the service**. The option of closures has been examined in more detail in Appendix C and is summarised in this section.

10.6 **We conclude this section with a shortlist of options and a recommended package of changes as the basis for formal consultation with the public, community organisations, public bodies and staff.**

Gap analysis

10.7 In the previous sections of this report, we have examined how the library service is organised, how it delivers its role in promoting reading and literacy and its wider role in supporting health and wellbeing, digital access, culture and employment support. We have also explored what people have told us about what is needed and their ideas for the future. Finally, we examined the impacts of COVID and the move in 2022 to part-time opening on the performance of the service.

10.8 We have used that information to assess at a high level the scale of the challenge facing the Council – the gap that needs to be overcome.

Table 10.1: summary of gap analysis between current state and strategic outcomes

Primary and secondary outcomes	Key gaps (H,M,L[5]) in current state
1. We are reaching more people • More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.	• H: visits to library facilities has fallen far below what was already a comparatively very low base. • H: it is highly likely that the service is not reaching those most in need as there is no outreach work, but data is not available. • H: it is difficult to know what is available in libraries and social media followers are low. • H: most libraries are poorly located to benefit from footfall, eg that generated by shopping centres.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community • We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.	• M: issues of books and other materials have improved slightly thanks to an increase in digital issues, but against a comparatively very low base. • M: digital issues are increasingly popular, but we don't yet know how this compares or how well-known this offer is. • L: joining TLC has given users access to the collections of over 20 library services. • H: cultural events and activities support health and well-being, but the number is restricted by opening hours, staff capacity and the buildings. • H: despite cost-of-living pressures, there has been a significant fall in free PC usage. • H/M: some libraries have been renovated to a high standard, but most are unattractive and are not easily adaptable for events.
3. Our service is more efficient • We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.	• H: the unit cost of services has risen since the reduction in opening hours. • H: most library buildings' environmental and energy performance is poor. • L: the new management of the service has already improved the IT systems thanks to joining TLC. • H: staff capacity is stretched and lacks resilience, leading to ad hoc closures. • H: apart from Central Library all others are part-time, wasting the building asset. • H: income-generation from more paid events or actively hiring out venues is limited by building design and opening hours. • H: the number of volunteers is low but there is support for some libraries (eg gardening).

10.9 **The size of the gaps identified above suggest that drastic change is required if the review is to achieve its ambitions.**

[5] The gaps are summarised as H = high, M = medium, L = low.

Longlist of options for change

10.10 Given the scale of change required to close the gap and achieve the outcomes for the review, we have collated a range of ideas and suggestions that have emerged from engagement and consultation to date. This longlist of options is summarised below.

Table 10.2: longlist of options for change

Primary and secondary outcomes	Options considered
1. We are reaching more people • More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.	1. Reverse library budget cut to extend staffed opening hours in the existing network. 2. Extend evening/weekend opening. 3. Extend opening hours through Open Plus. 4. Move some libraries to better locations. 5. Close the poorer performing and less viable libraries in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours. 6. Introduce 'library link' service points. 7. Introduce programme of outreach and marketing.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community • We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.	1. Extend programme of improved events, working with partners. 2. Increase community language provision. 3. Improve signage, entrances and interiors. 4. Improve libraries' IT offer. 5. Promote the library service's digital offer. 6. Train staff for more interactive role.
3. Our service is more efficient • We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.	1. Co-locate libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT. 2. Increase IT and checkout self-service 3. Explore alternative management arrangements. 4. Invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers. 5. Introduce income generation. 6. Invest in energy efficiency

10.11 **In Appendix B, we have examined each of the longlisted options in turn. For each option in the appendix we:**

- **Summarise what's involved.**
- **Describe the potential benefits and negative impacts.**
- **Identify the resource implications.**
- **Identify further work required.**
- **Evaluate the option and its feasibility.**
- **Recommend whether the option should be pursued further.**

Summarising the options for delivering the outcomes

10.12 The data shows that visits and other uses of the library have fallen dramatically compared with pre-pandemic levels - and are unlikely to recover from the effects of the pandemic as quickly as in other similar library services. As a result, assuming that restoring the budget cuts is not a realistic prospect, it is proposed to revisit the option of closing some libraries and using the money released to reinvest in longer opening hours in the remaining libraries, creating a new local 'library link' service point in communities and undertaking marketing and outreach. Most libraries are not in the best location to maximise footfall and visits by the public and so this needs to be addressed as opportunities allow.

10.13 As described in chapter 3 of the review report, reading is still central to libraries' purpose, but they play a much wider role in improving the health and wellbeing and giving people access to the digital world. In recent years and particularly since the reduction in opening hours in 2022 the trends suggest significant falls in PC use which means that the digitally excluded might be missing out. There is less time available in each library to run events and activities and this has been flagged as a frustration for users.

10.14 The level of visits to libraries has plummeted across the network, probably as a result of the reduction in opening hours. Where other library services' usage numbers are available, they appear to have been recovering from COVID faster than Croydon's.

10.15 If resources can be released from library closures it will be possible to tackle these challenges through programmed events, increased community language provision, better signage and library interiors and a better IT and digital offer, Staff can also be freed up to play a more supportive role to library users.

10.16 As part of the changes agreed in 2022, the Council was planning to co-locate more services in libraries and extend volunteering. Neither has proved viable so far as outlined in this report. In 2022, the options of outsourcing and community management were explored as ways of saving money. Following feedback during consultation, neither option was pursued.

10.17 Given the potential for closures, the option of transferring some libraries to community management have been revisited as part of a plan to enlist more voluntary support. The potential for outsourcing or spinning out the service into a charitable body have also been re-considered but are not recommended. Options for further co-location, volunteering and income generation are explored.

Recommended options

Most of the options for improvement are recommended to be pursued in the next phase of work. However, these options for improving the library network are dependent on the reallocation of savings from library closures. The detailed analysis of the options for library closure (option 1.5) is contained in Appendix C.

Table 10.3: options recommended to be pursued in the next phase

Option	Recommendation
1.2	To explore further the option of evening and Saturday opening if resources can be freed up within the service.
1.3	To undertake a review of the performance of Open+ at Selsdon and Norbury Libraries and lessons learned in advance of further extension.
1.4	To develop a long-term plan for improving library locations to be implemented as opportunities arise in consultation with local communities.
1.5	To consult formally on the option of closing the poorer performing and less viable library buildings in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours and improve the overall service.
1.6	To explore and test the option of a 'library link' service further.
1.7	To explore the resourcing of marketing and outreach if the service in libraries can be improved by other options.
2.1	To explore the option of extending a programme of improved events, working with partners if resources can be freed up by other changes.
2.2	To explore an increase community language provision if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.
2.3	To pursue the option of improving signage, entrances and interiors.
2.4	To improve libraries' IT offer if the resources can be freed up.
2.5	To explore the promotion of digital books and materials if resources can be freed up by other options and subject to Croydon's contribution being fair to TLC's other members.
2.6	To pursue the option of training staff for more interactive support role if the resources can be freed up.
3.1	To explore further co-locating libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT.
3.2	To pursue increased IT and checkout self-service in order to free staff for a more interactive support role.
3.3	To continue with in-house management of the library service and membership of The Libraries Consortium but explore the potential for community management of individual libraries at risk of closure.
3.4	To invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers.

Option	Recommendation
3.5	To explore further the introduction of a venue hire service in order to generate income from library spaces and to revisit café provision once attendances have increased at Norbury Library.
3.6	To pursue investing in energy efficiency.

10.18 The option of reversing the cut to the library budget (option 1.1) is not recommended in the light of the Council's financial position. Options for alternative management arrangements for the library service were explored in option 3.3. In that option, the potential for outsourcing or spinning out the service into a charitable body were considered but were not recommended.

Exploring the option of closures

10.19 Library managers are very reluctant to propose closures but believe that this is the only way to improve the overall performance of the service given that it is very unlikely that the Council will be able to increase funding to the service. Although some of the other options are designed to deliver some savings from efficiencies, these would not deliver enough to fund more than a handful of the improvement measures.

10.20 The main way to release sufficient funds to deliver more improvements across the service would be to close a number of the poorer performing and less viable library buildings.

10.21 In Appendix C, we summarise all of the borough's libraries and consider their performance and viability and the impact of closure. More details on each library can be found in Appendix F which includes detailed site profiles for each library which help to inform these options.

10.22 We recommend four libraries to be considered for closure, subject to formal consultation, together with a number of measures to deal with some of the effects of closure. The remaining library services are proposed to be retained with investment and improvements in the service offer and delivery model including relocation, colocation and closer partnership with other services to deliver a sustainable service model.

10.23 The recommendations are based on analysis on a set of assessment criteria designed to address the gaps that need to be bridged in order to achieve the outcomes for the review:

Table 10.4: summary of assessment criteria for retaining a library

Criterion	Factors to consider
Performance	• **Usage** including visits and issues. • **Event attendances** and attendances for other activities. • **PC hours in use.** • Unit costs, ie **cost per visitor**.
Location	• The **visibility** and prominence of the building.

	• The level of natural **footfall** in the vicinity. • **Public transport access** for users.
Building	• The **suitability** of the building to accommodate the full range of library uses (ie Universal Offers). • The **adaptability** of the building allowing for various uses. • The overall **condition** of the building and the extent of remedial work required.
Impacts of change	• The approximate size of the **population served**. • The **extent of deprivation** in the catchment area. • **Other public facilities** in the vicinity, including **other libraries**. • The extent of **existing community group use**. • The **number of volunteers**.

Recommended closures and the need for investment in rest

10.24 The four proposed closures are designed to release resources to invest in increasing the opening hours in the remaining libraries and to fund initiatives such as the introduction of targeted outreach for those most in need in the borough (see section above).

10.25 It is envisaged that the libraries recommended for retention are also subject to a range of improvements, including refurbishments, improved interior design and better signage. Three library sites (New Addington, South Norwood and Purley) require more extensive redevelopment and remodelling of the library service as part of a wider offer to deliver sustainable and impactful provision.

10.26 In some cases, it is recommended that opportunities should be sought for moving the library service to a better location and building and to exploring colocation. This may not be possible for immediate implementation but would take place over time as regeneration schemes develop that would allow change to be achieved in a cost-effective way. Any such changes to a building would need to be subject to a clear business case and further consultation.

Table 10.5: recommendations for libraries to be retained

Library	Recommendations
Ashburton	• Retain Ashburton Library Service. • Upgrade the interior design of the library.
Central	• Retain Central Library Service. • Look for an alternative location in a more suitable building at the heart of the changing shopping district.
Coulsdon	• Retain Coulsdon Library Service. • Explore further involvement of the Hive in the library. • Explore the remodelling of the library to provide direct access to the community garden. • Invest in refurbishing the library's interior.
New Addington	• Retain New Addington Library Service. • Research the barriers to library use in New Addington and introduce active outreach. • Explore partnership models of service delivery to improve the offer and attraction for residents.
Norbury	• Retain the Norbury Library Service. • Review the operating model for the building including options to license space for hire or tenancy to generate income and footfall. • Explore with community organisations their interest in the building and/or community management of the library. • Research the barriers to library use in areas of high deprivation in Norbury for active outreach. • Assess the impact on the different ethnic groups in the catchment area and of the wider equalities impact.
Purley	• Retain the Purley Library Service. • Seek a better location and building for Purley Library. • Explore local partnerships to develop the offer and service model
Selsdon	• Retain Selsdon Library Service. • Extend its staffed opening hours so that it can play a more active part in the cultural and community life in the south of the borough. • Introduce improved signage and market its presence, particularly to users of Sanderstead Library.
South Norwood	• Retain South Norwood Library Service. • Explore opportunities to develop plans for an improved community facility jointly with the Samuel Coleridge Taylor youth centre. • Engage with community and voluntary groups to develop a viable model for the site development and operation.
Thorton Heath	• Retain Thornton Health Library Service. • Invest in minor refurbishment. • Target library outreach from this facility and into the wider community, focusing on the most deprived.

10.27 It is recommended that four libraries are considered for closures, subject to extensive public consultation as described in Chapter 11. In each case further work is required to identify the impacts of closures and any mitigating measures that can be put in place.

Table 10.6: recommendations for libraries to be considered for closure

Library	Recommendations
Bradmore Green	• Consider Bradmore Green Library building for closure. • Consider targeted outreach work on the Tollers Estate. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.
Broad Green	• Consider Broad Green Library building for closure. • Research the barriers to library use in local areas of high deprivation for active outreach. • Assess the impact on the different ethnic groups in the catchment area and of the wider equalities impact. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.
Sanderstead	• Consider Sanderstead Library building for closure. • Explore the level of community interest in retaining the building. • Explore the particular impacts on people with mobility issues that might prevent them making use of another library. • Explore options for Library Link provision to serve the community impacted by closure.
Shirley	• Consider Shirley Library building for closure. • Consult Bromley Council over potential arrangements for Croydon residents to use West Wickham Library. • Explore the particular needs of residents in the most deprived LSOAs and the Shrublands estate • Explore potential mitigations for the older community in the catchment area. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.

10.28 **Given our conclusion that it is not feasible for the Council to spend more on the library service, improvements to the service would need to be found from savings elsewhere in the library service's budget.**

10.29 **Saving money by closing some libraries would release significant resources which could fund many of the improvements recommended above and transform the ability of the service to encourage more people to use the service, especially those that need it most.**

11. The new model and vision for the service

Introduction

11.1 As outlined above, the current service model is not meeting the current needs of Croydon's residents well, and there is very limited capacity to develop the offer or outreach to engage more residents.

11.2 The fixed service with teams of staff stretched across 13 buildings limits the opportunity to develop a local offer, responsive to local needs and priorities or to develop partnerships with other services to enhance the service and deliver across the Universal Offers.

11.3 In this section we will outline the key priorities to address with the library service model, and the emerging framework to achieve this.

11.4 It is important to note, that this is framework is still formative and will be further explored, tested and co-designed through the consultation period.

Key themes informing the service model

11.5 A common theme across the primary research engagement was that Croydon's libraries should be community hubs, providing accessible, welcoming, safe spaces, offering a broad range of activities and information services and a place for people to meet and connect with others in their community.

11.6 People also felt that the library service should be more responsive to local need and demand. A one size fits all offer in Croydon doesn't work and the service should be adaptable and focussed on delivering on the needs and priorities in each locality.

11.7 There was a strong perception that communication and marketing of the service offer is not good enough and more needs to be done to improve this and tell people what's available and how they can use libraries.

11.8 There are clear opportunities for more involvement and partnership working with other services and voluntary groups and to develop the volunteer programme more, but that this would need resourcing and managing well to be effective.

11.9 We have learned through the review that by prioritising retaining 13 library buildings and reducing to part time hours, the Council has continued to support the core library user base who have adapted and continued to use the services when they are open. These users value their local library and make good use of the offer available.

11.10 However there are many users who are now unable to use their local library because it is now only open two to three days per week with limited weekend opening and no evenings. This particularly impacts working people and families.

11.11 Footfall and active user numbers in the libraries have declined significantly from pre-pandemic rates and whilst this can be expected to a degree following the reduction in opening hours, without a new model to drive growth and engagement the library user base will decline over time.

11.12 The reduction in staffing numbers has also severely limited the capacity of the service to undertake outreach and engagement, particularly with regard to communities who are often less likely to use libraries but could benefit more from the services.

11.13 The ongoing financial pressure on the Council prevents any increase in the library services budgets and therefore a new service model is required to allow for resources to be reallocated to address these challenges.

What might deliver the outcomes

11.14 The emerging service vision and model has been developed to address the challenges identified and deliver the three outcomes identified to achieve a successful service in Croydon.

Outcome 1: We are reaching more people

- A network of modernised library buildings will be open for five days a week, including some evening provision and every library open on Saturdays
- A community based library link offer will be available to provide access to information, support and library services in areas without a local library building and deliver a localised offer responsive to need
- A community outreach and marketing programme will ensure the library offer is better communicated and understood by residents

Outcome 2: We have improved our service to the whole community.

- We will invest in the retained library buildings to improve the facilities and develop space for hire and events to expand the offer
- We will establish a dedicated staff member to focus on partnerships and engagement, expanding the volunteering programme and bringing a broader range of services into the libraries for residents to access in one place
- We will establish regular resident engagement forums to stay connected to local need and priorities and involve residents in the library service development

Outcome 3: Our service is more efficient.

- We will reallocate resources to where it will have the greatest impact. This includes releasing expenditure from the maintenance and repair of the smaller buildings to invest in library staff and services for residents.

- We will increase income generation through creating spaces for hire in the libraries

The emerging vision

11.15 The emerging vision has been developed following review of the primary and secondary research undertaken. This is intended as a formative proposal for the future model of the library service and will be developed further through extensive public consultation, research and codesign.

11.16 We want to enable people who live, work or study in Croydon to benefit from a high quality library service which delivers opportunities for reading, learning, creating and connecting online and with others through each stage of life.

11.17 We propose this is delivered across four strands:

- **Library Hubs**

A smaller network of more accessible and welcoming buildings delivering an extensive offer of books, wi-fi, PCs, study space, events and a Library Universal Offers programme. Open 5-6 days a week including every Saturday with the majority of hours staffed and extended hours with self-service access available from at least four sites.
These sites will act as focal points for services in their local areas with a broad service offer of reading, digital, health and culture delivered by the Council and community partners. We anticipate that Library Hub buildings will also host other services and partners aligned to the library Universal Offers, with the library as the primary anchor service.

- **Community Hubs**

A library situated in a shared venue as part of a wider service offer for residents, for example as part of a Family Hub, Adult Learning Hub, Health and Wellbeing Hub or VCFS Hub.
These sites would include dedicated library space to hold a range of book collections for children and adults, provide Wi-Fi and public computer access and host events and activities. The service offer and opening times would be developed in response to local need and would include weekend provision.
We envisage that this model of embedded colocation and partnership would attract more people to engage with the library service offer and would provide a more holistic service for residents. The delivery of this offer could include developing existing library buildings into Community Hubs, relocating a library service into a different building or exploring different models of delivering the library offer through partnership with other services or groups.

- **Library Outreach**

Outreach activity is essential to reach people not currently engaged with the library service offer, to raise awareness of the library offer and to provide access to library services for residents who are not able to physically visit a Library Hub or Community Hub. We propose that this is delivered over three strands:

1. Library Links will provide a regular contact point with the library service in localities without a building based library service. Delivered from other community venues on

a weekly basis, the offer would be developed based on local need but could include: an information service, community book collections, children and adults events, digital support sessions and support to access library services online.

Service provision would be delivered through a combination of library staff, volunteers and grant funded partners to deliver library programmes and events in community settings. We propose commencing with a pilot phase of four initial Library Link services focussed on catering to communities most impacted by any library closures with a second phase of delivery focussed on a further four areas with low library engagement and high need across the borough.

2. Expansion of the Home Library service which delivers books and resources to residents who are housebound, resident in care homes or otherwise unable to access library buildings.

3. Library service visits and activities at other community provision including schools and education services, dementia cafes, health care centres, community events and festivals. This is an established way to promote library services and the benefits of library usage, register new members and support residents to access library services and information.

- **Library Online**

An extensive digital offer including e-books and magazines, online learning and training resources and access to Museum and Archive digital resources.

11.18 It is important to note that the service operating budget remains low when benchmarked with neighbouring boroughs and the library service will continue to operate leanly. However we feel that this model provides a sustainable framework to deliver on the service outcomes and enables greater responsiveness to changing demographics and needs.

11.19 Further research is needed to develop the framework through the consultation process including the location, designs and piloting of Library Link points, further analysis on the equalities implications for the changes and more work to understand the barriers to access and priorities for residents not currently using the service.

EQIA for the future options

11.20 A detailed Equality Impact Assessment is included at Appendix D. This will be reviewed and updated following the consultation and the findings will be used to inform changes to the new model.

The proposals for consultation

11.21 We now propose that the Council commences formal consultation on the options identified above.

Summary of each recommended option(s)

- A - Adoption of the new model outlined above including closure of the four local libraries (Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley) and remodelling of the offer and provision for New Addington, South Norwood and Purley.

- B - Alternative suggestions to deliver service improvement in a cost neutral model

11.22 The consultation activity would include:

- An online survey with printed copies available in libraries
- A series of public events held in libraries
- A series of online events to gather feedback
- Engagement with other community groups, partners and organisations such as resident associations including promotion of the survey and attendance at other community meetings to take feedback
- A digital communications campaign to maximise the reach of the survey and ensure as wide a response as possible
- Targeted engagement to reach library users and non-library users and to reach residents representative of the borough population and with regard to the Equality Act characteristics
- Focussed engagement and service development workshops with communities and groups around South Norwood, New Addington and Purley.
- Engagement meetings to understand the impact of the library closures and further develop mitigations
- Engagement with groups interested to operate libraries or become more involved in their governance

11.23 The consultation questions will explore:

- Respondents' current library use and use of other community services
- Their priorities and aspirations for a library service offer and that of other services relevant to the library Universal Offers
- Their views on the proposals and the service model outlined above
- Ideas and partnership opportunities for the three proposed Community Hubs (New Addington, South Norwood, Purley).
- The views of those affected by the proposed library closures (Bradmore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead, Shirley) including on potential mitigation measure and alternative options
- Any other ideas to improve the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the library service

11.24 A framework has been established to collate all responses and contributions to the consultation which will be analysed and considered in the review of the proposals. The findings of the consultation and this analysis will be presented back to Cabinet alongside the final proposals for the service.

Appendix B

Options for change

Draft

1. Introduction

1.1 In this appendix, we examine each of the options that might enable the outcomes for the review to be met and to help address the gaps that have been identified between the outcomes and the service as it is now.

1.2 Given the poor performance of the service since the reduction in opening hours was introduced in April 2022, the outcomes for the review are:

Table E1: draft strategic outcomes for library service review (v0.3)

By three years' time, we will be able to say that the library review has achieved the following:

Primary outcome	Supporting outcomes
1. We are reaching more people	• More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community	• We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.
3. Our service is more efficient	• We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.

1.3 A range of options have been developed that might enable the outcomes to be met and that could help to address the gaps identified in chapter 10 of the report.

1.4 In this appendix, we have examined each of the options in turn. For each option we:

- Summarise what's involved.
- Describe the potential benefits and negative impacts.
- Identify the resource implications.
- Identify further work required.
- Evaluate the option and its feasibility.
- Recommend whether the option should be pursued further.

1.5 We have developed a set of success criteria to help guide our analysis of the options:

Table E2: evaluation criteria to assess how well each option could deliver the options

Primary outcome	Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
1. We are reaching more people	• More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.	• Encourages more users. • Allows a focus on areas of high need. • Provides resources for promotion and outreach.
2. We have improved our service to the whole community	• We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.	• Provides resources for events and programming. • Provides services people value. • Improves library interiors and entry points. • Enables us to deliver an offer for communities not engaged with the current model.
3. Our service is more efficient	• We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.	• Improves the unit costs of the service. • Increases income from paid-for services. • Increases partner and voluntary support.

1.6 Our description and evaluation of each option follows the sequence of the three primary outcomes. We point out where an option may also contribute to other outcomes. Some options are subject to a more detailed analysis, and this is shown in separate appendices.

1.7 **These options are still at the formative stage and so for each option we have identified further research that is required in the next phase of the review and the engagement that will need to be undertaken largely in parallel.**

1.8 **Potential costs and savings are shown for a number of the options. Where they are included, they are indicative at this stage and further work would be required to validate them in detail before any final decisions are made.**

1.9 **Resource to invest in service improvement is currently limited by the Council's overall financial circumstances. The recommendations and costs have been considered in this context and the Summary at Section 5 outlines what is proposed to be included in the new service model for consultation in January 2024.**

2. Options for addressing primary outcome 1: "We are reaching more people"

Preamble

2.1 The supporting outcomes and success criteria for this primary outcome are:

Table E3: supporting outcomes and specific evaluation criteria for primary outcome 1

Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
• More people are using our library service. • We reach the people who need us most in Croydon. • People know what we're offering.	• Encourages more users. • Allows a focus on areas of high need. • Provides resources for promotion and outreach.

2.2 In this section, we explore ways of addressing the fundamental problems with the library service that have manifested themselves since opening hours were reduced in 2022. Combined with the effect of the slow recovery from the impact of the pandemic, the numbers of people using the service have plummeted.

2.3 As summarised in chapter 9 of the review report at Appendix A:

- The data shows that visits, book issues and other uses of the library have fallen dramatically compared with pre-pandemic levels - and are unlikely to recover from the effects of the pandemic as quickly as in other similar library services.
- Our feedback so far is that the public find it harder to access the service as a result of the reduction in hours and to know what time the libraries are open and what is on.
- The introduction of Open Plus so that libraries can open longer is progressing slowly and has proved more expensive to make the physical changes needed to library entrances.
- Few of the 13 libraries are in the best locations to maximise footfall.
- There is little confidence that the library service is reaching the people that need it most and there is no capacity in the service to undertake outreach work.

- The staff of the service are now so stretched that they struggle to keep the libraries open or to find time to organise the events and other activities that people value.

2.4 The options considered in order to meet this primary outcome focus on how resources can be used to address the problems caused by the move to part-time opening.

2.5 We have sought to identify and consider all possible options in order to make a comprehensive analysis and develop proposals for the best possible service model.

Draft

Option 1.1: reverse library budget cut to extend staffed opening hours in the existing network

Introduction

2.6 This option examines the possibility of reversing the reduction in the library budget wholly or in part in order to increase staffed library opening hours. It could involve either:

- A straight reversal of the April 2022 hours reductions for each library across the network.
- A more tailored pattern of opening to reflect local need or to accommodate more evening or weekend opening.

2.7 This option would require the Council to find additional funds from elsewhere in its overall budget to restore library opening hours. It assumes that the Council is not able to improve its overall financial position and so budget reductions in other Council services would be required. As a result of pay inflation since the last reduction in hours, the budget increase would need to be greater than the £500k reduced from the service budget to meet the same number of hours as previously staffed.

Benefits and impact

2.8 This option would restore library opening hours to the level that users enjoyed before April 2022.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Enables users to return to previous patterns or more tailored opening patterns. • Allows greater stability for staff and provides continuity for their customers. • Restores resources that could be used for more programming or outreach. • Could allow a recovery in library usage. • Would allow for more weekend opening that might suit working parents using the library with their children. • Would allow for tailoring of opening hours to better suit people in full-time work.	• Would require the Council to make budget reductions elsewhere, probably at the expense of children's and adult social care services (the main areas of Council spending). • Would not address weaknesses and inefficiencies in the library network. • Would require greater capital investment to improve the accessibility and condition of the library buildings. • If the budget cut was not reversed in full, a partial restoration of the library budget could still leave the service with much-reduced hours and stretched staffing.

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Would allow the service to provide a longer and more tailored opening pattern to people in need and with protected characteristics.	

Resource impact and affordability

2.9 A full restoration of the budget (uprated for inflation) has been assumed below.

Resource	Cost estimates	Saving estimates
Increase in staffing budget	Revenue: Over £500k Capital: N/A	N/A

Given the financial problems facing local government and Croydon in particular, there is little chance that the Council would be in a position to restore the budget reduction, whether in whole or in part. The current Medium Term Financial Statement published by the Council in October 2023 forecasts a budget deficit of £75m for the period of April 2024-25.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the latest CIPFA benchmarking data when published in to compare Croydon's library spending with similar authorities. • To confirm whether the Council's spending power has increased over the last year.	• To consider whether it is realistic to include the option of increasing the library budget in the Council's overall budget consultation (if the Council's spending power has improved).

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Allows restored or tailored opening hours. • Allows for increased use across the network. • Does not address weaknesses in network.	Over £500k	Nil	***This option cannot realistically be pursued given the Council's financial position.***

Recommendation: to not pursue reversing library budget cut to extend staffed opening hours in the existing network further given the Council's financial position.

Option 1.2: extend evening/weekend opening

Introduction

2.10 During the briefing sessions for community organisations, it was pointed out that libraries do not open in the evening (all shut by 6pm) and only five of the thirteen are open on Saturdays, making it difficult for people working full-time to access the libraries. This also prevents many parents from being able to take their children to a library.

2.11 *The* extension *of opening hours into the evening and weekend would need to be offset by more daytime and weekday closures if the current number of libraries are maintained and other aspects of the service remain the same.*

Benefits and impact

2.12 This option envisages all libraries being open one evening a week and on Saturdays for larger libraries and Saturday morning for smaller ones. It would be envisaged that additional children's activities would be provided on Saturdays.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Enables people working full-time during the week to access the library more often. • Increases the chance for working parents to take younger children to the library. • Improves access to library services for younger children who cannot visit the library on their own.	• Reduces access for people who prefer to (or can only) use the library during daytime during the week. • Requires changes to staff working patterns.

Resource impact and affordability

2.13 If no additional resources can be made available and evening and weekend opening would be offset by closing at other times during the week, this option could be cost neutral, although it may be difficult to attract and retain staff for weekend working given current workforce shortages in the economy.

Resource	Cost estimates	Saving estimates
Increase in staff budget to allow for additional weekend working	Revenue: £105k Capital: N/A	N/A

This option may be affordable if other options are pursued that would free up resources that could be redirected.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the experience and impact of weekend opening in Croydon and other library services. • To identify which libraries would open for a full or half day on Saturdays.	• To consult users and non-users over the ideal opening pattern in each library. • To consult staff on changes to their working patterns, if the option is pursued further.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Improves access for people who can't use the libraries during the weekday daytimes. • Improves access for younger children of parents who work Mondays to Fridays. • Reduces access for those who prefer to or can't use the library in the evenings and weekends.	£105k	Nil	***This option is worth exploring further if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service, but change may have an impact on staff recruitment and retention.***

Recommendation: to explore further the option of evening and Saturday opening if resources can be freed up within the service.

Draft

Option 1.3: extend opening hours through Self Service access (Open Plus) technology

Introduction

2.14 Open Plus was introduced to Selsdon Library in 2022 and extended recently to Norbury Library. There were plans to extend Open Plus to three more libraries, but progress with implementation has been slow due to issues with capacity and building adaptations and delays to the implementation of self-service kiosks. Open Plus allows users to access a library using their library card and PIN outside the hours when library staff are present.

2.15 Although a security guard is present during self service access opening hours, users are not able to get support from library staff. Take-up has been low so far in Selsdon Library, but the experience from other library services is that this option can prove popular (over time and with marketing) with a section of the population who don't require support when using the library.

2.16 This option envisages the extension of Open Plus to up to three more libraries. This will be subject to the suitability of the building and the funding of a security presence.

Benefits and impact

2.17 The use of Open Plus provides those who are happy to use this service with more opportunities to use the library during normal opening hours.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Increases access for those who cannot use the service during normal opening hours. • Extends opening hours for those who do not need library staff support and are happy to use the service. • Extends access for people working full time on weekdays.	• Does not extend access to unaccompanied children and young people nor those not happy to use the service. • Will have a negative impact on other aspects of the service if resources cannot be freed up as a result of other options. • Has a revenue cost where security staff are needed to be on site for fire safety reasons. • Take-up at Selsdon Library has been low so far and Open+ has only just gone live in Norbury Library, so not yet clear how popular this will be.

Resource impact and affordability

2.18 The principal costs of extending Open Plus are the adaptations to buildings and the use of security measures, which are identified through building assessments as part of the implementation process. Both Selsdon and Norbury currently operate with a security guard on site. The induction of new users of the service does take some staff time.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Cost of part-time security staff. Maintenance for the equipment and software. Cost of installation and capital works, which includes FM adaptations and CCTV cameras as well as hardware.	Costs per site approx: Revenue: £2k (annual maintenance per site) Security: £25k per annum (3 days a week, 30-hour week) Capital: £35k approximately for each site.	N/A

This option may be affordable if other options are pursued that would free up resources that could be redirected.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the experience of operating Open Plus so far, reviewing its performance, comparing with other library services using it for longer. • To review the current policy of providing an on-site security presence, learning from other library services. • To develop a marketing plan to improve take up of existing Open+ service before deciding whether to extend it to other libraries.	• To understand the experience of current Open Plus users in Croydon. • To consult users and non-users on their interest in this option and whether it might encourage them to make more use of libraries.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Extends access for those who are happy using the service. • Provides a benefit for working people who cannot use the library during standard opening hours. • Does not improve access for unaccompanied children nor those not happy to use the service.	Per site approx: £27k (revenue) if security staff are required. Capital: £35k.	Nil	***The costs of retrofitting Open+ and operating the libraries during Open+ hours with security staff are currently too high to merit further rollout across the current network. An evaluation of existing Open+ sites is required before extending it further as part of wider building modernisation projects.***

Recommendation: To undertake a review of the performance of Open+ at Selsdon and Norbury Libraries and lessons learned in advance of further extension

Option 1.3: extend opening hours through Open Plus technology

Introduction

2.19 Although library buildings, especially older Victorian and Edwardian ones, are much-loved, they were often not sited in the best or busiest locations at the time or, if they were originally, those locations are less busy now due to changes to shopping parades and shopping in general. The environmental performance and layout of older buildings are often poor and can be difficult to adapt.

2.20 A location that is both very visible *and* has high levels of natural footfall due to passing pedestrian traffic will attract more visitors, especially among those less dedicated to - or aware of - what a library can offer. Currently, only two libraries are in busy pedestrian locations. If other libraries in the network were moved to more lively locations, take-up of the service could improve as was demonstrated by the redevelopment of Selsdon and relocation of Ashburton libraries.

2.21 Moving library locations is generally contentious as people are often strongly attached to the old building, regardless of its suitability. Careful consultation is needed over a potential move.

Benefits and impact

2.22 Library services that have located their services in well-designed buildings that benefit from good footfall improve their visitor numbers and performance. They are also often designed in a more flexible way to accommodate the wide range of uses and services delivered in a modern library and with spaces which can be used to generate income through hires. This does require investment and the cost of purchase and conversion will generally outweigh any income from the disposal of the old building, especially if it is listed.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• A visible library building in an area of high footfall will improve service take-up. • A popular library can act as an 'anchor' to improve a shopping parade or district. • A new or adapted building will generally be more accessible and easier to manage. • Modern or overhauled buildings will generally have better energy performance. • A location in a popular shopping parade and district will generally be better served by public transport.	• People who loved the old building and users who live near it are likely to be very disappointed. • The cost of change may be prohibitive in the Council's current financial position.

Resource impact and affordability

2.23 Given the Council's finances, a programme of replacing library buildings is not practical. Instead, a longer-term strategy which takes opportunities for relocation, particularly as a result of regeneration programmes will be more realistic. Lottery bids or Government funding programmes can be a source of capital funding but will require match-funding by the authority.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Project management and scheme development.	Revenue: scheme dependent. Capital: scheme dependent.	N/A

2.24 A more modern or refurbished building will generally be cheaper to maintain, but a prominent high street location will demand a higher standard of routine maintenance and cleaning. New buildings will also often attract a higher business rate bill (although this will have little impact in the event that full business rate retention is implemented).

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• Identify opportunities for relocating libraries to take advantage of regeneration programmes or fundraising/bidding opportunities. • Identify long-term plan for improving library facilities informed by demographic and footfall data.	• Consult carefully when opportunities arise for an improved library location and building. • Test with users and non-users how library use and their locations would fit into their lifestyles.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Improved library locations would improve service take-up. • More modern buildings would perform better and be more accessible and efficient. • Popular libraries can make shopping centres and parades more successful. • Leaving a much-loved old building can disappoint people and local users.	Scheme specific	N/A	***Moving to a better location can transform a service but can be capital-intensive. In the current financial climate this can only be pursued as regeneration and bidding opportunities emerge.***

Recommendation: develop a long-term plan for improving library locations to be implemented as opportunities arise in consultation with local communities.

Option 1.5: close the poorer performing and less viable libraries in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours

Introduction

2.25 The Council consulted the public on options for cutting the library service budget in 2021. Respondents to the consultations expressed a preference for not closing any libraries and reducing their opening hours instead. The reduction in opening hours took place in 2022 and has been a failure with usage now much lower compared with before the pandemic. The performance of all library services has taken time to recover, but Croydon's has been notably worse as a result of the reduction in opening hours.

2.26 It is notable that the number of digital issues has increased steadily, offsetting the fall in the number of physical loans to the point that combined physical and digital issues in 2022/23 exceeded the totals for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

2.27 However, although the number of visits to the library network has improved steadily since the pandemic, it is still less than half of pre-pandemic figures. This is particularly important for users who need access to PCs and the internet and for those who need to use libraries as study spaces. This suggests that the reduction in opening hours may be having a disproportionate impact on those who most depend on access to libraries and library spaces.

2.28 In Appendix E, we have examined the option of library closures in greater depth and recommended that the poorest performing libraries are closed or transferred to community management so that resources can be reinvested in extending the opening hours of the more popular libraries.

Benefits and impact

2.29 The benefits and adverse impacts of library closures have been explored in greater depth in Appendix C and are summarised here.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Allows the reintroduction of longer opening at the more popular or suitable libraries. • Encourages increased visits to the overall network by opening the most popular or suitable libraries for longer. • Allows more time for those most in need of PC access and study space in remaining libraries. • Frees staffing resources to organise more activities and events and undertake outreach.	• Increases the travel time for those who use the libraries that would close. • Risks preventing or discouraging users of libraries that would close from using the service at all. • Risks depriving users of much-loved libraries and library buildings.

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Reduces the building running costs of the service. • Reduces the capital investment costs to improve the accessibility and condition of the library estate.	

2.30 Library closures can impact negatively on those who use those libraries, particularly those with protected characteristics. Mitigations would need to be explored to reduce that impact.

Resource impact and affordability

2.31 The recommended closure of the libraries in Appendix C would allow staffing and building expenditure to be reallocated to expand the service in the higher performing and more viable libraries.

Resource	Cost	Saving	Net saving
Staffing costs reallocated from closed libraries.	£214k staffing costs to be redistributed to deliver improved offer in retained libraries and community provision	£214k	0
Building management costs reallocated from closed libraries.	£189k to be redistributed to support improved library offer and community provision	£189k	0
	Net saving		**0**

As part of the consultation process, it is planned to explore the appetite and realism of community management of the library service as an alternative to closure. Any contribution to the costs of running a community managed service would reduce the amount available to reinvest in the remaining network.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To research further the probable causes and impacts of the fall in visits to libraries. • To identify the impact of library closures on users, communities and those with protected characteristics. • To identify potential mitigations to offset the negative impact on users of closed libraries. • To confirm the net savings resulting from the proposed closures.	• To explore the impact of part-time opening on users at the most popular libraries and those proposed for closure. • To consult on the proposed closures and review the representations of those who want to retain the libraries. • To consult on the specific proposition of closing libraries, focusing on the users most affected by the proposal.

• To identify how best to allocate the net savings to improving the service in the remaining libraries and evaluate the positive benefit that might result. • To explore the potential for community management (see also option 3.3) and the financial impact of that option.	• To consult on proposed mitigations to assess their adequacy. • To focus on the views and experience of those with protected characteristics.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Allows the focusing of resources in order to allow longer opening hours at the most popular libraries. • Frees resources for the programming of events and activities and for outreach. • Impacts negatively on users of the libraries proposed for closure.	N/A	0	***The option of closing the worst performing libraries would allow the overall weaknesses in the service to be addressed through reallocation of the budget within the service***

Recommendation: to consult formally on the option of closing the poorer performing and less viable library buildings in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours and improve the overall service.

Draft

Option 1.6: Introduce 'library link' service points

Introduction

2.32 Library services traditionally rely on dedicated library buildings to provide a service. Some library services have experimented with providing book deposits in non-library settings, such as in community centres. Models include offering a 'pop up' library, deposit collections of books from the library for use by users in a community setting such as a leisure centre, children's centre or care home; library staff delivering regular events in community settings, for example storytimes and family reading advice at playgroups and family centres; or a full service point with access to the Council's library management systems and access to the Council's book stock. It might also include a PC and Wi-Fi offering in areas suffering from digital exclusion.

2.33 A 'library link' offering could allow the library service to reach parts of the borough that do not traditionally make active use of the library service. They could also help to provide mitigation in areas where a library has been closed. This offer would also allow for library services to be tailored to local need, for example delivering advice and information on digital skills in areas of digital deprivation or early years provision in areas with a large population of young families.

2.34 The potential permutations of a library link offering would need to be explored and defined in collaboration with potential partners who would host library link such as community centres and schools.

Benefits and impact

2.35 A library link offering could enable the service to extend its service at low cost to a wider range of locations.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Extends the library service including possible digital access to new locations to reach new users. • Offers a low-cost and flexible way of providing a physical library presence. • Enables the service to target hard to reach communities. • Encourages an increase in book usage (albeit likely limited in take-up).	• Does not provide space for study for those that need it.

Resource impact and affordability

2.36 Depending on the model selected, this option should be relatively low cost, relying on restocking as part of the library van delivery round. This option has been costed on the basis of a simple 'honesty' service with units using surplus stock located in five sites, with no rental charges for locations hosting the units. Service provision would be

delivered through a combination of library staff, volunteers and grant funded partners to deliver library programmes and events in community settings.

2.37 We would propose commencing with a pilot phase of four initial Library Link services focussed on catering to communities most impacted by the library closures with a second phase of delivery focussed on a further four areas of low library engagement across the borough.

Resource	Cost	Saving
• Increase in staffing budget for weekly library van deliveries. • Maintenance costs of units. • One-off cost of design and installation of units.	Revenue: £92k staff costs for co-ordination, programme delivery and additional transport delivery of stock and portable internet connection devices One-off cost of units: £15k. Capital: N/A	N/A

If the service was integrated into the network using self-service checkout, the capital and revenue costs would be higher, requiring the purchase of self-service units, the installation of power points and internet points and additional revenue costs, including maintenance.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To model a 'library link' unit and permutations and test a prototype. • To identify potential locations for library link units and partnership arrangements.	• To test whether people would use the units.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Increases access to library books in areas of high need. • Allows for targeted library programmes and events under the Universal Offers to be delivered.	£92k (annual) £15k (one off)	Nil	***Allows a limited service to be provided in areas of need and may provide some mitigation in areas where a library is closed (if that option is pursued).***

Recommendation: to explore and test the option of a 'library link' service further.

Option 1.7: introduce programme of outreach and marketing

Introduction

2.38 The budget reductions in the service have been associated with a marked fall in usage, particularly in library visits. Fewer than 10% of the borough's population are active users of their libraries in Croydon and this may be due to a combination of factors, such as the limited opening hours; a lack of awareness of opening hours or of the service as a whole; or the quality of the service that can be offered within the resources available. The percentage of the population who are active users is considered to be comparatively low and this will become clearer when CIPFA's benchmarking data for 2022/23 is published in December 2023.

2.39 Library staff are stretched by keeping a part-time service with tight staffing in operation and have no capacity for outreach or the targeting areas of high need, such as through visits to schools or other institutions. As a result, those who need the service most may have little awareness of what libraries can offer. In addition, library users and potential library users often complain they don't know what is going on in their library.

2.40 In 2019 a previous round of cuts included the deletion of a team of six staff delivering a cultural programme and promotion. Some dedicated staffing resource would need to be restored for promotion to communicate what's on offer, particularly through social media and e-newsletters. Resources would also be needed to introduce outreach. Promotion and outreach would need to be programmed but would only be effective if the service was able to run more activities and have longer opening hours.

Benefits and impact

2.41 Resources for promotion would encourage greater service take-up and outreach would enable staff to target those most in need of what is available.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Increases awareness of what the library service has to offer. • Increases usage and interest among hard-to-reach communities. • Allows those most in need to be targeted.	• Will only be effective if the service in libraries is of sufficient quality.

Resource impact and affordability

2.42 Marketing resource would bring together the programme of activities in library hubs (both staff run and hosted), and highlight outreach activities and opportunities, co-ordinated them into one programme through a regular targeted engagement and communication plan, raising awareness of the activities in each of the Universal offers and defining the library service offer. The regular communications would be shared with a network of partners for onward promotion and engagement. The success measures

of this exercise would be a clear development of the service including take-up of the services and activities on offer, linked back to Universal offers and project objectives, as well as increased engagement with partners and the harder to reach groups in Croydon. The marketing staff would also collect regular feedback from residents that will ensure continuous service improvement and development of services to meet the needs and priorities of the communities across Croydon.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Increase in staffing budget for outreach and marketing (two full-time staff).	Revenue: £77k Capital: N/A	N/A

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To develop an operating model for marketing and a marketing plan. • To identify communities most in need of outreach and develop and test a package of outreach service offerings. Working with community partners already in these communities	• To explore how different categories of users and non-users are best communicated with. • To explore with local institutions and community organisations in target areas how best to collaborate on outreach.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Enables the service to encourage take-up from those most in need. • Promotes to all potential users what is available. • Contributes to increased library usages.	£77k (revenue)	Nil	***This option could transform service take-up but would only be effective if the overall service offer in libraries was improved. This option is worth exploring further if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.***

Recommendation: to explore the resourcing of marketing and outreach if the service in libraries can be improved by other options.

3. Options for addressing primary outcome 2: "We have improved our service to the whole community"

Preamble

3.1 The supporting outcomes and success criteria for this primary outcome are:

Table E4: supporting outcomes and specific evaluation criteria for primary outcome 2

Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
• We have a wide range of popular services and activities. • People across our communities enjoy what's available. • Our facilities are welcoming and attractive.	• Provides resources for events and programming. • Provides services people value. • Improves library interiors and entry points. • Enables us to deliver an offer for communities not engaged with the current model.

In this section, we explore ways of improving the service available from the borough's libraries and how the service could encourage more people across communities to make use of the service.

3.2 As described in chapter 3 of the review report at Appendix A, reading is still central to libraries' purpose, but they play a much wider role in improving the health and wellbeing and giving people access to the digital world. In recent years and particularly since the reduction in opening hours in 2022 the trends suggest:

- The number of people making use of free PCs has fallen significantly compared with pre-pandemic levels which means that the digitally excluded might be missing out.
- There is less time available in each library to run events and activities and this has been flagged as a frustration for users.
- Loans of books and other materials have recovered well from pre-pandemic levels, in large part thanks to the increase in digital loans (eg of eBooks).
- Where libraries are in good locations and well-designed buildings (eg Selsdon), service take-up remains higher.
- The level of visits to libraries has plummeted across the network, probably as a result of the reduction in opening hours. Where other library services' usage numbers are available, they appear to have been recovering from COVID faster than Croydon's.

3.3 The options considered in order to meet this primary outcome focus on how resources can be freed up to provide a better service to more people.

Option 2.1: extend programme of improved events, working with partners.

Introduction

3.4 The budget reductions in the service have led to a marked fall in usage, particularly in library visits. Library staff are stretched by keeping a part-time service in operation with fewer staff and have little capacity for organising events and activities such as 'Rhymetime' for infants; homework clubs for older children; and author visits and creative arts for adults. In any case, with the reduced opening hours and only five libraries open on Saturdays, the time available for scheduling and promoting events is limited.

3.5 The lack of organised events and activities was raised as an issue at briefings with community organisations in September 2023. Expanding the range of activities and events held in libraires would require dedicated staff resources to design the programme of events and co-ordinate them across the network and to promote them. It was also suggested at the briefings that a mixture of free and paid-for events could be laid on.

3.6 The library service already collaborates with other services and organisations to lay on events in libraries and a central resource could strengthen partnerships and potentially expand the programme.

3.7 However, running more events and in the evenings and weekends would require resources to be freed up through other options. Some libraries are not easily adaptable to host events and some changes would be needed to equipment and furniture (especially moveable bookshelves and suitable seating).

3.8 Some staff development may be required to ensure that activities are delivered to a consistently high standard and some specialisation may also be beneficial.

Benefits and impact

3.9 A lively programme of activities and events can prove popular and encourage those attending to make more use of their libraries and encourage others to do so. Library events are often the only affordable way for many people to engage in arts and cultural activities.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Promotes the role of the library as a community hub and lively cultural centre. • Allows events to be tailored and targeted at those in greatest need. • Encourages more users, particularly if events can be run at evenings and weekends. • A wider programme of events can be offered by working in partnership. • Central co-ordination and programming can improve the quality of the events. • Supports the development of literacy and learning among children and young people. • Addresses feelings of isolation and contributes to improved health and well-being.	• Events in open plan spaces can disturb users needing quiet for study.

Resource impact and affordability

3.10 This option envisages a new member of staff dedicated to the programming, design and co-ordination of events and activities, generally delivered by staff or partners. A capital investment would be required in audio-visual (AV) equipment and furniture to make libraries suitable for hosting high-quality events.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Resource for an event co-ordinator. Capital investment in AV equipment and furniture.	Revenue: £40k to include co-ordinator and staff training. Capital: to be determined, potentially in combination with option 2.3 to improve the interior of libraries.	N/A

This option may be affordable if other options are pursued that would free up resources that could be redirected. The value of an events programme would be limited if opening hours cannot be increased.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the current range of events and activities and any organisational and quality issues. • To review all libraries to identify suitable spaces and investments in furniture and AV equipment. • To collaborate with partners to plan a potential programme that would suit different communities, preferences and age groups. • To develop a planning and quality framework for event and activity planning. • To review staff support requirements and staff skills and create a development programme.	• To review satisfaction with existing activities and events. • To engage with library users to find out what type of events (and timings) that they would find useful. • To explore with local community groups the types of events that would be attractive and that they could support.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Introduces a co-ordinated programme of high-quality events and activities. • Encourages new users and strengthens community cohesion. • Supports learning and health and wellbeing.	£40k pa (revenue) TBD (capital)	Nil	***This option is worth exploring further if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service and if opening hours can be extended.***

Recommendation: to explore the option of extending a programme of improved events, working with partners if resources can be freed up by other changes.

Draft

Option 2.2: increase community language provision.

Introduction

3.11 Staff have indicated that there the current library collection does not adequately cater for particular community languages. This may require special stock selection arrangements, outside of the current supplier contract.

3.12 Specialist books collections catering for new communities can help to welcome them, providing opportunities to promote other Council services such as ESOL courses. The option to increase capacity for outreach would enable relationships to be built with community organisations who could help to target non-users.

Benefits and impact

3.13 The provision of specialised language collections can encourage new communities to use the library. Supported by outreach, this option can help target those most in need.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Increases the take-up of library services. • Allows targeting of those most in need. • Builds community cohesion. • Recognises the needs of community with particular language needs. • Supports engagement with communities not currently using the library.	• Could result in the dilution of the already small stock fund if additional resources are not found.

Resource impact and affordability

3.14 As a result of budget reductions, the revenue budget for books and materials is provisionally £300k funded through CIL funds which is time-limited. Spend was only £150k in 2022/23 and at that level it would be difficult to divert resources towards books and materials for community languages without an impact on the wider overall service.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Allocate budget for books and materials in community languages from within overall budget for books and materials.	Revenue: N/A, subject to the results of research and delivery and maintenance of CIL funding. Capital: N/A	N/A

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To research and verify the extent of local demand for books and materials in community languages. • To identify priority languages and locations and consult on stock acquisition.	• To engage with community groups to explore the extent of potential demand and need.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Can allow targeting of communities in greatest need. • Can support community cohesion.	Revenue: N/A, subject to the results of research and delivery and maintenance of CIL funding. Capital: N/A	Nil	***This option is worth exploring further if there is genuine need and potential demand.***

Recommendation: to explore an increase community language provision if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.

Draft

Option 2.3: improve signage, entrances and interiors

Introduction

3.15 Libraries built in the Victorian and Edwardian age tend to be designed around the requirements for a library to house a large number of bookstacks. This were generally fixed to walls and so the ground floor of many older libraries have solid walls at ground floor level with high ceilings with rooflights and windows *above* the bookstacks.

3.16 The replacement of physical reference books and journals with online material has reduced the need for as many bookstacks and so modern library design often exhibits a 'retail' aesthetic with extensive ground floor 'shop windows'. Modern library entrances are also glazed allowing passers-by to see into the library and the doorways are often less grand, but lighter and more welcoming. Many of Croydon's library entrances are messy and entrance lobbies are cluttered with unreadable notices. Staff have suggested replacing notices with updated (and professionally designed) notice on screens.

3.17 The interiors of most libraries are drab and dull although those in Norbury, Thornton Heath and Selsdon libraries are notable exceptions: their interiors are bright and the furniture comfortable and stylish. Another issue important to users is that not all libraries have accessible toilets.

3.18 While the interior of Selsdon Library is attractively designed, its exterior is anonymous. Like most of Croydon's libraries, there is minimal exterior signage indicating the presence of the library. With the exception of Thornton Heath Library and Norbury Library (at least at night when the sign is illuminated), signage is often almost invisible.

3.19 Users know where their libraries are and are more likely to tolerate their faults. Non-users (the majority of the population) often don't and have no prominent visual reminders of their library's presence. Once inside, non-users will find most libraries' interiors to be so dull and uninspiring that they may not want to return. The design of children's libraries can be visually exciting and stimulate the imagination, but too many of their interiors in Croydon need investment.

Benefits and impact

3.20 A highly visible library with an inviting entrance, an attractive interior and comfortable furniture will encourage more people to use it - and more often. Thoughtful design also can preserve key aspects of a library's heritage, reusing and refurbishing existing furniture and fittings where practical.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Prominent signage will inform or remind people of the library's presence. • Better designed entrances and interiors will welcome non-users (and users) and provide a better experience for people with disabilities. • Well-designed furniture will be more practical and encourage people to visit more often. • Visually stimulating children's libraries will encourage them (and their parents) to make more use of their library. • Accessible design and accessible toilets will allow people to stay longer and benefit people with disabilities. • Users and non-users will be more likely to use the service.	• Poorly designed signage would detract from the façade of the building and the streetscape. • While most people will probably welcome nicer interiors, some may question the expenditure. • Some users may be attached to their library just the way it is. •

Resource impact and affordability

3.21 One-off capital funding has been made available to invest in library buildings. Some of this can be allocated to improving signage, entrances and interiors.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Invest in works to improve signage, entrances and interior design.	Revenue: direction and sponsorship of the project can be met from existing management resources. Project management costs can be capitalised. Capital: subject to site surveys, design standards and extent of any works required.	N/A

Good interior design is needed to ensure that a clear and consistent standard is set that makes a noticeable impact within limited budgets.

Draft

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To commission a simple design manual for signage, entrances and library interiors that can be rolled out as resources allow and adapted to each site. • To undertake site surveys to assess the extent of works required and to estimate costs. • To explore the replacement of notices with screens. • To develop a programme of works and project manage its delivery.	• To test design options with focus groups representative of users and non-users. • To consult disability group representatives on accessibility aspects of design standard. • To test design options with staff. • To consult on individual library designs plans with local users, friends' groups and any partners.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Prominent signage will alert and remind non-users and users of the location of libraries. • Well-designed entrances will welcome users and non-users. • Good quality interior design and furniture will improve the experience of using the library, particularly for those using libraries for research and study. • Improvements in signage and interior design will encourage more users.	£nil (revenue) Management direction can be met within existing resources. £TBC (capital) Project management costs may be capitalised and capital costs will be subject to design and survey and the number of libraries to upgrade.	Nil	***There is one-off capital allocated to improving libraries and the upgrading of signage and interiors are needed. There would be little point upgrading libraries that may be closed and so clarity will be needed on the closure option before investments are made.***

Recommendation: to pursue the option of improving signage, entrances and interiors

Option 2.4: improve libraries' IT offer

Introduction

3.22 An important aspect of a modern library service is the provision of free PCs, Wi-Fi and support with IT. This is particularly needed for people suffering from digital exclusion if they can't afford the cost of devices or broadband and data contracts. Even if households do have broadband and data contracts, some cannot afford devices for everyone that needs them. Demand for library PCs has been falling, but demand for Wi-Fi and printing has increased.

3.23 Library staff have highlighted that PCs need to be kept up-to-date to cope with the demands of the latest software and streaming. In the past, PCs and the network were very dated and this was associated with a severe drop-off in usage. To correct this, all IT equipment & network were updated by January 2020 with full fibre. It is possible that there is a lack of awareness of the improvements made, but there is a risk that the recent equipment could date rapidly and so a periodic replacement programme is required, probably as a capital investment.

3.24 Staff also pointed out the value of IT training and support to people who increasingly have to deal with completing online forms and often lack the confidence. Library staff are increasingly asked to provide complex support without the training or time needed. This was suggested as an area that could particularly benefit from more support from partners who run digital skills programme and from skilled volunteers. The service has secured an £80k grant to provide Clear Community Web IT training for both customers and for staff and volunteers over the next 3 years. The library service received a £150k grant to create a Digital Zone in Central Library; dedicated space is needed for IT training and more spaces in libraries could be identified to host such training.

Benefits and impact

3.25 Up-to-date IT equipment and IT training and support are particularly important for people who are digitally excluded or want to improve their IT skills.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Provides IT equipment that is fit-for-purpose. • Benefits people who cannot afford devices, broadband and/or data packages. • IT training gives people the confidence to take part in the digital world. • Supports people less confident in using technology, particularly older people. • Reduces the risk of digital exclusion in a world that increasingly demands 'digital by default'.	• Some users may feel libraries' IT provision detracts from what they see as their core purpose: physical books and materials.

Resource impact and affordability

3.26 A rolling programme of IT replacements is the best way to keep equipment up-to-date. Various partners already offer IT training and more may be willing to deliver IT training from libraries.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Introduction of rolling 5-year PC replacement programme.	Revenue: N/A Revenue for IT training: nil (either self-funded or delivered by partners). Capital: TBC	N/A

Routine IT equipment updates (eg of routers and switches) are covered by the Council's IT support arrangements. It is assumed that monitors will need a less frequent refresh. Good IT training depends on suitable IT training facilities which only some libraries can offer currently. An assessment is needed of whether it is possible to create IT training areas in all libraries.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To confirm the priorities for PC and monitor refreshes and develop a rolling programme. • To review all libraries and identify suitable rooms or zones for IT training. • To develop a delivery plan with the support of partners and/or volunteers.	• To engage with users and non-users over their IT training needs. • To engage with partners (including CALAT) to extend an IT training programme in libraries. • To test options for IT training among less confident IT users.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Provides improved IT provision for users who depend on the libraries' free IT. • Provides training to people who might otherwise be digitally excluded.	TBC	Nil	***Fit-for-purpose IT equipment and training are essential to deliver one of libraries' most important services. Funding for this should be built into the library service's base budget but this will only be possible if resources can be freed up by decisions on other options.***

Recommendation: to improve libraries' IT offer if the resources can be freed up.

Option 2.5: promote the library service's digital offer

Introduction

3.27 While physical versions of books still remain more popular than eBooks, the proportion of digital issues has increased steadily in recent years, accelerated by the pandemic. Digital issues have now reached 29% of all issues. The option of borrowing digital materials appears to be valued by a substantial proportion of active users.

3.28 Digital materials can be borrowed and downloaded from anywhere via the internet, so users do not need to visit a library at all. As a result, digital use is not impacted by the reduction in opening hours. The ability to download books and other materials remotely does risk users losing touch with their library, but the functionality of the app does include alerts and the ability to promote events and other activities in libraries. The new TLC Discovery Platform has recently been launched in Croydon which makes collections of ebooks and e audiobooks easier to access.

3.29 Most users and non-users are probably not aware of how easy it is to borrow eBooks and other digital materials and so this option envisages marketing that option further and increasing the budget for digital resources.

Benefits and impact

3.30 While the rate of growth in the sale of eBooks has reportedly slowed recently in the publishing industry, they are popular with a substantial and growing proportion of Croydon's library users and provide a convenient way of encouraging reading that is not dependent on library opening hours.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Encourages reading among users who are particularly open to using digital materials. • Provides access to reading to people who would otherwise struggle to visit library during their shortened opening hours. • Users using the digital app can be sent notifications about events and activities going in libraries. • Digital stock can be more accessible to visually impaired – more adaptable because you can control size of print as required and also access audio versions of titles.	• Reduces the incentive for users to visit a library and take advantage of other service offerings. • Some users are not interested or confident in using digital materials, especially among older users. • Screen use, particularly in the evening, is reported to impact on sleeping patterns. • Is not available to those who cannot afford smartphones, e-readers or tablets.

Resource impact and affordability

3.31 Digital materials are increasingly popular among library users

Resource	Cost	Saving
• Increase staffing resources by 0.2 fte to actively promote digital books and materials. • Increase stockfund for digital materials.	Revenue: £10k pa staffing. £20k pa increase in digital stock-fund. Capital: N/A	N/A

It should be noted that, as a member of The Libraries Consortium (TLC), the library service can access digital stock from all TLC members and so a judgement will be needed about what is a fair level of funding for digital stock for Croydon.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To benchmark against other TLC members to ensure Croydon's contribution to funding digital materials is fair. • To research the pattern of borrowing of digital materials and their distribution among users across the borough and whether active users are new to the service or have 'switched'.	• To test digital users' views on the range of digital materials on offer • To explore users' and non-users' awareness of the digital offer and their willingness to use it.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Encourages greater take-up of reading, despite the reduction in opening hours. • Communicates the digital offer available. • Could remove the incentive for library visits. • Does not benefit those who cannot afford smartphones, e-readers or tablets.	Revenue: £10k pa staffing. £20k pa increase in digital stock-fund. Capital: N/A	Nil	***More and more users are taking advantage of the digital offer and this may grow with better promotion. Given Croydon's limited stockfund, diverting further resources from physical to digital materials will reduce the limited resources for the physical stock most users prefer at present.***

Recommendation: to explore the promotion of digital books and materials if resources can be freed up by other options and subject to Croydon's contribution being fair to TLC's other members.

Option 2.6: train staff for more interactive support role

Introduction

3.32 Staff are increasingly drawn into providing support and advice to library users needing help with completing online forms or interpreting online guidance. Some public services as part of their move to 'digital by default' advise people to visit their libraries for help in completing online documents. Generally, public services have not consulted library services before providing this advice and staff report that they can often feel ill-equipped to help.

3.33 If libraries are going to provide more events and activities, they will also need to know more about them so that they can promote them. There are parallels with training for retail staff: they will require briefing on 'products' and 'promotions' by supervisors and training in how to 'sell' such services.

3.34 The provision of more support to the public over online forms and applications and the selling of services requires both training *and* capacity. Staff need to be freed up from routine tasks by encouraging more self-service (see option 3.2) so that they are not stuck behind counters.

Benefits and impact

3.35 The range of services that can be available in libraries (if resources allow) demands a much wider range of skills on the part of library staff. Library staff want to provide a great service but can only do so if they have the training and time needed.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Gives staff the skills and confidence to provide support to people in most need. • Provides staff with the knowledge to be able to promote library services, events and activities better. • Could increase the take-up of library services, especially by those most in need of digital support. • Gives staff the chance to provide a more complete service and gives them a richer role.	• Will only be possible if self-service can be maximised (see option 3.2), otherwise staff will not have the capacity to provide the support required.

Resource impact and affordability

3.36 There is no scope for providing staff training given current resourcing levels. Currently, if staff training is required, libraries have to close. This option will depend on the creation of capacity for staff training. In the past, public services and libraries opened half an

hour later one day a week to allow for staff training. Given the restricted opening hours currently available, this option will require additional resources to be freed up.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Increase in staffing budget to allow for staff training and new responsibility Trained staff would expect to go up to Grade 5 (aligned with Access)	Revenue: 8 staff at Grade 4 to Grade 5 = £12,800pa Capital: N/A	N/A

As the role of library staff becomes ever broader, the skills required becomes more challenging. Requiring those skills and retaining staff with those skills will challenge the current grading and employment package of staff and a review may be required.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify the changes in staffing and rosters needed to allow for training and regular briefings. • To develop a protocol for supervisor briefings and a training programme for staff.	• To explore with users the support they receive from staff and what they value most. • To consult with staff on their skill needs and priorities for training.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Additional staffing budget required to roster staff for training. • Requires a cycle of specialist training.	£12,800	Nil	***Funding for this should be built into the library service's base budget but this will only be possible if resources can be freed up by decisions on other options.***

Recommendation: to pursue the option of training staff for more interactive support role if the resources can be freed up.

4. Options for addressing primary outcome 3: "our service is more efficient"

Preamble

4.1 The supporting outcomes and success criteria for this primary outcome are:

Table E5: supporting outcomes and specific evaluation criteria for primary outcome 2

Supporting outcomes	Success criteria
• We are delivering better value within the resources we have. • We generate more income from events and venue hire. • More people are willing to help.	• Improves the unit costs of the service. • Increases income from paid-for services. • Increases partner and voluntary support.

4.2 In this section, we explore ways of making the service more efficient and making better use of the library building assets and reducing 'unit costs' (eg the cost per visit) within existing budgets.

4.3 As part of the changes agreed in 2021, there was an intention to:

- Co-locate services in libraries. As outlined in the review report at Appendix A, little progress has been made in finding partners to share library facilities and this has not been helped by the severe reduction in library opening hours.
- Encourage more volunteering. This has proved more challenging and the number and type of volunteers has become more limited. Lack of staff capacity is an issue as some staff in branches are too busy responding to customers to spend time training and supporting new volunteers. Volunteer feedback is not always positive because the staff are too busy to help them or give them a range of tasks when they are on site. IT volunteers have found they are not so much helping residents get online and increasingly supporting residents in completing forms, often finding this stressful especially in Central Library. Part time opening hours mean that volunteers can only help on certain days which does not support the momentum of regular volunteering and makes work experience impossible.

4.4 This unfinished business is revisited in this section alongside other options for the future designed to:

- Make better use of technology to free up staff resources.
- Generate income from library buildings.
- Improve library buildings' energy efficiency.
- Explore transferring individual libraries to community management.

Option 3.1: co-locate libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT

Introduction

4.5 Library services have found that locating services in shared buildings can generate greater footfall for each service. Some councils have co-located libraries with leisure centres and others in 'joint service centres' which include other services such as health, housing and community services. Some have amalgamated their library and adult education services, using shared buildings.

4.6 New Addington library shares its building with CALAT and other services. The library service has explored the potential for further co-location with other services, although none have yet progressed to the point of sharing a facility. There is likely to be greater impetus as the Council reviews its other assets, including those used by community organisations. Discussion have taken place with CALAT about greater collaboration over site usage and this is being explored further.

4.7 Some libraries do have spaces that can be shared with other partners, eg Thornton Heath and Norbury.

Benefits and impact

4.8 Sharing buildings can encourage more crossover between services and reduce the overheads of running a building. As outlined in option 1.4, the buildings have to be of the right design and in the right place.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Reduces the overhead of building management for each service. • Encourages greater footfall and crossover for each service. • Can dramatically increase service usage (if in the right building and in the right place). • Close collaboration can enable more cost-effective joint programming and marketing.	• If the library service opening hours remain part-time, the benefits of co-location will be reduced. • The management of the building can become more complex if the services operate at different times (eg evening classes). • Services can lose their distinctiveness and visibility within a larger building. • If the library is moved to a new location, this may impact on current users attached to the existing building or for whom the new location is less convenient.

Resource impact and affordability

4.9 The sharing of a facility can generate income for the library service or savings if redundant buildings can be released for re-use or disposal.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Joint planning is required to support co-location but should be contained within management budgets. Savings should be achievable through rental income or releasing assets and their building management costs.	Revenue: N/A Capital: TBC (expenditure may be required for adaptations to allow for sharing).	£tbc Savings will be dependent on any sites released or income from rent.

4.10 The ideal co-location is one where the services collaborate to maximise the mutual benefits of sharing, rather than creating siloed spaces.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify the library sites that have spare capacity. • To identify partners' buildings with spare capacity that might be suitable. • To assess their building for its suitability, condition, management costs and cost of adaptation. • To identify how sharing would operate, including the sharing of costs.	• To consult users over a potential change of location or change to their own library if it impacts on their use of the building. • To explore the possibility of co-location or deeper collaboration with potential partners.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Co-locating services can increase footfall and users. • Co-location can reduce the overheads of managing and maintaining buildings. • Changing a library's location could impact on existing users and require consultation.	Revenue: N/A Capital: TBC (expenditure may be required for adaptations to allow for sharing).	£tbc Savings will be dependent on any sites released or income from rent.	***Co-location can help to reduce the cost of building overheads but can be contentious. Any location shared by the library service needs to be in the right building in the right location. Co-location and collaboration often requires culture change.***

Recommendation: to explore further co-locating libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT

Option 3.2: increase IT and checkout self-service

Introduction

4.11 Self-service checkouts are now common-place in retail and, after some initial resistance, shoppers can become used to it and many actively choose self-service checkouts. Similarly, users can use self-checkout in Croydon's libraries and most books are now checked out this way.

4.12 Users of printing and photocopying facilities can also use the equipment without assistance and pay for their use. However, they can only pay by cash as payment by card is not yet functional. It is intended to resolve this shortly by implementing the Council's new payment system in all libraries using the new kiosks.

4.13 Staff encourage users to use self-service, but the option for users to ask staff to check out a book or take payment for printing remains. It should continue to do so, but self-service can be encouraged further as the 'default' approach for the vast majority of transactions. The public often value the human contact offered at a counter, but by freeing staff from manual processes, they will be freed up to provide the more interactive role described in option 2.7.

Benefits and impact

4.14 Improved self-service functionality and increased take-up of self-service options can free staff up to leave the counter and to provide a more interactive support role. They will still provide human contact, but from the other side of the counter.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Self-service checkout and printing and copying reduces the administrative burden on staff. • Users are increasingly happy to use self-service and this will simply reinforce that trend. • Staff will be freed up to play a more interactive support role within the library. • Check-out and payment at the counter will remain available.	• Many users are put off by self-service and take time to learn how to do it. • Until a user gets the hang of self-service, staff will spend some initial time showing them how. • Many users value the human contact with staff when checking out books.

Resource impact and affordability

4.15 The technology is largely already in place and the final piece of functionality (card payments for printing and copying) will be available shortly.

Resource	Cost	Saving
No extra resources required.	Revenue: £nil Capital: N/A (already paid for)	Not realisable (see below)

Given that most users already use self-service, the shift to self-service by default will not produce realisable savings but will allow staff to spend more time assisting users on the floor of the library.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify the timetable for resolving the delay in introducing card payment for printing and copying. • To introduce monitoring of the proportion of transactions that are self-service. • To train staff in how to encourage reluctant users to make use of self-service.	• To explore with users the barriers to using self-service. • To work with staff to identify the best way of maximising self-service and overcoming the fear of a loss of human contact.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Encouraging more self-service will reduce the burden on staff of routine administration. • Some users are not keen on self-service and value human contact. • Freeing staff up to play a more interactive role on the library floor will provide human contact for those who want it. • Frees staff to target support to those who need it most.	Revenue: £nil Capital: N/A (already paid for)	Not realisable (see above)	***This option completes the shift towards self-service and makes it the default approach. It frees staff up to play a more interactive support role with users who need it.***

Recommendation: to pursue increased IT and checkout self-service in order to free staff for a more interactive support role.

Option 3.3: explore alternative management arrangements

Introduction

4.16 Principally in order to reduce costs, many councils have experimented with alternative management arrangements or 'sourcing' of their library services. Models have included outsourcing the service, spinning it off into a charitable trust or transferring libraries to community management. The experience of these alternative service models has been mixed.

4.17 Croydon Council's experience was not a positive one. A contract was awarded in 2013 to John Laing Integrated Services which was promptly bought out by Carillion which then collapsed in 2018. The Council then had to take the service back in-house. In recent consultation, the survey results demonstrated that respondents were not keen on the alternatives to in-house delivery.

Assessing the options

4.18 There are four main options for sourcing library services and a high-level evaluation is summarised below.

Option	Key considerations	Explore further?
Make: continue to deliver the library service in-house	• Staff costs and overheads are likely to be more expensive. • There is a track record of delivering much improved library buildings (eg Thornton Heath, Norbury and Selsdon). • Volunteering is at a low base and offers the potential for improving the service. • Opportunities for co-location with other services, particularly council services. • Service use has fallen dramatically in recent years due to the impacts of COVID and of the severe reduction in opening hours. • The library service in Croydon is comparatively cheap and stretched so the potential for further staff savings is limited without severely degrading the service. **Potential savings: low**	Yes: to continue in-house provision as it is better able to deliver shared premises and the fastest results.

Option	Key considerations	Explore further?
Buy: procure from private or third sector	• There is not a competitive market for library outsourcing, but there is a local option in GLL (Better) who already deliver leisure services for the Council. • Savings from outsourcing are in large part dependent on lower staff pay and conditions. • Procurement process costly and potentially abortive and would delay changes or savings. • Introduces client-side costs for contract management. • The most recent survey showed opposition to this option. **Potential savings: moderate**	No: outsourcing would be high risk and time-consuming for uncertain returns given that there is not a competitive market for library outsourcing.
Share: collaborate to share expertise or resources.	• Existing track record of collaboration through The Libraries Consortium (TLC) which, through economies of scale, allows greater innovation. • The Consortium provides a shared library management system and My Library App which is being developed further. The authorities in the Consortium share their stock with Croydon (and vice versa). • The track record in London of fully shared library services has been problematic and few savings would result as the service has few 'back office' resources and the library system is shared already with TLC. Shared library services take time to set up and maintain for limited returns. **Potential savings: low/moderate**	Yes: to continue membership of The Libraries Consortium. No: to pursue a fully shared library service with another Council.

Option	Key considerations	Explore further?
Divest: devolve or transfer to third sector or community.	• The community management of individual libraries may provide an alternative to closures. • The most recent survey showed opposition to this option. • There is no track record of community management of libraries in Croydon. Will take several years to build capacity and can be precarious. This option generally involves some form of ongoing investment from the local authority to support the community managed operations. • Spin-out charity would take time to and resources to establish and might not be successful in the procurement process that would be required and the spin-out may not be viable. **Potential savings: low/moderate**	Yes: to explore the potential for community management of individual libraries if there is interest. No: to spinning out the service to a charitable body.

4.19 This high-level analysis suggests that there is little point pursuing outsourcing, a fully shared service with another borough or a spin-out. Instead, the recommended **approach is to**:

- Continue with in-house management of the service as this can deliver change faster.
- Continue collaboration with The Libraries Consortium due to its benefits.
- Explore the potential for community management of individual library buildings as an alternative to closure, while noting the opposition shown in the 2021 survey results.

Benefits and impact

4.20 This assessment focuses on the benefits and impacts of the recommended approach (ie continuing in-house, collaborating with TLC and exploring potential community management of individual libraries).

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Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• In-house management is more responsive and can deliver change faster. • The service has a track record of improvements under in-house management. • Membership of The Libraries Consortium provides considerable benefits and economies of scale. • There may be appetite for community management of individual library buildings.	• The last survey showed opposition to community management. • Credible community management can take time to emerge and time to mature. • Without a sustainable business plan, problems can emerge with community management due to a lack of capacity or resources (eg for repairs and maintenance).

Resource impact and affordability

4.21 The recommended approach has a resource impact in relation to exploring community management for individual libraries. Interest in community management is likely to be higher for library buildings at risk of closure (if the closure option is pursued), but there may be interest in other library buildings which the Council would want to remain a core part of the library service. In either instance, resources would be required, eg for exploring credible community management options; agreeing on a model; undertaking a condition survey; completing any urgent remedial work; negotiating a lease and operating agreement as part of a 'community asset transfer'.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Project resources to explore the potential for community management.	Revenue: £TBC (one-off project management costs, depending on the number of options explored). Capital: TBC (subject to the terms of the lease and operating agreement).	TBC There may be savings from transferring a library building to community management, but there may be ongoing costs that reduce the savings that might result from a closure.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To identify potential models for community management that are sustainable. • To identify potential interested parties and explore their proposed approach, suitability and stability. • To review the business plans of potential community operators before agreeing any asset transfer.	• To explore whether there are community management options, particularly for any libraries at risk of closure. • To consult the public on the possibility of community management options.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• In-house management for the bulk of the service allows faster change. • Membership of The Libraries Consortium delivers benefits and economies of scale. • Community management of individual libraries may offer an alternative to closure. • There was opposition to community management in the last survey.	Revenue: £TBC (one-off project management costs). Capital: TBC	TBC There may be savings from transferring a library building to community management, but there may be ongoing costs.	***Overall the recommended approach to management continues current arrangements. The option of community management of individual libraries may be an alternative to closure, but any residual costs would reduce the savings flowing from closures.***

Recommendation: to continue with in-house management of the library service and membership of The Libraries Consortium but explore the potential for community management of individual libraries at risk of closure.

Option 3.4: invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers

Introduction

4.22 Library services increasingly rely on volunteers to help deliver their service. Some have over the years developed a model with large numbers of volunteers who undertake tasks that suit their skills and preferences, from routine tasks through to IT coaching. This has, at least initially, depended on a full-time volunteer co-ordinator.

4.23 However, formal volunteering has declined over the last decade across the public and voluntary sector and that decline accelerated following the outbreak of the pandemic[11]. This trend has also affected Croydon's library services. As part of the changes agreed in 2021, it was intended to recruit more volunteers in order to help keep all thirteen libraries open. This has not been a success.

4.24 In 2019/20 Croydon Libraries had 201 volunteers delivering 6,218 volunteer hours. However, many of the volunteers pre-COVID did not return after the Pandemic and it has been difficult to build back to the levels of 2019 which would not have been enough to increase open hours then. The priority has been to recruit IT volunteers and local volunteers for the branches, especially to be in the branches over lunchtimes to avoid closures, and there are currently only 41 regular volunteers across all branches fulfilling these roles, but certainly not enough to confidently increase open hours. Factors identified by the Volunteer Co-ordinator include cost of living priorities reducing the number of regular volunteers, and our own limited capacity to provide support with subsistence and training. Staff on site say they often find it difficult to provide new volunteers with timely training and support.

4.25 Staff and supervisors have described the difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers who may not always be reliable. There have been suggestions that the roles of volunteers could be made more rewarding and that all staff need to be trained on how best to encourage and support volunteers. The officer responsible for volunteer co-ordination would benefit from extra support.

4.26 There is a full time Volunteer Co-ordinator who co-ordinates the promotion, recruitment, DBS checks, and administration of the volunteer service. Following advice from Croydon Volunteer Action, she has set up key policies and uses the Better impact database to administer the applications and communication which streamlines the process. However, her time is taken up with operational and daily queries and she has limited capacity for the wider promotion and marketing of the volunteer offer. More capacity within the senior frontline staff would allow her to delegate control over the interview, selection and training process for the volunteers in their branches, and leave the Co-ordinator with time to grow the quantity and quality of the Volunteer programme. Reinstating the volunteer expenses element would attract more volunteers and enable existing volunteers to work more daily hours (currently limited because we cannot cover a contribution towards lunches).

[1] 1. DCMS: Community Life Survey 2021/22

Benefits and impact

4.27 Volunteers can bring invaluable skills and enthusiasm and help to improve the service, but need to have roles that are attractive to them and to have the encouragement and support of the staff they work with. Volunteers (and sometimes staff and the public) worry that volunteers will be used to displace staff jobs, but their prime role would be to help improve the service.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Volunteers can help the library service to expand its offer and improve quality. • Volunteering can be rewarding. • Volunteers can bring a range of skills and experiences to the service. • Volunteers can help to keep the service operating efficiently.	• Volunteers can feel taken for granted if not appreciated and supported. • Volunteers can become bored with routine tasks. • Volunteers may not have the skills or knowledge needed to respond to enquiries from the public. • Volunteers can be unreliable and need co-ordination. • Volunteers can be seen as a threat to paid employment.

Resource impact and affordability

4.28 The transformation of the level of volunteering in the library service would require additional project support to help the volunteer co-ordinator to revisit the roles of volunteers, to introduce more marketing, to train staff and to support volunteers with any issues they face.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Provide one-year additional project support to the volunteer co-ordinator.	Revenue: £40k (one-off) Capital: N/A	Savings should materialise downstream, but at the margins of the staff budget.

The use of volunteers can help a library service to function effectively but cannot at the moment be relied upon to support professional library staff to the extent needed. This depends on resources to co-ordinate and on freeing resources to enable library staff to select and train volunteers.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the numbers and types of volunteering opportunities available. • To review the roles of volunteers, drawing on feedback from staff and volunteers. • To develop a marketing plan for library volunteering. • To train staff in the skills and approaches needed to support and encourage volunteers.	• To consult staff and volunteers on their experience of volunteering. • To explore with volunteers the types of roles that they would be interested in and the help they need. • To explore with the public what their perceptions are of volunteering and the barriers to them taking part.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Volunteers can help to improve the quality of the library service and its efficiency. • Volunteering can be a rewarding experience. • Recruiting, retaining and supporting volunteers require effort. • Volunteering can be viewed negatively by some staff and members of the public.	Revenue: £40k (one-off) Capital: N/A	Savings should materialise downstream, but at the margins of the staff budget.	***Volunteers can be integral to a successful library service but require support and co-ordination (and frontline staff resources to be freed up). Using volunteers to replace paid staff is unlikely to be successful.***

Recommendation: to invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers.

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Option 3.5: increase income generation

Introduction

4.29 The library service has a number of spaces that could be suitable for hiring out for events or meetings, as noted during briefings with community groups. The spaces include the community hall on the first floor at Norbury Library and training rooms and an IT suite on the lower ground floor of Thornton Heath Library. There are spaces in other libraries that may be suitable, but some alterations may be required.

4.30 This is a competitive market, but the libraries offer a different style and setting to other venues and so there may be some potential for the service to run a venue hire operation. To do this effectively, the service would need to invest in marketing and sales capacity and in AV equipment. There would also need to be staff training to support hirers. A key barrier to success is the current pattern of opening hours which would either limit the availability of spaces or incur costs for opening just for a venue hire booking.

4.31 The option of providing cafés was suggested. There is already provision for a café at Norbury Library, but it was not practical to open it when the library was part-time. It may in any case be difficult to let given that it has no external 'shopfront'. Cafes in libraries can be difficult to operate successfully unless they have the right location and sufficient library footfall. The Norbury Library café option could be revisited after a period of Open+ operation. It was also suggested that charges could be introduced for dedicated 'hotdesking' workspace and this has been trialled in other library services, but this is now a saturated market and there is a trend for employers to encourage office workers to spend more time at the workplace.

Benefits and impact

4.32 If there is a market for the hire of libraries' spaces, this could generate valuable income, although there are barriers to overcome. Cafés in libraries are not generally successful given the need for a shopfront and suitable library opening hours.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Venue hire can bring valuable income, particularly for large spaces. • The libraries could, with the right investment, provide attractive venues for corporate and community events and for celebrations. • Visitors to venues would be able to enjoy their visit to the library and come more often. • Hires for community events or celebrations could reinforce libraries' roles as hubs for the community.	• Venue hire requires professional management and there are reputational risks if hirers are let down in any way or their safety is compromised. • This can be a diversion for staff from their everyday activities. • Busy events (eg parties) can be distracting for library users and disruptive for neighbours (unless carefully managed).

• Café provision could attract more users.	• Finding operators for café spaces in libraries can prove difficult and the financial return can be low.

Resource impact and affordability

4.33 Success in venue hire depends on a professional approach and an investment in resources, kit and skills.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Specialist resource to develop a business plan and business case. Venue hire manager (fixed term and part-time).	Revenue: £25k (one-off) for business plan and business case. £24k pa for venue manager. Capital: TBA, dependent on site assessment, survey and adaptations required.	TBC income depends on business plan and case and number of spaces for hire and hire rates achievable.

Before pursuing a more active venue hire operation, a business plan and business case would be needed to confirm that the net returns are worthwhile. If not, a reactive venue hire operation may be more realistic. The return to the Council from a concession fee from a café operator is likely to be poor.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• Develop business plan assessing the local market for venue hire and whether there is a gap in the market for spaces in libraries and potential pricing. • Review all suitable spaces and identify equipment and adaptations needed. • Develop a business case identifying investment requirements, potential income, ROI and annual net return after taking account of venue hire sales and support costs. • Confirm the most suitable model for venue hire (active or reactive). • Review the option of café provision if staffed opening hours can be increased, subject to market analysis and a business plan.	• Engage with staff to identify what's involved and their appetite to make this work. • Identify training requirements with them. • Engage with local communities over need to balance hire and community use.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Venue hire can bring valuable income but must be resourced to be run professionally. • Regular venue hire for meetings, events and celebrations would help to cement libraries as focal points for the community. • Venue hire can be disruptive for users, staff and neighbours if not managed well. • Part-time opening would make a professional venue hire operation more challenging. • A café would be attractive to users, but finding operators can be difficult.	Revenue: £25k (one-off) for business plan and business case. £24k pa for part-time venue manager. Capital: TBA, dependent adaptations required.	TBC income depends on business plan and case and number of spaces for hire and hire rates achievable.	***Venue hire can be lucrative for the right venues. This is a crowded market and careful planning, and resources would be required to make a success of it. While the gross income might be attractive, the net return is key. Concession fee income from a café operator would be low.***

Recommendation: to explore further the introduction of a venue hire service in order to generate income from library spaces and to revisit café provision once attendances have increased at Norbury Library.

Draft

Option 3.6: invest in energy efficiency

Introduction

4.34 A number of the library buildings are difficult to heat in winter and difficult to keep cool in summer. This is particularly true of older libraries with high ceilings and rooflights such as Norbury Library or with large single-glazed windows such as South Norwood Library. Although recently refurbished, Norbury Library had to close in 2022 during a hot spell of weather for health and safety reasons as it was severely overheated.

4.35 As well as making the libraries uncomfortable for users and staff, poor energy performance leads to large energy bills and contributes to the climate emergency. There is an imperative to improve the energy efficiency of the borough's libraries or to find better buildings.

Benefits and impact

4.36 Improved energy efficiency improves the experience of users and staff, reduces costs and helps to save the planet.

Summary of benefits and impacts

Benefits	Negative impacts
• Improves the experience of users and staff and so encourages the public to use the library more. • Reduces the cost of energy uses. • Reduces libraries' carbon footprint. • Possible to bid to funding streams such as the £230m Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.	• Retrofitting energy efficiency measures can be difficult and expensive, especially in old and/or listed buildings. • Retrofitting can take time and require closures or partial closures. • While there may be an invest to save case, funding the investment can prove challenging.

Resource impact and affordability

4.37 Energy efficiency measures require careful planning and costing and may require additional resources for the council's Estates team.

Resource	Cost	Saving
Energy efficiency assessment. Project management and bid writing.	Revenue: TBC Capital: TBC (subject to scheme development).	TBC There will be savings in energy costs.

If there is a question mark about the future of some libraries, it would be advisable to defer decisions on investment in their energy efficiency.

Further work required in next phase

Research and analysis	Engagement issues to explore
• To review the energy performance of each library. • To undertake a study into measures for improving energy efficiency in each library. • To develop an energy efficiency scheme for the library network. • To explore potential funding pots ready for fund-raising.	• To consult staff on their experience of the issues with managing temperatures in their libraries. • To consult planning staff over any impacts on the fabric of listed buildings and in relation to conservation and local heritage areas. • To consult friends' groups over energy efficiency proposals for each library and any changes to the building's fabric.

Summary and viability

Summary of impact	Costs	Savings	Viability
• Improved energy efficiency will improve users' and staff experience and encourage use. • Energy costs will be reduced. • The carbon footprint of libraries will be reduced. • The impact of retrofitting energy efficiency measures on the fabric of listed and historic buildings will need to be considered.	Revenue: TBC Capital: TBC	TBC There will be savings in energy costs.	***This is essential work for the future of the planet and may be difficult to fund unless the Council is successful in external fundraising.***

Recommendation: to pursue investing in energy efficiency.

Draft

5. Summary of recommendations

5.1 The options recommended to be pursued in the next phase of work are summarised below.

5.2 The options for improving the library network are dependent on the reallocation of savings from library closures. The detailed analysis of the options for library closure (option 1.5) is contained in Appendix C.

5.3 The estimated costs detailed against these recommendations in Sections 2 to 4 of this report represent the preferred resourcing and delivery mechanism for delivering the service outcomes. However given the ongoing pressure on Council budgets it is not viable for the Council to progress with this expenditure and alternative models for delivering the outcomes have been proposed, as outlined in the table below.

Table E6: options recommended to be pursued in the next phase

Option	Recommendation	Proposed new service model
1.2	To explore further the option of evening and Saturday opening if resources can be freed up within the service.	Additional staff requirement factored into new service model budget through some reinvestment of costs
1.3	To undertake a review of the performance of Open+ at Selsdon and Norbury Libraries and lessons learned in advance of further extension.	The Council will seek to extend self service access using technology security systems to reduce additional revenue cost where possible
1.4	To develop a long-term plan for improving library locations to be implemented as opportunities arise in consultation with local communities.	The service will continue to work closely with other Council departments to seek long term opportunities to develop the service
1.5	To consult formally on the option of closing the poorer performing and less viable library buildings in order to resource remaining libraries for longer hours and improve the overall service.	This is included in proposals for public consultation
1.6	To explore and test the option of a 'library link' service further.	This is included in proposals for public consultation as part of a wider outreach offer
1.7	To explore the resourcing of marketing and outreach if the service in libraries can be improved by other options.	The full cost of £77k is not proposed in the new model. A budget of £24k is proposed for a post supporting outreach, fundraising and engagement focused in areas impacted by

Option	Recommendation	Proposed new service model
		closures as part of the mitigations.
2.1	To explore the option of extending a programme of improved events, working with partners if resources can be freed up by other changes.	The proposed £40k for this service is not included in the new model. The service will seek to deliver programme activity through partnerships and fundraising.
2.2	To explore an increase community language provision if resources can be freed up by other changes to the service.	This is proposed to be funded through the libraries book stock investment from Community Infrastructure Levy.
2.3	To pursue the option of improving signage, entrances and interiors.	No specific budget is allocated for this in the proposals. A review and prioritisation of the capital needs and improvement plans in the service will be undertaken following approval of the new service model.
2.4	To improve libraries' IT offer if the resources can be freed up.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will use grant funding and partnerships to improve the offer for residents.
2.5	To explore the promotion of digital books and materials if resources can be freed up by other options and subject to Croydon's contribution being fair to TLC's other members.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will use grant funding and partnerships to improve the offer for residents.
2.6	To pursue the option of training staff for more interactive support role if the resources can be freed up.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will use grant funding and partnerships to improve the offer for residents.
3.1	To explore further co-locating libraries and other services and closer collaboration with CALAT.	This is included within the proposals for public consultation.
3.2	To pursue increased IT and checkout self-service in order to free staff for a more interactive support role.	This is included within the proposals for public consultation.

Option	Recommendation	Proposed new service model
3.3	To continue with in-house management of the library service and membership of The Libraries Consortium but explore the potential for community management of individual libraries at risk of closure.	This is included within the proposals for public consultation.
3.4	To invest in increasing the number and scope of volunteers.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will seek to develop the volunteer programme through reallocation of existing resources.
3.5	To explore further the introduction of a venue hire service in order to generate income from library spaces and to revisit café provision once attendances have increased at Norbury Library.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will seek to develop the hires programme through reallocation of existing resources.
3.6	To pursue investing in energy efficiency.	No additional resource is proposed for this within the new service model but the service will work in partnership with other Council teams to seek funding opportunities.

5.4 The option of reversing the cut to the library budget is also not recommended given the Council's financial position. Options for alternative management arrangements for the library service were explored in option 3.3. In that option, the potential for outsourcing or spinning out the service into a charitable body were considered but were not recommended.

Table E7: options not recommended to be pursued

Option	Recommendation
1.1	To not pursue reversing the library budget cut to extend staffed opening hours in the existing network further given the Council's financial position.

Appendix C

Analysis of closure options

Draft

1. Introduction

About this appendix

1.1 In chapter 10 of the review report at appendix A, we summarised a longlist of options for change that were designed to achieve the strategic outcomes for the Library Service Review. The longlist of options was evaluated, resulting in a recommended shortlist. In this appendix, we explain why we are proposing re-opening the option of closing some libraries.

1.2 Given our conclusion that it is not feasible for the Council to spend more on the library service, improvements to the service would need to be found from savings elsewhere in the library service's budget. Saving money by closing some libraries would release significant resources which could fund some of the improvements in the options longlist.

1.3 Library managers are very reluctant to propose closures but believe that this is the only way to improve the overall performance of the service given that it is very unlikely that the Council will be able to increase funding to the service. Although some of the other options are designed to deliver some savings from efficiencies, these would not deliver enough to fund more than a handful of the improvement measures.

1.4 The main way to release sufficient funds to deliver more improvements across the service would be to close a number of the poorer performing and less viable library buildings.

1.5 In this appendix, we summarise all of the borough's libraries and consider their performance and viability and the impact of closure. More details on each library can be found in Appendix F which includes detailed site profiles for each library which help to inform these options.

1.6 We then recommend four libraries to be considered for closure, subject to formal consultation, together with a number of measures to deal with some of the effects of closure. The remaining nine libraries are proposed to be retained with investment and improvements in the service offer and model.

Why consider closures again?

1.7 The Council decided in 2021 to seek £500k in savings from the library service and to consult on a proposal to close five libraries:

- Bradmore Green
- Broad Green
- Sanderstead
- Shirley
- South Norwood

1.8 In the first round of consultation, participants showed strong opposition to the proposed closures. In response to the feedback, the Council decided not to progress with the

closure option and instead consulted on a range of alternative options for savings (see chapter 8 of the review report at Appendix A). The option preferred by a majority of respondents was to reduce the opening hours by 21%, with 56% of respondents preferring that option.

1.9 The Council decided to proceed with the reduction in staffed opening hours which would be accompanied by measures including introducing Open+ (ie self-service opening) and encouraging more volunteering. For the reasons set out in chapter 9, these measures failed.

1.10 First, the introduction of Open+ proved technically complex, slow and expensive and so Open+ has been implemented in only two libraries so far of the planned five. It is too early to judge the success of Open+ although take-up in Selsdon Library (introduced from May 2023) has been low. It was introduced in Norbury Library from October 2023.

1.11 Second, it has proved very difficult to recruit and retain volunteers and numbers are far lower than hoped. This reflects a downwards trend in formal volunteering in recent years, which worsened further as a result of the pandemic.

1.12 As a result of these problems, the actual reduction in opening hours since April 2022 has been 39% (if Open+ opening hours are included) or 48% (if they are excluded).

1.13 Croydon's library service take-up fell during the pandemic when libraries were closed due to lockdowns, and service take-up has been recovering slowly. However, as outlined in chapter 9 of the review report at Appendix A, following the reduction in opening hours, user numbers have fallen considerably, with the exception of the rise in the number of issues of books and other materials thanks to a big increase in issues of digital books and materials which now have a 29% share of all issues in 2022/23. This increase in issues of books and materials, while welcome, is from a very low base compared with issues per head of population in other councils.

1.14 We concluded in chapter 10 of the review report at Appendix A that, **despite the best endeavours of committed library staff and the enthusiastic support of loyal library users, Croydon's library service is now a failing service.**

1.15 We are exploring the option of library closures as a way to release resources that can be re-invested in repairing the damage caused by the changes made in 2022.

2. Understanding the current library network in Croydon

2.1 Croydon is the London Borough with the largest population and the third largest geographical area. In this section we highlight some key data that helps to provide an overview of the library service and the population it serves.

2.2 We begin by showing a series of maps. These maps are designed to aid understanding of the borough and its population but need some explaining. These maps present data from updated 2021 Census data and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 allows relative deprivation levels across the country to be compared.

2.3 The index is based on population data at Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level: "LSOAs were created based on 2011 Census data by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). There are 32,844 LSOAs in the country and of these 220 LSOAs are in Croydon. Each one has between 400 and 1,200 households with between 1,000 and 3,000 people"[1].

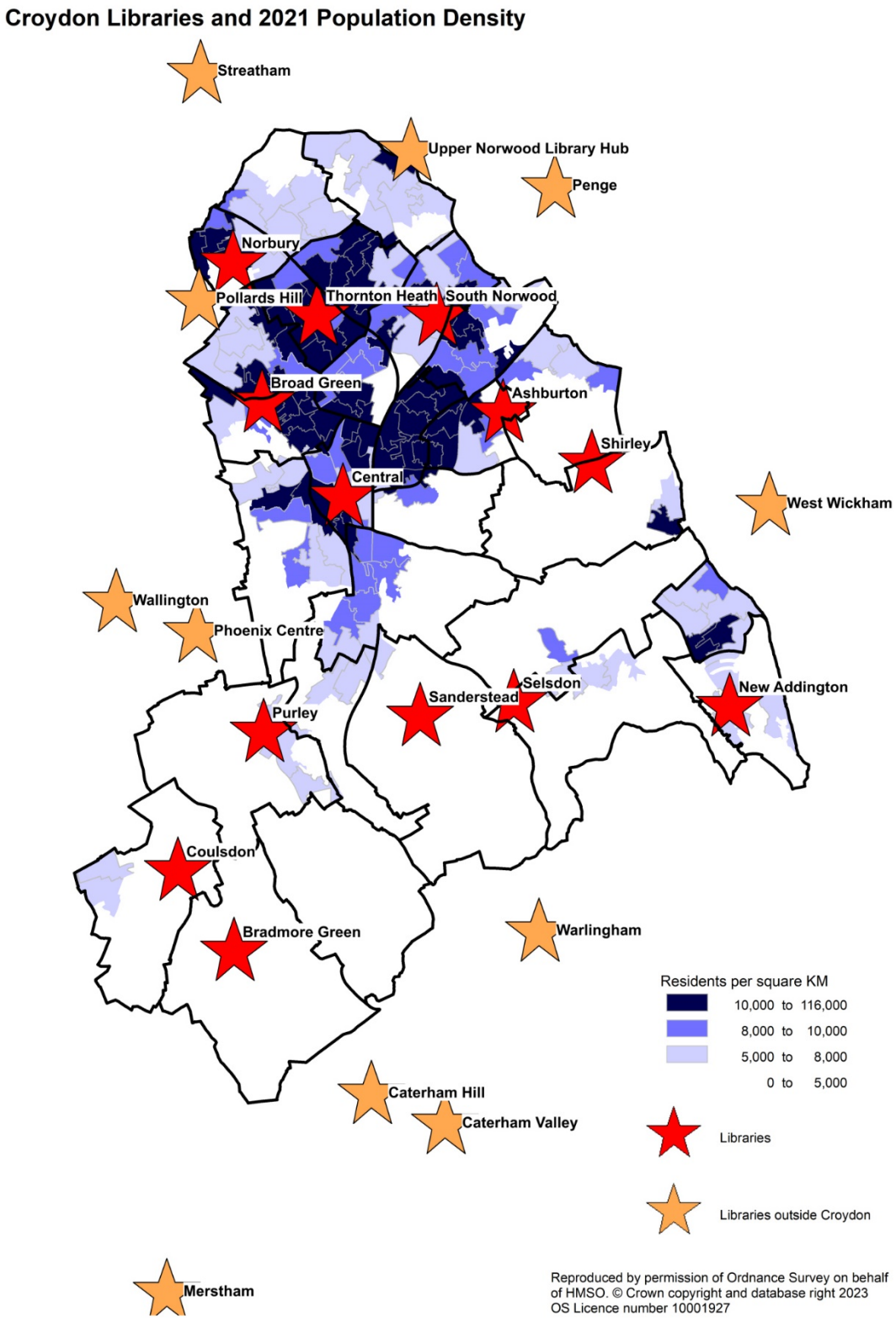
2.4 The IMD allows deprivation in Croydon to be compared for each local area (or LSOA) within the borough with deprivation levels across the country.

2.5 Below we illustrate the relative density of the population (ie how many people live in an area) in comparison with the location of libraries. The libraries in the north of the borough are closer together, but they are serving much denser concentrations of population compared with the south which has large areas of green space. In this map, the darker areas have a denser population.

2.6 To reach the people that need them, libraries need to be located where people go. This means that in some areas libraries may be some distance from each other and in others they could be little more than a mile distant, particularly if there are two distinct shopping districts.

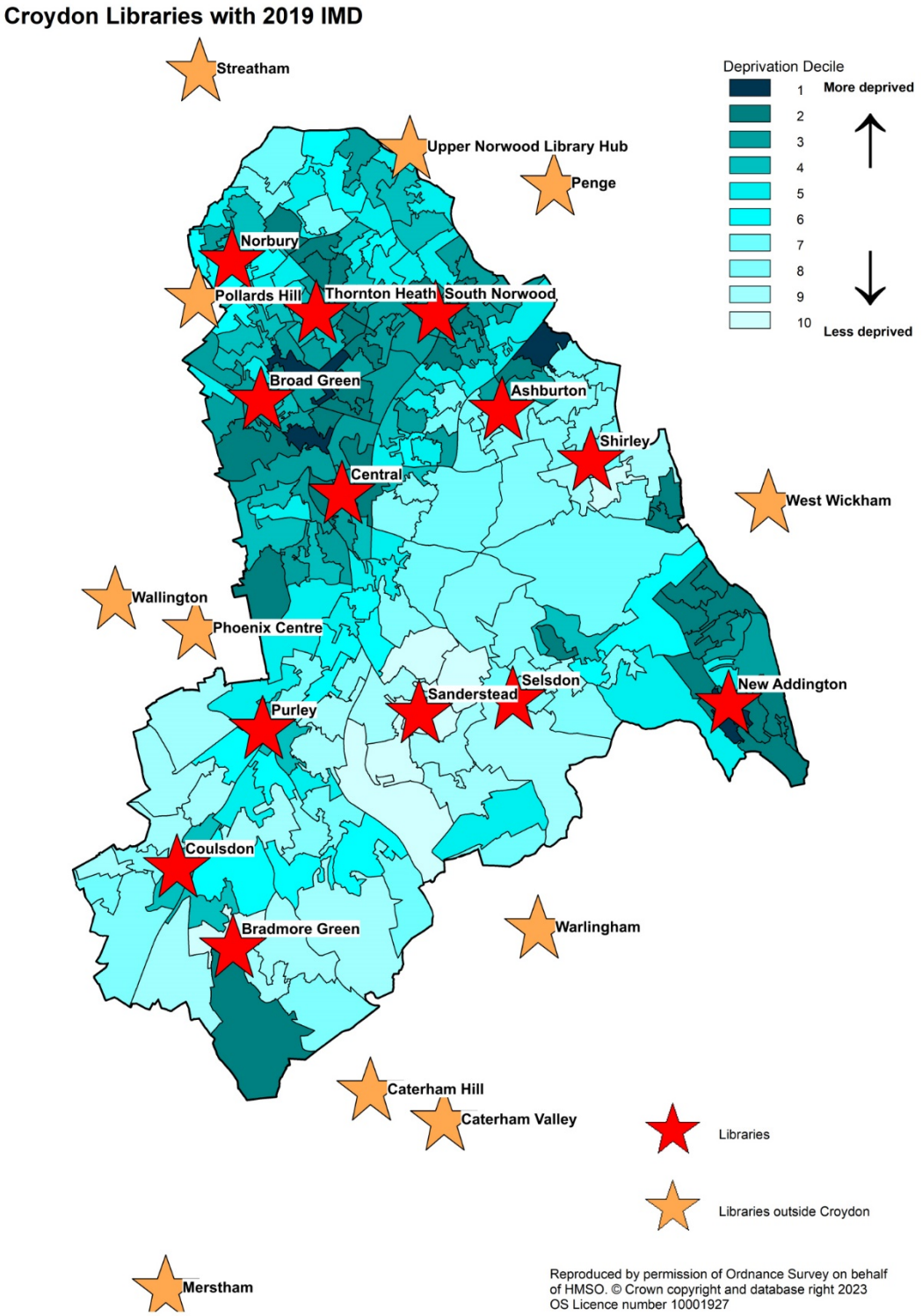
[1] From the Croydon Borough Profile June 2023.

Figure E1: the location of libraries and population density



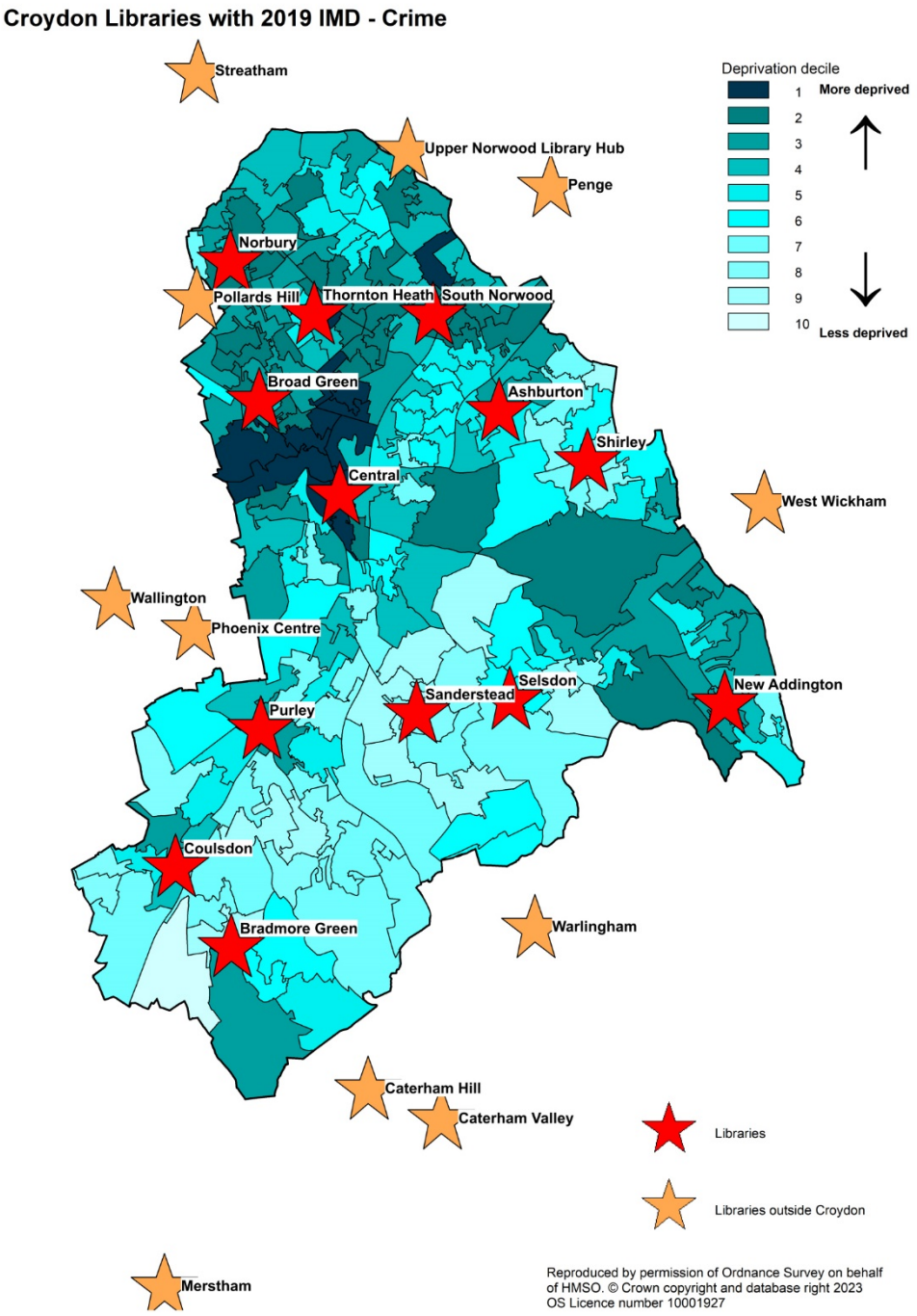
2.7 Much of the south of the borough is more prosperous than much of the north. However, there are pockets of deprivation in parts of the south (eg Old Coulsdon) and the east (eg New Addington) and pockets of greater prosperity in the north (eg in parts of Norbury). The darker areas of the map are more deprived, and are also where most libraries are located.

Figure E2: the libraries mapped against deprivation



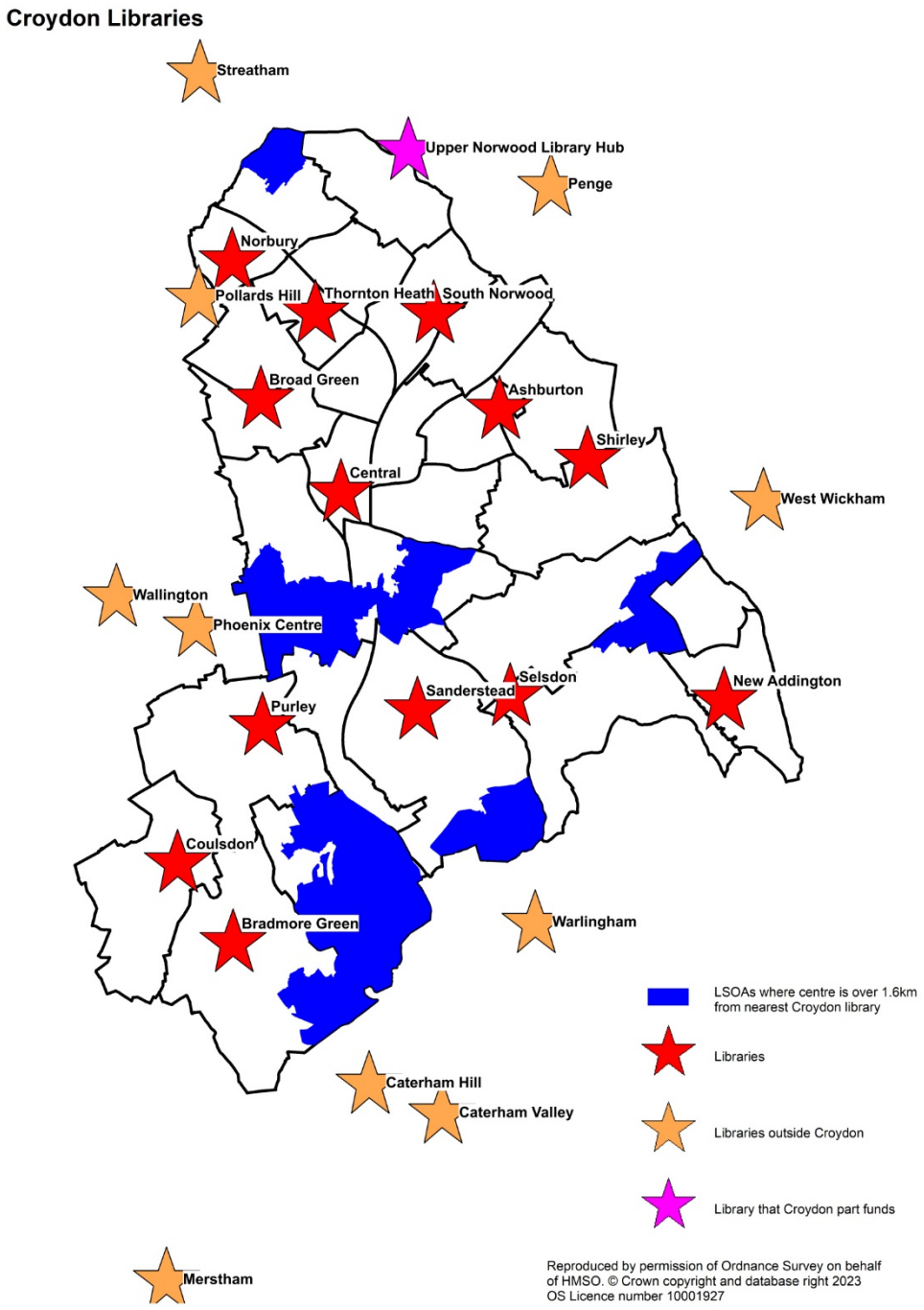
2.8 The location of libraries are not merely a matter of geography.. In areas of high deprivation, people can be more reluctant to travel far as they might not be able to afford public transport if not entitled to free travel. Also, crime and fear of crime can limit people's (especially young people's) willingness to travel. Crime is a serious problem for some parts of the borough.

Figure E3: the libraries mapped against deprivation impacted by crime



2.9 The network of libraries is not evenly distributed across the borough. There are 29,449 residents who live in LSOAs where the centre of the LSOA is more than 1.6km (ie 1 mile) from the nearest Croydon library (including Upper Norwood Library in Crystal Palace which is joint owned by Croydon and Lambeth). These areas are shown in blue below. However, they include people who live close to other libraries outside of the borough which they can use, eg Croydon residents also have access to libraries in Merton, Sutton and Surrey through membership of The Libraries Consortium.

Figure E4: areas whose residents live more than 1.6km from nearest Croydon library



2.10 Each library is very different. They range in age, design, size and opening hours. In Appendix G, we provide a profile of each library including data, such as performance, activities, condition and proximity to other public facilities and libraries.

2.11 A summary of performance is shown below.

Table E1: summary of performance of each library for 2022/23

Library	Visits	Issues	PC hrs	Event visits[2]	Hours	Cost (£)[3]	Cost (£) per visit
Ashburton	38,593	45,619	3,021	2,997	32	308,009	8
Bradmore Green	17,370	14,698	178	574	16	83,273	5
Broad Green	11,315	8,113	838	688	16	93,272	8
Central	316,046	153,099	25,117	10,390	40	1,028,316	3
Coulsdon	27,315	29,505	857	1,098	24	156,475	6
New Addington	12,268	7,729	1,452	1,378	24	130,230	11
Norbury	17,030	27,742	2,484	1,789	24	152,425	9
Purley	14,485	22,754	1,020	1,327	16	101,690	7
Sanderstead	18,784	31,951	497	916	24	114,099	6
Selsdon	48,695	63,566	1,976	2,524	24	248,049	5
Shirley	11,006	12,371	723	808	16	98,746	9
South Norwood	12,582	19,359	1,386	1,483	16	123,971	10
Thornton Heath	28,651	32,064	3,145	1,446	24	219,703	8
All libraries	**574,140**	**468,570**	42,693	**27,418**	**296**	**2,858,257**	5

2.12 All except Central Library are now part-time, with most closed on Saturday (often the busiest time for libraries). Two libraries (Selsdon and Norbury) have 3 days a week of Open+ self-service opening with a security guard on-site but no library staff. The opening hours below are 39% lower than before 2022/23 and 48% lower if Open+ hours are excluded.

2.13 Since visits during Open+ hours at Selsdon Library have been so low, it worth noting that opening hours *excluding* Open+ are now only 296 hours a week compared with 566.5 hours in 2019/20.

[2] Event visits is the estimated number of attendees at events and activities organised by the library service in each library.
[3] The cost of operating each library represents an estimate after allocating library management costs to each library. It included both planned and reactive maintenance into account and so will not represent the long-term planned maintenance and refurbishment costs required for each library.

Table E2: library opening hours (including Open+ hours in italics)

2022-23	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thur	Fri	Sat	Total
Ashburton	10m-6pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	9am-5pm	32
Bradmore Green	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	16
Broad Green	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	16
Central	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-6pm	9am-5pm	40
Coulsdon	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	9am-5pm	24
New Addington	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	Closed	24
Norbury	*10am-6pm*	10am-6pm	*10am-6pm*	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	*9am-5pm*	48
Purley	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	16
Sanderstead	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	24
Selsdon	10am-6pm	*8am-6pm*	10am-6pm	*8am-6pm*	*8am-6pm*	9am-5pm	54
Shirley	Closed	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	16
South Norwood	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	16
Thornton Heath	10am-6pm	Closed	10am-6pm	Closed	Closed	9am-5pm	24
						Total	**344**

2.14 There have been marked differences in the rate of recovery of visits to libraries since the pandemic, largely determined by their reductions in opening hours. We have compared the number of visits to libraries for the first six months of the current financial year (ie April to September 2023) with the same period in 2019/20 (ie the year before the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours).

2.15 Overall visits are still 59% below the level in 2019/20, but this hides significant variations. For example, New Addington's are 83% lower than in 19/20 whereas Ashburton's are only 36% lower. Interestingly, Central Library's visits are 61% lower, despite having the lowest reduction in opening hours (25%).

2.16 As might be expected, the largest reductions in opening hours is associated with the largest falls in visits, if we exclude Central Library and Norbury Library (as this has only recently returned from an extended closure for refurbishment). Excluding those two libraries, of the six libraries with the biggest percentage reduction in opening hours, five also have suffered the biggest percentage reduction in visits as the table below illustrates.

Table E3: visits and opening hours for the period April to September and percentage change for 2023/24 compared with the same period in 2019/20

April-September	2019/20		2022/23		2023/24		% change	
Library	Visits	Hrs	Visits	Hrs	Visits	Hrs	Visits	Hrs
Ashburton	35,612	44.5	17,303	32	22,918	32	-36%	-28%
Bradmore Green	22,773	44.5	8,151	16	12,335	16	-46%	-64%
Broad Green	19,066	35.5	4,306	16	8,377	16	-56%	-55%
Central	454,316	53.5	163,920	40	175,291	40	-61%	-25%
Coulsdon	31,951	44.5	13,032	24	17,324	24	-46%	-46%
New Addington	43,273	52.5	4,920	24	7,421	24	-83%	-54%
Norbury	31,335	44.5	6,353	24	9,213	24	-71%	-46%
Purley	25,608	44.5	7,145	16	8,680	16	-66%	-64%
Sanderstead	21,035	34.5	9,538	24	11,740	24	-44%	-30%
Selsdon	38,315	44.5	14,933	24	22,471	24	-41%	-46%
Shirley	16,144	44.5	5,376	16	6,529	16	-60%	-64%
South Norwood	20,577	34.5	6,655	16	7,173	16	-65%	-54%
Thornton Heath	41,231	44.5	11,578	24	19,479	24	-53%	-46%
Total	801,236	566.5	273,210	296	328,951	296	-59%	-48%

2.17 The complexity of the opening hours and performance in the table above makes it harder to judge the relative performance levels of each library. Therefore, in order **to understand how popular each library is *for the hours that it is open*, we have calculated the average number of visits for each opening hour for each library. We have then identified the rank of each library for visits per opening hour.**

2.18 While it shows that Selsdon Library has slightly increased its average number of visits per hour and ranks second behind Central Library at 36 visits per opening hour, the third busiest library in terms of total visits overall (Ashburton) is only in sixth place when measuring visits *per opening hour*. Bradmore Green has bucked the trend, increasing its visits per hour to 30 visits per hour and ranks 4th on that measure in the first six months of 2023/24.

Table E4: showing differences in opening hours, visits per hour and rank

April - Sept	2019/20		2022/23		2023/24		Change in visits/hr[4]
Library	Visits/hr	Rank	Visits/hr	Rank	Visits/hr	Rank	Since 19/20
Ashburton	30.78	5th	20.80	4th	27.55	6th	-11%
Bradmore Green	19.68	12th	19.59	5th	29.65	4th	51%
Broad Green	20.66	11th	10.35	11th	20.14	8th	-3%
Central	326.61	1st	157.62	1st	168.55	1st	-48%
Coulsdon	27.62	6th	20.88	3rd	27.76	5th	1%
New Addington	31.70	4th	7.88	13th	11.89	13th	-62%
Norbury	27.08	7th	10.18	12th	14.76	12th	-45%
Purley	22.13	10th	17.18	7th	20.87	7th	-6%
Sanderstead	23.45	8th	15.29	9th	18.81	9th	-20%
Selsdon	33.12	3rd	23.93	2nd	36.01	2nd	9%
Shirley	13.95	13th	12.92	10th	15.69	11th	12%
South Norwood	22.94	9th	16.00	8th	17.24	10th	-25%
Thornton Heath	35.64	2nd	18.55	6th	31.22	3rd	-12%
Total	**54.40**		**35.50**		**42.74**		**-21%**

Assessing the performance, viability and impact of each library

2.19 The reduction in library opening hours has led to a reduction in library visits, PC usage and other library-based activities and the impact of this is likely to have been hardest on the most vulnerable people in the community. As the gap analysis in Chapter 10 demonstrated, much now needs to be done to achieve the strategic outcomes *and* to ensure the service is serving as many as possible of those most in need.

2.20 The options for achieving those outcomes and improving the service that were explored in chapter 10 (eg extending opening hours at some libraries, introducing more activities and events and conducting outreach) will only be possible if resources are diverted from elsewhere in the library service.

2.21 The principal way of releasing those resources would be to close a number of libraries. In this section we set out our approach to assessing each library and recommending whether it should be considered for closure.

[4] 'Change' shows the percentage increase or decrease in visits per hour for each library for the period April to September 2023 compared with the same period in 2019.

2.22 We have based our analysis on a set of assessment criteria designed to address the gaps that need to be bridged in order to achieve the outcomes for the review:

Table E5: summary of assessment criteria for retaining a library

Criterion	Factors to consider
Performance	• **Usage** including visits and issues. • **Event attendances** and attendances for other activities. • **PC hours in use.** • Unit costs, ie **cost per visitor**.
Location	• The **visibility** and prominence of the building. • The level of natural **footfall** in the vicinity. • **Public transport access** for users.
Building	• The **suitability** of the building to accommodate the full range of library uses (ie Universal Offers). • The **adaptability** of the building allowing for various uses. • The overall **condition** of the building and the extent of remedial work required.
Impacts of change	• The approximate size of the **population served**. • The **extent of deprivation** in the catchment area. • **Other public facilities** in the vicinity, including **other libraries**. • The extent of **existing community group use**. • The **number of volunteers**.

Notes on the data used on performance

2.23 The data used in our assessments includes both data that is directly reported from the Library Management System (LMS) and data that is collated with a degree of manual intervention or judgement:

- **Issues** of physical books and materials and PC hours are reported directly from the LMS.

- **Visits** are recorded by counters at the entrance to the library and collected periodically by library staff. When the counters fail, staff have to resort to counting users. As a result, data on visits is not wholly reliable. We have noted if there are any particular problems with reliability of the visitor numbers in our assessment of each library.

- **Library budget and cost per visit**: we have calculated a budget for each library. Some of the figures included are actual costs for each library (eg repairs), others are estimates, eg disaggregating and reallocating the cost of library management to each library or the disaggregating of business rates for the Central Library (which is part of a larger complex). The budget for repairs and maintenance included in the cost of each library are the costs incurred in 2022/23. This can mean that maintenance costs could be inflated by major expenditure in one library in a particular year. It also flattens the R&M costs for Selsdon and Ashburton which,

because they share a building, have any cost of repairs to the fabric of the building incorporated in their standard annual lease costs.

Notes on the commentary on location and building

2.24 Our commentary on location and building relies on a mixture of objective, subjective and factual observations:

- **Location**: comments on visibility and footfall are based on visual inspections at different times of day and a map-based review of distances between sites, eg between a library and its local shops. Our approach rejects the 'build it and they will come' philosophy, partly because most people clearly don't and partly from experience of the impact on performance of moving a location from a quieter spot to a busy area such as a shopping centre.

- **Public transport access**: this is based on a simple assessment of the availability of bus, tram or train routes to the library.

- **Suitability**: this is a judgement on the size of the library, its layout and zoning and its potential for delivering the full range of Universal Offers.

- **Adaptability:** this is a judgement on the ability to use the building for a range of uses and considers the extent to which spaces can be reconfigured readily (eg by moving wheeled bookshelves to create a temporary event space).

- **Condition**: as the most recent library condition surveys are now out of date, this judgement is based on a visual inspection of the exterior and interiors and interior design.

2.25 Rather trying to generate a numerical score for these judgements, we have simply provided a Red, Amber or Green rating and provided a written commentary on key points of interest.

Notes on the commentary on impacts of change

2.26 For each library, we have summarised context about the library, its catchment area and need in the area. We also indicate the nearest libraries and the schools that might use them as well as the level of community use and involvement in the library and the number of volunteers.

2.27 The background to the data used includes:

- **Catchment area and population**: to estimate the geographical catchment area, we have drawn a radius of 1.6km (ie a mile) around each library and then included each Lower- layer Super Output Area (LSOA) whose centre is within that radius. This allows us to use LSOA census data which includes data on deprivation across various datasets. This approach provides a 'best-fit' picture of the people who live

within 1 mile or a 20-minute walk[5]. The term 'Lower-layer Super Output Area' is a "geographical area for census statistics" which "comprises between 400 and 1,200 households and have a usually resident population between 1,000 and 3,000 persons"[6]. In this section we have generally limited references to 'deprivation' to the main "Index of Multiple Deprivation" which takes a range of deprivation factors into account for each LSOA. We have focused our commentary on the top two deciles from the index, ie the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England. 17.7% of LSOAs in Croydon as a whole are in the 20% most deprived LSOAs in the country. For each library, we have shown what percentage of LSOAs in its catchment area are in the 20% most deprived; this provides an indication of levels of deprivation in the area that it serves. The higher the percentage, the greater the deprivation.

- **Alternative provision**: for each library, we have listed other libraries within 2 miles on foot (as calculated using Google Maps), including libraries in other boroughs. In the case of New Addington Library, we have the two nearest both of which are more than two miles away. We have indicated how many schools are within 1km of the library.

- **Community use**: we have included the number of regular community group uses of the library and the number of active volunteers.

2.28 In our written text accompanying each library, we have highlighted where the population in the catchment area differs significantly from the average for Croydon. In this section w**e only highlight differences in the proportions by age, ethnicity, health or disability where these vary significantly from the Croydon average.** Issues of accessibility **to** the building are not mentioned **as all have level access** but we do highlight where there are particular issues such lack of accessible toilets or problems with accessibility *within* the building.

General observations and the status of recommendations

2.29 More data on each library is shown in the library profiles which can be found Appendix G.

2.30 The factors we have used in this assessment are not designed to be final, definitive statements of why a library should change or close as the proposals are still at a formative stage. The process of formal consultation will allow for closer examination of the data and the generation of new insights that should inform any final decision on whether to close libraries or change them and how best to improve them.

2.31 More research would be needed into each library recommended for change or closure before a final decision could be made. Areas for examination include:

[5] Transport planners assume 1 mile is a 20-minute walk. Of course, this represents an average so many people may walk faster and some slower, eg older people and people with heavy shopping or children's buggies. Road layouts will also affect the speed at which people can walk.
[6] Office for National Statistics: "Census 2021 geographies".

- Feedback and the experience of people using that library and from other people in that area, particularly those who do not use the library and suffer from deprivation.

- The experience of young people who do and do not use a library. Of particular importance will be perceptions of safety and of the 'turf' in and around the library.

- The experience of people who do not have access to a car and/or have mobility challenges, especially in relation to public transport and reasonable walking distances (eg a half mile walk up a steep hill will be different to a half mile on the level).

- The experience of other disadvantaged groups and people with protected characteristics. This will not just examine mitigations of impacts of change but the type of change needed to provide a good service to groups with protected characteristics.

- The nature and type of alternative library provision and outreach needed in a particular locality, taking the specific needs of any minority communities into account.

- The appetite and capacity of community organisations to get more closely involved in a library building or the library service.

2.32 The recommendations for closing, changing or retaining a library are based on the commitment that savings from closures will be reinvested in improving the service and that a package of options for improving the service will be implemented.

2.33 This means that a recommendation to retain a library should *not* be read as a recommendation to keep it as it is. Instead, it represents an indication that a retained or changed library would be capable of delivering the outcomes required if it is invested in, either through longer staffed opening hours, more partnership delivery, refurbishment and/or a livelier service offer.

2.34 During the process of consultation, we will have the chance to explore the options with the people who live, work and study in Croydon and to improve the data and assumptions lying behind these assessments before any final decisions are made by the Council.

3. Review of all thirteen libraries

About this section

3.1 In this section we assess each of the libraries using the criteria outlined in the previous sections, before setting out our recommendations and rationale.

Review of Ashburton Library

3.2 Ashburton library is one of the larger libraries and occupies part of the Oasis Academy building. This is a modern building covered by a PFI contract which provides for maintenance within the annual budget. Its interior is functional but dull, not fitting that of a cultural institution.

3.3 It is one of the best-performing libraries. Although it has the second longest opening hours and budget cost, its unit costs (ie cost per visitor) are close to the average. Although its location is not ideal, it is a prominent building with good bus links.

Table E6: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	32	2nd
Library visits (pa)	38,593	3rd
Library issues	45,619	3rd
Event attendances	2,997	2nd
PC hours in use	3,451	1st
Budget (£)	323,732	2nd
Cost per visitor (£)	8	5th=
Internal area (m²)	650	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.4 The library performs well and is serving an area which includes LSOAs within the 20% most deprived in the country.

Table E7: impacts of change and recommendation

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	53,738
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	12.5%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Shirley (1.2) South Norwood (1.5) Central (2.0)
	Schools within 1km	4
Community use	Existing community group uses	None
	Number of volunteers	4

Recommendations	• **Retain Ashburton Library Service.** • **Upgrade the interior design of the library.**
Rationale	• **This is a high-performing library with unit costs close to the average.** • **It serves a catchment area with some of the highest needs in the country.** • **The building is practical and in good condition but the interiors are dull and need upgrading.**

Draft

Review of Bradmore Green Library

3.5 Bradmore Green Library is a small branch library directly behind a primary school. It is not in a prominent location, being on a side residential road and so does not benefit from significant footfall apart from the adjacent primary school. The building is cramped, difficult to adapt given its unusual shape and does not allow for a full range of library services.

3.6 The library is only open two days a week and so overall performance is comparatively low. However, its visits per hour are in the top third of the network and given its lower running costs, its cost per visit is second lowest. Due to its small size and inflexibility it does not lend itself to events and PC usage is much lower than any other library.

Table E8: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	16	9th=
Library visits (pa)	17,370	7th
Library issues	14,698	10th
Event attendances	574	13th
PC hours in use	178	13th
Budget (£)	83,273	13th
Cost per visitor (£)	5	11th=
Internal area (m²)	180	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.7 This is Croydon's smallest neighbourhood library serving a relatively small population in an area of low population density. The catchment area includes one LSOA which is in the 20% most deprived nationally and has a slightly higher proportion of residents over 65 than the Croydon average. The number of current active users registered at the library is the lowest, suggesting it has a small but loyal user base.

3.8 There is a fair degree of overlap with the catchment area for Coulsdon Library whose users appear to extend well into Bradmore Green Library's catchment area. Bus routes to Coulsdon are within a short walk from the vicinity of Bradmore Green Library. In a previous round of consultation, concerns were expressed about difficulties in travelling to Coulsdon. This will need to be explored further if this option is progressed.

3.9 There are few volunteers and it is not used regularly by community groups, but there are good relations with the next door school.

Table E9: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	Population served	18,306
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	10%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Coulsdon (1.2)

	Schools within 1km	3
Community use	Existing community group uses	None
	Number of volunteers	4
Recommendations	• **Consider Bradmore Green Library building for closure.** • **Consider targeted outreach work on the Tollers Estate.** • **Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.**	
Rationale	• **The overall performance of the library is comparatively poor, although its unit costs are low.** • **The population in the catchment area is relatively small and there is some overlap with Coulsdon Library's catchment area.** • **There is a pocket of deprivation in the catchment area which should be targeted for library outreach.** • **The building is small and is unsuitable for the full range of the library service offer.** • **Coulsdon Library already serves residents in Bradmore Green Library's catchment area but would require a short bus journey for those not using a car.**	

Draft

Review of Broad Green Library

3.10 Broad Green Library is the second smallest library in the library network. It is a prominent, single storey building that is situated on a side road, near a day care nursery, school and day care centre. There are no shopping parades in the vicinity of the library and no bus routes on the road and so visibility and access are limited.

3.11 Although the interiors are cluttered and unattractive, the building's open plan design is practical, albeit with limited ability to zone activities and the static shelving makes it difficult to adapt it for events and activities.

3.12 The library is only open two days a week which limits its overall comparative performance which is generally poor with the second lowest number of visits which also leads to unit costs which are fairly high given its smaller budget. Fewer attend events, due to the constraints of opening hours, size and adaptability.

Table E10: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	16	9th=
Library visits (pa)	11,315	12th
Library issues	8,113	13th
Event attendances	688	12th
PC hours in use	838	10th
Budget (£)	93,272	12th
Cost per visitor (£)	8	5th=
Internal area (m²)	236	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.13 As the library is located in an area of high population density its physical catchment area suggests it serves a large population. Although its overall performance is comparatively low, the current active user numbers registered at Broad Green suggest a regular following who live close by. The catchment areas is predominantly Asian, Black, Mixed and Other and the impact would need to be identified.

3.14 The library is situated close to areas of high deprivation with several LSOAs in the most deprived decile although these are also largely in the geographic catchment areas of Thornton Heath and Central libraries. This library is close to a Tamil community who make use of the library and would be impacted if the library closed and it is used by a Tamil community group. Although the road that the library is on has no bus routes, there are several bus stops 400m to 500m from the library that residents could use to reach alternative provision if it closed.

Table E11: impacts of change and recommendation

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	63,533

	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	24.3%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Thornton Heath (1.2) Central (1.4) Pollards Hill (1.5) Norbury (1.7)
	Schools within 1km	2
Community use	Existing community group uses	4
	Number of volunteers	1
Recommendations	• **Consider Broad Green Library building for closure.** • **Research the barriers to library use in local areas of high deprivation for active outreach.** • **Assess the impact on the different ethnic groups in the catchment area and of the wider equalities impact.** • **Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.**	
Rationale	• **The overall performance of the library is comparatively low, reflecting its opening hours and location.** • **The catchment area for the library is an area which includes LSOAs with high deprivation.** • **Its catchment area is largely within the catchment areas of Central and Thornton Heath libraries.** • **The library serves a local Tamil community and community group and they would be impacted by closure.** • **Although the library itself is on a road with poor public transport access, the catchment area appears well-served by bus routes.** • **If the option of closure is considered, consultation should include particular engagement with the local Tamil community.** • **Research is also required into the pockets of population outside the catchment areas of Central and Thornton Heath libraries.** • **Research is also required into the needs of local people and the potential for targeted library outreach.** • **The library building is very poorly located which might explain its recent poor performance (even before opening hours were reduced).** • **The open plan design is flexible but does not lend itself to the full range of library services.**	

Review of Central Library

3.15 Central Library is the largest library in the network. It is located near to the large shopping centre although it is not located close to highest areas of town centre footfall. The library is part of the Croydon Clocktower complex but is invisible until one is inside the entrance to the Clocktower. The interiors are generally functional and unattractive and dominated by the sound of the escalators that serve its three floors. Apart from the ground floor children's library, there is no further physical demarcation in the open plan design and so no separate training rooms or event spaces. Arts Council England funding will be spent on creating an event space in 2024.

3.16 The library's performance is the highest in the network. Its budget is also the highest, but high usage means that its unit cost per visit is the lowest. However, its performance is comparatively poor and has not recovered well since the pandemic despite its opening hours being reduced only from 6 to 5 days a week. In the period April to September 2023 visitor numbers were still just 38% of the number for the same period in 2019. A wide range of activities and events are laid on, albeit their frequency is low for a busy central library.

Table E12: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	40	1st
Library visits (pa)	316,046	1st
Library issues	153,099	1st
Event attendances	10,390	1st
PC hours in use	25,177	1st
Budget (£)	1,129,329	1st
Cost per visitor (£)	3	13th
Internal area (m^2)	6633 (3 floors)	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.17 Central Library accounts for half of all visits and a third of all physical issues and its location in the centre of Croydon makes it fairly easy to reach on public transport from most parts of the borough for those determined to use it. Its performance may be improved if resources can be found to return it to 6 day a week opening (or increase it to 7 days a week).

3.18 Given its importance to the library service for the public, closure cannot be considered and its catchment area includes areas of high deprivation. However, its problems need to be addressed. The principal problems are the building and its location. The continuing work to regenerate Croydon's town centre and shopping centre may throw up the opportunity to relocate the library to the busy heart of Croydon's shopping centre.

Table E13: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	71,783
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	22.5%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Broad Green (1.4) Thornton Heath (1.9) Ashburton (2.0)
	Schools within 1km	4
Community use	Existing community group uses	TBC
	Number of volunteers	15
Recommendations	• **Retain Central Library Service.** • **Look for an alternative location in a more suitable building at the heart of the changing shopping district.**	
Rationale	• **The library is the highest performing library in the network with the largest budget.** • **It accounts for half of all visits and hosts a popular progamme of activities that could be expanded.** • **The number of visits remains well under half of pre-pandemic levels and is only slowly recovering.** • **If resources can be found to reintroduce six day opening or move to seven day opening, this would make better use of this large asset.** • **Its catchment area includes a large population and LSOAs with high levels of deprivation.** • **The library is invisible from the street and the building is poorly designed and unsuitable for the full range of library activities.** • **Opportunities should be sought for moving the library to a better location and more suitable building as part of the regeneration of Croydon's shopping district.**	

Review of Coulsdon Library

3.19 Coulsdon Library is well-located in a prominent building albeit with poor signage within Coulsdon's extended shopping district. For a small library, the space is adequate for core services but does not lend itself to a full range of library events and activities, due to its layout. The interior is drab, but a redesign of the interior could help the library to provide a broader service. A community garden at the rear has been attractively refurbished by a voluntary group, the Hive. There is no direct access from the library interior to the garden but this may be possible with some remodelling.

3.20 Although a relatively small library open three days a week, its comparative performance is fairly good and its unit costs comparatively low.

Table E14: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	24	3rd=
Library visits (pa)	27,315	5th
Library issues	29,505	6th
Event attendances	1,098	9th
PC hours in use	857	9th
Budget (£)	176,739	6th
Cost per visitor (£)	6	9th=
Internal area (m²)	337	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.21 The library's catchment area has a smaller level of population, reflecting the lower density of its housing and includes some areas with higher level of deprivation. The catchment area overlaps with Bradmore Green's catchment area.

3.22 There are few volunteers within the library at present, but the Hive has an active team of volunteers working on the garden and grounds maintenance. There may be a possibility of working with the Hive on extending their involvement in the library.

3.23 As one of the more popular libraries (despite its small size) and one of only two libraries in good locations in the borough, closure would have a serious impact on residents in the south of the borough who are some distance from alternatives.

Table E15: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	24,606
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	0%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Bradmore Green (1.2) Purley (1.7)

	Schools within 1km	2
Community use	Existing community group uses	2
	Number of volunteers	4
Recommendations	• **Retain Coulsdon Library Service.** • **Explore further involvement of the Hive in the library.** • **Explore the remodelling of the library to provide direct access to the community garden.** • **Invest in refurbishing the library's interior.**	
Rationale	• **For a small library, Coulsdon's performance is comparatively good as are its unit costs.** • **The library serves a small population which does not include areas with the highest levels of deprivation.** • **Its catchment area overlaps with Bradmore Green's.** • **If Bradmore Green Library is closed, the nearest library is Purley Library (which has its own limitations).** • **The building's interior needs refurbishment to make it more adaptable and better able to provide a full service.** • **There is an active voluntary group that manages the community garden.**	

Draft

Review of New Addington Library

3.24 New Addington Library is located in the New Addington Centre at the end, but just outside the main shopping parade. There is poor signage for the library and the library interior is unattractive, cramped and with functional furnishings. The building is shared with CALAT and the services are discussing moving the library to the ground floor (it is currently spread over two).

3.25 Where once the library was one of the best performing in the network it is now one of the worst with *visits still 83% lower than pre-pandemic levels and PC use 78% down*. The causes of this extreme decline are not yet fully understood but are thought to include closing on Saturday and market day and new provision in the area. **The cost per visitor is now the highest in the network.** The decline in performance needs to be understood but does call the current library into question. While much lower, the usage of PCs and attendance at events is at or close to the median compared with other libraries.

Table E16: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	24	3rd=
Library visits (pa)	12,268	11th
Library issues	7,729	12th
Event attendances	1,378	7th
PC hours in use	1,452	6th
Budget (£)	149,385	7th
Cost per visitor (£)	12	1st
Internal area (m²)	TBC	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.26 Although the library is no longer performing well and the population in its catchment area is relatively low, this is an area with high levels of deprivation. It includes LSOAs in the most deprived decile nationally. Residents are some distance from any alternative library provision which is not in easy walking distance for most.

3.27 Given that there are many people in need, but the library is failing to reach many people, a rethink is required. Closure is not a realistic option given the level of need and remoteness of New Addington from other libraries. Instead, change might involve reducing the physical size of the library and/or relocating it alongside active outreach, possibly via local community centres and closer working with partners including CALAT, health and community services.

Table E17: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	23,872

	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	73.3%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Selsdon Library (2.9) West Wickham (3.5)
	Schools within 1km	1
Community use	Existing community group uses	N/A
	Number of volunteers	5
Recommendations	• **Retain New Addington Library Service.** • **Research the barriers to library use in New Addington and introduce active outreach.** • **Explore partnership models of service delivery to improve the offer and attraction for residents.**	
Rationale	• **The performance of New Addington Library has fallen drastically compared with pre-pandemic levels and its recovery is much slower than elsewhere in the network.** • **The catchment area for the library has a relatively small population, but one that has high levels of deprivation.** • **Alternative libraries are some distance from New Addington and closing the service is not recommended.** • **The library building is not well-designed or located and some change is needed to make it effective.** • **A change in the service could involve collocating a library offer with more services, developing the relationship with CALAT, reducing the physical size of the library and/or relocating it alongside active outreach, possibly via local community centres.** • **A different approach would also increase engagement and reach with communities across New Addington and Fieldway**	

Review of Norbury Library

3.28 Norbury Library is one of the larger libraries in an Edwardian building in a prominent location, albeit some distance from the busier shopping parade in Norbury. The library has been recently refurbished and now has attractive interior design. The building does have problems, particularly with its poor level of energy efficiency even after the refurbishment. It is expensive to heat in winter and has had to be closed at times due to excessive heat in the summer.

3.29 There are separate spaces for the Children's library, study and PC use and a first-floor hall that can accommodate 60 users. Open+ was introduced in October 2023, too recently to assess its impact on performance. The building can accommodate the full range of library services and includes the largest hall and potential performance venue in the network.

3.30 Following an extended period of closure for refurbishment, usage is some way from returning to pre-pandemic levels with visits in the period April to August 2023 only 29% of the level for the same period in 2019 (just before closure). The number of visits and issues is close to the median for the network for 2022/23 and levels of event attendance and PC hours in use are higher than most.

3.31 The operating costs for this large building mean that the cost per visitor is among the highest in the network. There is no active marketing of the Hall and so venue hire income is low.

Table E18: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	24	3rd=
Library visits (pa)	17,030	8th
Library issues	27,742	8th
Event attendances	1,789	4th
PC hours in use	2,484	4th
Budget (£)	187,491	5th
Cost per visitor (£)	9	3rd=
Internal area (m²)	1192	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.32 With high levels of housing density, the library's catchment area has a relatively large population which overlaps with that for Broad Green Library. It includes areas with significant levels of deprivation. It also shares a large part of its catchment area with Thornton Heath Library. Its catchment area population is majority Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups and any change will need to take account of any differential impacts.

3.33 It is notable that the nearest library is not a Croydon library but is Merton's Pollards Hill Library which is less than a mile away. Merton Council is also a member of The Library

Consortium which allows residents in both boroughs to use each other's libraries and their stock. Thornton Heath Library is just over 1 mile away and active users over the past year registered at Norbury Library overlap with Thornton Heath Library's distribution of active users.

3.34 The library has recently received significant investment with its refurbishment creating attractive spaces and interior design. This is also one of the few libraries in the network whose layout and size allow it to offer the full range of library service offers.

3.35 However, it appears that the library's location will continue to limit its performance. Its impressive interiors following the substantial investment in the building could reasonably be expected to result in a surge in demand. However, its visits per hour have only been rising gradually since the pandemic and have been second bottom in the network since the April 2022. Thornton Heath Library's visits per hour (31 per hour) have been twice the level of Norbury Library's (15 per hour) for the period April to September 2023. The number of visits in this financial year are only just over half of that achieved by Coulsdon Library, for example, despite being in a building three times the size.

3.36 However, it continues to meet evident need, performing comparatively well for event attendances and PC hours in use, for which it is in the top third across the network and it serves a catchment area that includes areas with high levels of deprivation. It is recommended that the library be scaled back considerably in size with provision located in a smaller section of the building or elsewhere in Norbury, closer to the shops.

3.37 The building is well supported by local community organisations and there may be the opportunity for collaboration, community management or a community asset transfer, although the size of the building and its energy performance will make its long-term viability as a community asset challenging.

Table E19: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	40,914
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	12.5%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Pollards Hill (0.8) Thornton Heath (1.2) Broad Green (1.7) Streatham (1.9)
	Schools within 1km	1
Community use	Existing community group uses	5
	Number of volunteers	3
Recommendations	• **Retain the Norbury Library Service.** • **Review the operating model for the building including options to license space for hire or tenancy to generate income and footfall.** • **Explore with community organisations their interest in the building and/or community management of the library spaces.**	

	• **Research the barriers to library use in areas of high deprivation in Norbury for active outreach.** • **Assess the impact on the different ethnic groups in the catchment area and of the wider equalities impact.**
Rationale	• **The performance of the library is comparatively poor given its size and recent investment.** • **The number of visits is 71% down on pre-pandemic levels and its visits per hour are second worst in the network.** • **The library's catchment area includes areas of high need and a majority of Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups, although much of its catchment area is shared with Thornton Heath.** • **The building is large with attractive interiors, but its location is not ideal for maximising library take-up and it has poor energy efficiency.** • **The library building has sufficient space in a good condition to deliver a comprehensive programme across the library Universal Offers** • **The library's catchment area is shared with libraries at Thornton Heath and Pollards Hill.** • **The Library is well-supported by local community organisations with an interest in its future.**

Draft

Review of Purley Library

3.38 Purley Library is one of the larger libraries, with a large children's library and a large reference/reading room. Its location is very poor, located on a corner site on a busy road that is isolated from the high street and Tesco by the A23 gyratory. The building requires investment to bring it up to standard, although its garden is well-maintained by volunteers from Recre8: CR8. With investment it would be large enough to accommodate the full range of library services, although the wisdom of such an investment is questionable given its location.

3.39 The overall performance of the library is generally close to the median for the network, including visits per hour which for the current financial year is at the median. Visits per hour are only 6% lower for the period April to September 2023 compared with the same period in 2019. It is one of the larger libraries and so might be expected to perform better, but its location will hold it back.

Table E20: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	16	9th=
Library visits (pa)	14,485	9th
Library issues	22,754	7th
Event attendances	1,327	8th
PC hours in use	1,020	8th
Budget (£)	121,080	10th
Cost per visitor (£)	7	8th=
Internal area (m²)	610	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.40 The population in the catchment area is comparatively small due to the generally low density of housing, but there is an area of high deprivation in Waddon to the north of the library, outside its immediate geographic catchment area, but closer to the Phoenix Centre in Sutton. However, geography and the Phoenix Centre's location make it relatively inconvenient from that part of Waddon. The population has a higher proportion of people who are over 65; higher of people of White ethnicity; and lower of Black ethnicity than the average for Croydon.

3.41 Given that it is only open two days a week, Purley Library's general performance suggests that it is meeting a need, albeit one that could be met from smaller premises and more effectively in a better location, ideally close to the high street. In the meantime, there may be interest from local organisations in sharing the site.

3.42 Closing the library would create a large area within the south of the borough with no library provision (particularly if Sanderstead Library were to close) and would miss the opportunity to take advantage of reaching more people through a better and busier location.

Table E21: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	25,201
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	0%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Phoenix Centre (1.4) Coulsdon (1.7) Sanderstead Library (1.9)
	Schools within 1km	3
Community use	Existing community group uses	3
	Number of volunteers	2
Recommendations	• **Retain the Purley Library Service** • **Seek a better location and building for Purley Library** • **Explore local partnerships to develop the service offer and model**	
Rationale	• **The overall performance of the library is close to or at the median for most performance and cost indicators.** • **After the pandemic and the reduction in open hours, visitor numbers fell drastically and are recovering only slowly.** • **The population in the catchment area is relatively small and less deprived, albeit there is one LSOA in the top 20% most deprived in the country in Waddon beyond the catchment area.** • **Usage figures for PC use suggest there is need for a library in the area.** • **The library building is large enough to house the full range of library services but would require investment.** • **There is little point investing in the current building as it is in a poor location.** • **A smaller library in a better location on the high street would perform better overall and at lower unit cost.**	

Review of Sanderstead Library

3.43 Sanderstead Library is a small but prominent building on a large plot on a busy road. The building is set back from the road and is some distance from shopping districts and other areas of heavy footfall. The small size of the library and its design restrict the range of library services that can be offered.

3.44 The library is open three days a week and its visits and issues are just above the median and the cost per visit below the median. However, attendances at events are below median and PC hours in use are particularly low (representing only 1% of all PC across the network) probably reflecting the relative prosperity of the area. Visits per hour are just below the median.

Table E22: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	24	3rd=
Library visits (pa)	18,784	6th
Library issues	31,951	5th
Event attendances	916	10th
PC hours in use	497	12th
Budget (£)	129,033	9th
Cost per visitor (£)	6	9th
Internal area (m²)	260	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.45 The population in the catchment area for the library is relatively low and the area is among the least deprived in the country. Compared with the average for Croydon, the population has a higher proportion of people who are over 65; higher of people of White ethnicity; and lower of people of Black ethnicity.

3.46 The catchment area of the library is largely covered by the catchment area for Purley and Selsdon libraries. Most parts of Sanderstead Library's catchment area have relatively poor public transport accessibility but, given its overall prosperity, a proportion of residents may drive for supermarket shopping to either Tesco in Purley or Sainsburys next door to Selsdon Library. Indeed, active library users registered at Selsdon Library are distributed across much of Sanderstead's catchment area.

3.47 Given its small size, the relatively low level of need and that many residents are in the catchment areas of two other libraries, it is recommended that Sanderstead Library is considered for closure. Closer analysis is required of the transport options for users of Sanderstead Library.

3.48 The library is well-supported by Friends of Sanderstead Library and Sanderstead Residents Association who may be interested in the library building as there are few other public facilities in its vicinity.

Table E23: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	20,608
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	0%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Selsdon Library (1.3) Purley Library (1.9)
	Schools within 1km	1
Community use	Existing community group uses	2
	Number of volunteers	5
Recommendations	• **Consider Sanderstead Library building for closure.** • **Explore the level of community interest in retaining the building.** • **Explore the particular impacts on people with mobility issues that might prevent them making use of another library.** • **Explore options for Library Link provision to serve the community impacted by closure.**	
Rationale	• **The library's opening hours, visits and issues are at or just above the median and the cost per visit and visits per hour just below.** • **The population in the catchment area is among the least deprived in the country.** • **The library is a small building in a location that does not benefit from busy footfall.** • **Much of the catchment area for the library is within the catchment area for Purley and Selsdon libraries.** • **Public transport accessibility in the catchment area is poor, but residents are more likely to be already using cars to visit local supermarkets.** • **The library is well-supported by the local community and there may be interest in keeping the building in use.**	

Review of Selsdon Library

3.49 Selsdon Library is part of the Sainsburys supermarket site in Selsdon. The entrance to the library is on the same level as the entrance to Sainsburys and benefits from its busy footfall. The interiors are very attractively designed with designated areas for various library uses, including a separate children's library area. No further work is required to make it a successful library providing a full library service, with one important exception: signage. The library is invisible from outside and has no shop signage or directional signage. Even when inside the Sainsburys main entrance, the library is 'hidden' at the back of a corridor.

3.50 The library is open for three days a week with staff present and three days a week with Open+ access although the visitor numbers on Open+ days are very low, representing only 4% of visits in the period since Open+ was launched.

3.51 The library's performance for visits and issues is the best of all libraries apart from Central Library, despite it only being open for three days a week (with library staff present). Usage figures are good (compared with the rest of the network) and although the budget is third highest, its popularity means its cost per visit is equal second lowest.

TableE24: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	24	3rd=
Library visits (pa)	48,695	2nd
Library issues	63,566	2nd
Event attendances	2,524	3rd
PC hours in use	1,976	5th
Budget (£)	276,691	3rd
Cost per visitor (£)	5	11th=
Internal area (m²)	535	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.52 The geographic catchment area for the library is relatively small and is mostly less deprived. Compared with the average for Croydon, the population has a higher proportion of people who are over 65; higher of people of White ethnicity; and lower of people of Black ethnicity.

3.53 Selsdon Library is the best located and designed of the borough's library network. As a result it performs well and should be retained. With longer staffed opening hours and even Sunday opening, it has the capacity to play a more active role in the south of the borough, hosting more events and activities.

Table E25: impact assessment of closure

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	22,603
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	0%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries (miles)	Sanderstead (1.3)
	Schools within 1km	2
Community use	Existing community group uses	
	Number of volunteers	TBC
Recommendations	• **Retain Selsdon Library Service.** • **Extend its staffed opening hours so that it can play a more active part in the cultural and community life in the south of the borough.** • **Introduce improved signage and market its presence, particularly to users of Sanderstead Library.**	
Rationale	• **Performance is high and unit costs low.** • **The library serves a small population which does not include areas with the highest levels of deprivation.** • **The library has the capacity and location to provide a suitable alternative for many users of Sanderstead Library.** • **The building is well-located and well-designed and can host the full range of library offers.** • **With longer staff opening hours, it could be a venue for more library activities and cultural events.** • **It needs much better signage.**	

Review of Shirley Library

3.54 Shirley Library is a small library on a corner site slightly outside main area of footfall of the local shopping parade. Signage is poor and the building is slightly hidden by mature trees. The building and interiors require investment, but it is too small to cater for larger events and activities.

3.55 It is now open two days a week and has the fewest visits and third lowest level of book issues. Before the pandemic and the reduction in opening hours, it had the lowest number of visits and of visits per hour. Visits per hour are now slightly higher for the two days a week that it is open, but it is still third lowest (for the period April to September 2023). It has the third highest cost per visit.

Table E26: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	16	9th=
Library visits (pa)	11,006	13th
Library issues	12,371	11th
Event attendances	808	11th
PC hours in use	723	11th
Budget (£)	109,346	11th
Cost per visitor (£)	9	3rd=
Internal area (m²)	279	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.56 The population in the geographic catchment area is relatively low but includes some LSOAs in the 20% most deprived in the country. Compared with the average for Croydon, the population has a higher proportion of people who are over 65; higher of people of White ethnicity.

3.57 The library shares some of its geographic catchment area with Ashburton Library. The east of Shirley Library's catchment area is also close to West Wickham Library (currently undergoing refurbishment) in Bromley. Bromley Council is not a member of The Libraries Consortium, and some arrangement would be required with Bromley Council if residents were to be encouraged to use West Wickham library if Shirley Library were to close. It is likely that West Wickham is used for shopping by many residents in Shirley, but this requires further research.

3.58 Given the older population in the catchment area and the areas of deprivation, further analysis is required of the take-up of the library service and the impact of any closure, particularly given public transport access. Shirley Library is a small library which requires investment and performs poorly. It is recommended for closure, subject to sufficient mitigation being in place. Library outreach work to the most deprived parts of the community would be needed.

Table E27: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	25,893
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	12.5%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries	Ashburton Library (1.2) West Wickham (1.4)
	Schools within 1km	4
Community use	Existing community group uses	0
	Number of volunteers	5
Recommendations	• **Consider Shirley Library building for closure.** • **Consult Bromley Council over potential arrangements for Croydon residents to use West Wickham Library.** • **Explore the particular needs of residents in the most deprived LSOAs.** • **Explore potential mitigations for the older community in the catchment area.** • **Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.**	
Rationale	• **Shirley Library has historically performed poorly and continues to do so.** • **The catchment area includes areas of deprivation that need to be targeted for library outreach work.** • **There are two libraries within one and a half miles of the Shirley Library site.** • **Public transport access to those two libraries needs further examination.** • **The building is small and requires investment but has limited space for the fully range of library services.**	

Review of South Norwood Library

3.59 South Norwood Library is in a prominent position with a visible sign on a busy road. The library is close to South Norwood's shopping parade but is outside the area with significant footfall. There are bus routes and a train station nearby. The building is one of the larger of the small libraries but is on five floors reached by stairs and with lift access. The building has numerous problems, including management and oversight (including safeguarding for children) over five levels, energy performance, safe exits for people with disabilities. The lift has not been working and will take some months to repair due to procurement and supply timelines.

3.60 South Norwood Library has for many years been one of the poorer performing libraries in the network for visits and issues, even before the reduction in hours. Its visits per hour put it in tenth place for the period from April to September 2023 and 25% lower than for the same period in 2019. As a result, its unit costs are high with the cost per visitor being second highest. As one of the larger of the small libraries in the network, it is under-used.

Table E28: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	16	9th=
Library visits (pa)	12,582	10th
Library issues	19,359	9th
Event attendances	1,483	5th
PC hours in use	1,386	7th
Budget (£)	137,396	8th
Cost per visitor (£)	10	2nd
Internal area (m²)	365	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.61 The library has a geographic catchment area that has a large population which includes areas in the most deprived 20% in the country. The area also includes areas in the 10% most deprived in relation to crime. The population is slightly younger than the Croydon average and has a higher Black and lower White population compared to the average for Croydon. The population also includes areas where deprivation affecting children is high.

3.62 Its catchment area overlaps those of Thornton Heath, Ashburton and Upper Norwood libraries, with the exception of one area which also has high levels of deprivation. There are bus routes from South Norwood to Ashburton and Upper Norwood libraries, but the connections to Thornton Heath Library are not as straightforward.

3.63 This is an area of high need and the level of PC hours (at the median) suggests there is demand for the service, including for events and activities for which attendance is above the median and had been comparatively high before the reduction in hours. Given the need, PC hours should be much higher.

3.64 However, that demand may not be best met from the library building in its current configuration. The building requires significant investment (and with escalating costs) and it is doubtful that the cost would deliver the same return in performance as investments across the network. Its five-level design is impractical for a library and its location does not benefit from the footfall that a position in the shopping district would provide. There is an opportunity to consider a wider site redevelopment with the adjoining Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Youth Centre to create a larger, more flexible community facility to increase the attraction and extend the service offer through partnership with other services.

3.65 The library is well-supported by a Friends group and the Brutalist Library Group. Both groups are interested in seeing the building retained and refurbished and have ideas for its improvement. Further work could be done to engage these groups and other partners with the development of plans for the site works and the operating model for the complex. Voluntary and community organisations can access funding streams for capital that councils cannot, providing the lease terms satisfy eligibility requirements. However, this is a significant asset to maintain and all parties would need to be clear about its sustainability. Further opportunities to collocate Family Hub and adult education services should also be explored to develop a more attractive overall offer at the site.

3.66 While this is explored (and during any eventual refurbishment), alternative locations could be considered for a scaled down library offering. The proposed new location for the library on Station Road is no longer available and so alternative sites would be needed. Any savings from closures elsewhere in the network could be focused on library outreach into deprived communities.

Table E29: impacts of change and recommendations

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	60,280
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	22.9%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries	Thornton Heath (1.4) Ashburton (1.5) Penge (1.7) Upper Norwood (1.8)
	Schools within 1km	6
Community use	Existing community group uses	2
	Number of volunteers	2
Recommendations	• **Retain South Norwood Library Service.** • **Explore opportunities to develop plans for an improved community facility jointly with the Samuel Coleridge Taylor youth centre.** • **Engage with community and voluntary groups to develop a viable model for the site development and operation.**	
Rationale	• **The library's performance is poor overall, with low visits per hour and high unit costs.**	

	• **The catchment area includes a high population and with areas within the most deprived in the country, including deprivation particularly affecting children and high deprivation related to crime.** • **The current library building requires significant investment, is impractical as a library and is not in an ideal location.** • **The needs in the area are not being met from the current library building which is under-used** • **There are community groups passionate about the library and the building who may have an interest in developing the building and becoming more involved**

Draft

Review of Thornton Heath Library

3.67 Thornton Heath Library is the third largest in the network. It is a prominent building with very obvious signage on a busy road, albeit some distance from Thornton Heath's shopping district. It has two floors, with a separate children's library area, PC room, space for study and meetings on the upper ground floor and on the lower ground floor there is an IT training room and meeting rooms, which includes a larger room used for activities which opens out on to a community garden. The building was substantially refurbished in 2010 and has attractive interiors although now needs redecoration and minor refurbishments. The main library area has fixed shelving which needs to be replaced to allow greater flexibility, eg for events.

3.68 The library was one of the higher performing libraries in the network in terms of visits, issues and PC hours in use and continues to perform well in comparison with the rest of the network, although its visitor numbers are half the pre-pandemic level for the period April to September 2023. It is, however, third for visits per hour in the same period. Occupying a large building, its cost per visit is at the median. Although its location is not ideal to maximise visits, its size allows it to provide the full range of library services.

Table E30: performance and viability data

Performance	Total	Rank
Opening hours (pw)	24	3rd=
Library visits (pa)	28,651	4th
Library issues	32,064	4th
Event attendances	1,446	6th
PC hours in use	3,145	2nd
Budget (£)	254,162	5th=
Cost per visitor (£)	8	5th=
Internal area (m^2)	768	

Location	Rating
Visibility	
Footfall	
Public transport access	
Building	
Suitability	
Adaptability	
Condition	

3.69 The library is an area of high housing density and so its geographic catchment area contains the largest population of the thirteen libraries. However, its catchment area overlaps significantly with four other libraries. The catchment area contains a number of areas in the 20% most deprived LSOAs in the country. It has a slightly younger population and a higher proportion of people of Asian and Black ethnic origin (23.5% compared with the Croydon average of 17.5% and 33.9% compared with an average of 22.6% respectively).

3.70 It is recommended that the library is retained (with some minor refurbishment) and, with longer opening hours, considered for venue hire. Even though it performs better than most, it is still underused and could be the focus of more active promotion and programming and other services, such as training. Its size means that it could accommodate more users from the catchment areas of libraries recommended for closure or scaling back.

3.71 There is a community garden project that manages a sizeable vegetable plot at the rear of the library, but volunteer numbers for the library itself are very low given the size of the library and population in the catchment area.

Table E31: impact assessment of closure

Criterion	Sub-criterion	Level
Catchment	LSOA population within 1.6km	85,587
	LSOAs in 20% most deprived	24%
Alternative provision	Nearest libraries	Norbury (1.2) Broad Green (1.2) South Norwood (1.4) Pollards Hill (1.5) Central (1.9)
	Schools within 1km	3
Community use	Existing community group uses	1
	Number of volunteers	4
Recommendations	• **Retain Thornton Health Library Service.** • **Invest in minor refurbishment.** • **Target library outreach from this facility and into the wider community, focusing on the most deprived.**	
Rationale	• **The library performs comparatively well, achieving the fourth highest number of visits and issues.** • **Its catchment area contains areas of high deprivation.** • **The library has been recently refurbished and has attractive interiors.** • **The library is large enough to offer a full range of library services, and with some minor refurbishment could be a good venue for the community.** • **The library has enough capacity to cater for users of other libraries in the area that might be closed or scaled back.**	

4. Summary of recommendations for change

Recommendations and the need for investment

4.1 The recommendations set out in this appendix are designed to improve the overall service and the four proposed closures are designed to release resources to invest in increasing the opening hours in the remaining libraries and to fund initiatives such as the introduction of targeted outreach for those most in need in the borough. Those improvements are explored further in Appendix B.

4.2 It is envisaged that the libraries recommended for retention are also subject to a range of improvements, including refurbishments, improved interior design and better signage. Further remodelling is recommended for three library services (New Addington, Purley and South Norwood) where more significant change is needed to deliver the outcomes for the service improvement.

4.3 In some cases, it is recommended that opportunities should be sought for moving the library service to a better location and building. This may not be for immediate implementation but would take place over time as regeneration schemes develop that would allow change to be achieved in a cost-effective way. Any such changes to a building of this would need to be subject to a clear business case and further consultation.

Draft

Table E32: recommendations for libraries to be retained

Library	Recommendations
Ashburton	• Retain Ashburton Library Service. • Upgrade the interior design of the library.
Central	• Retain Central Library Service. • Look for an alternative location in a more suitable building at the heart of the changing shopping district.
Coulsdon	• Retain Coulsdon Library Service. • Explore further involvement of the Hive in the library. • Explore the remodelling of the library to provide direct access to the community garden. • Invest in refurbishing the library's interior.
New Addington	• Retain New Addington Library Service. • Research the barriers to library use in New Addington and introduce active outreach. • Explore partnership models of service delivery to improve the offer and attraction for residents.
Norbury	• Retain the Norbury Library Service. • Review the operating model for the building including options to license space for hire or tenancy to generate income and footfall. • Explore with community organisations their interest in the building and/or community management of the library spaces • Research the barriers to library use in areas of high deprivation in Norbury for active outreach. • Assess the impact on the different ethnic groups in the catchment area and of the wider equalities impact.
Purley	• Retain the Purley Library Service. • Seek a better location and building for Purley Library. • Explore partnership models of service delivery to improve the offer and attraction for residents
Selsdon	• Retain Selsdon Library Service. • Extend its staffed opening hours so that it can play a more active part in the cultural and community life in the south of the borough. • Introduce improved signage and market its presence, particularly to users of Sanderstead Library.
South Norwood	• Retain South Norwood Library Service. • Explore opportunities to develop plans for an improved community facility jointly with the Samuel Coleridge Taylor youth centre. • Engage with community and voluntary groups and other services to develop a viable model for the site development and operation.
Thorton Heath	• Retain Thornton Health Library Service. • Invest in minor refurbishment. • Target library outreach from this facility and into the wider community, focusing on the most deprived.

4.4 It is recommended that four libraries are considered for closures, subject to extensive public consultation as described in Appendix A. In each case further work is required to identify the impacts of closures and any mitigating measures that can be put in place.

Table E33: recommendations for libraries to be considered for closure

Library	Recommendations
Bradmore Green	• Consider Bradmore Green Library building for closure. • Consider targeted outreach work on the Tollers Estate. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.
Broad Green	• Consider Broad Green Library building for closure. • Research the barriers to library use in local areas of high deprivation for active outreach. • Assess the impact on the different ethnic groups in the catchment area and of the wider equalities impact. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.
Sanderstead	• Consider Sanderstead Library building for closure. • Explore the level of community interest in retaining the building. • Explore the particular impacts on people with mobility issues that might prevent them making use of another library. • Explore options for Library Link provision to serve the community impacted by closure.
Shirley	• Consider Shirley Library building for closure. • Consult Bromley Council over potential arrangements for Croydon residents to use West Wickham Library. • Explore the particular needs of residents in the most deprived LSOAs. • Explore potential mitigations for the older community in the catchment area. • Explore opportunities to deliver a library link service offer for the community impacted by closure.

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Equality Analysis Form

CROYDON
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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term **'proposed change'** broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria.

2. Proposed change

Directorate	**Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery**
Title of proposed change	**Libraries Service Review (Community Hubs Programme):**
Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	**Joan Redding, Library & Archives Services Manager [Stephanie Wilson]**

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

Summary of proposals

The Libraries Service Review (Community Hubs) project is undertaking a review of the current library service model following changes introduced in April 2022 to reduce opening hours across the library network as a way to generate £500k in savings for the Council. The project is also considering how Croydon's library service can be improved for residents including through closer partnership working and co-location with other services.

This project is not seeking to generate significant revenue savings for the Council but to consider how current budgets can be reallocated to deliver a more impactful service for residents.

The project has involved a programme of primary and secondary research as summarised below:

Primary research - Staff engagement and workshop sessions, external partner meetings held with active groups from the last libraries consultation, internal Council colleague meetings including education, health, communities, adults and assets

Secondary research – Analysis of libraries usage and membership data, demographic data and need, health inequalities, educational attainment, deprivation, case studies from other library services, insight from previous staff engagement, formal consultation responses and equality impact assessments from the last change process in 2021.

Key Findings from this research are**:**

- Staff are valued by residents and face to face services are seen as most important
- Reduction in hours has had devastating impact and more weekend opening is needed
- The libraries are important local hubs for wellbeing and support for local families, young people and elders in the community
- We need to improve publicity generally, especially communication about opening hours because the community is confused; some think their local library is closed.
- The Council needs to think about the local need in each area, including deprivation levels, and develop an offer which is responsive to this, there isn't one size to fit all communities of Croydon
- The service model needs to be resourced properly. Volunteers, partnerships and fundraising can all help but they also need resource to be done effectively.
- Though usage is increasing, Croydon's libraries have the lowest performance across London, largely as a result of underinvestment and changes in the service model. Performance has been consistently amongst the lowest in London for several years and change is needed to improve this and deliver a sustainable offer.

- Library branch usage is not always representative of the local demographics and some communities are less engaged with the service
- Library users are quite dispersed across the borough with some libraries having a wider catchment than others
- There are particular areas of need across all of the metrics including Broad Green and New Addington
- There are opportunities to work in partnership with other services to deliver a more impactful library offer, particularly health and adult education and skills

This research has informed development of **Three Outcomes** to develop an improved library service:

1. We are reaching many more people
2. We have improved our offer to the whole community
3. Our service is more efficient

A set of Options to deliver these outcomes have been identified and assessed for viability and opportunity. There are a number of recommendations for which options should be further explored detailed in the main report (see Appendices A, B and C).
However all changes to the service model require a reallocation of resource and through the review we have come to the conclusion that some library closures will be needed to release resource for investment in the wider service offer.
This will primarily contribute towards extending the opening hours and offer in the retained library sites and developing a library service offer delivered through community venues and partnerships which will be able to more flexibly respond to local need and engage with communities where they are, particularly those who are under represented in usage data of the current library service offer.

The new Library Service Framework is proposed to be delivered over four strands:

- **Library Hubs** A smaller network of more accessible and welcoming buildings delivering an extensive offer of books, wi-fi, PCs, study space, events and a Library Universal Offers programme. Open 5-6 days a week including every Saturday with the majority of hours staffed and extended hours with self-service access available from at least four sites.

- **Community Hubs** A library situated in a shared venue as part of a wider service offer for residents, for example as part of a Family Hub, Adult Learning Hub, Health and Wellbeing Hub or VCFS Hub.
These sites would include dedicated library space to hold a range of book collections for children and adults, provide Wi-Fi and public computer access and host events and activities. The service offer and opening times would be developed in response to local need and would include weekend provision.
We envisage that this model of embedded colocation and partnership would attract more people to engage with the library service offer and would provide a more holistic service for residents. The delivery of this offer could include developing existing library buildings into Community Hubs, relocating a library service into a different building or exploring different models of delivering the library offer through partnership with other services or groups.

- **Library Outreach**

Outreach activity is essential to reach people not currently engaged with the library service offer, to raise awareness of the library offer and to provide access to library services for residents who are not able to physically visit a Library Hub or Community Hub. We propose that this is delivered over three strands:

1. Library Links will provide a regular contact point with the library service in localities without a building based library service. Delivered from other community venues on a weekly basis, the offer would be developed based on local need but could include: an information service, community book collections, children and adults events, digital support sessions and support to access library services online.

Service provision would be delivered through a combination of library staff, volunteers and grant funded partners to deliver library programmes and events in community settings. We propose commencing with a pilot phase of four initial Library Link services focussed on catering to communities most impacted by any library closures with a second phase of delivery focussed on a further four areas with low library engagement and high need across the borough.

2. Expansion of the Home Library service which delivers books and resources to residents who are housebound, resident in care homes or otherwise unable to access library buildings.

3. Library service visits and activities at other community provision including schools and education services, dementia cafes, health care centres, community events and festivals. This is an established way to promote library services and the benefits of library usage, register new members and support residents to access library services and information.

- **Library Online**

An extensive digital offer including e-books and magazines, online learning and training resources and access to the Museum and Archives collections available 24/7.

Library Locations for the new model have been evaluated based on their current usage, the communities they serve including deprivation, population density, inequalities, the location and condition of the library buildings and the potential to develop the offer further to deliver the service outcomes.

- We propose to retain and invest in the following existing sites as Library Hubs: Central, Ashburton, Thornton Heath, Norbury, Selsdon and Coulsdon.

- Three areas (New Addington, Purley and South Norwood) have been found to need library services but low visitor numbers at the libraries suggest the current set-up isn't working. In line with this, the council is proposing to introduce Community Hubs in these areas, where a library would be available alongside other services such as family and adult education services and community partnerships.

- In order to release resource to extend and develop the offer in the above localities, we propose closing the library buildings in: Shirley, Sanderstead, Broad Green and Bradmore Green.

Mitigation for the impact of the closures would include:

- Extending the opening hours and offer at the remaining libraries
- Developing the Library Link offer in with local residents in these areas to best meet local need
- Undertaking outreach including focussed work with local schools, care homes and other centres
- Developing the home library service for residents with access needs.

These proposals are at a formative stage and further consultation and engagement is now needed to test and develop them further.

The Equality Impact Assessments to date have considered the potential impacts of the changes on Croydon residents of each of the protected characteristics based on desk-based analysis of the data and review of the 2021 consultation responses.

Further insight into the impacts of the proposals will be generated through the next stage of consultation and the EQIA's will be updated and used to review the proposals again following this consultation and ahead of any recommendation for proposals to implement.

2.2 Libraries as a Statutory Service

The project has been delivered in line with guidance for local authorities from DCMS (April 2022) which states:

In addition to the legal considerations of Equalities Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, there is further legislation under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7). The Act allows for joint working between library authorities and councils may also offer wider library services (for example, loaning devices, running activities or providing access to wifi and computers). In providing this service, councils must, among other things:
encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b)) and lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (in accordance with section 8(3))

Summary of statutory library service: Every council in England is required to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under the Act. It must do so in a way which meets the needs of local library users taking into account the resources available. The public library service is not a national service, but a local service. What a comprehensive and efficient service means will differ between councils, and will depend on the needs of each area. It is therefore the role of councillors and officials at a local level to determine how much they spend on libraries and how they manage and deliver their service. This must be done:

- in consultation with their communities
- through analysis of evidence around local needs

- in accordance with their statutory duties

The Council is required to give serious, substantive, and advance consideration of what (if any) the proposals would have on the protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place. Guidance 7.1.1

The EQIAs produced for each library form part of a wider report and assessment of the service and should be read as part of that document set. The EQIA for these proposed changes will guide the initial investigations during our consultation and will be updated with our findings and reviewed as proposals develop.

2.3 Croydon Library Service Context

Croydon's library service is currently delivered from 13 buildings grouped into three areas: North, Central and South. The service also delivers a home library service and supports delivery of library services at Upper Norwood Library Hub, situated in Lambeth but jointly owned by Croydon and Lambeth and operated by Lambeth Council and the Upper Norwood Library Trust.

A table of the libraries in the Croydon network and their groupings can be found below. The library group type informs the opening hours and the extent of the offer available. Croydon libraries are currently open for 344 hours per week, with 296 of these a fully staffed service and 48 enabled through self service technology.

Type of library	**North Area**	**Central Area**	**South Area**
Area Library	Thornton Heath	Croydon Central Library	Selsdon
Branch Libraries	South Norwood Norbury	New Addington Ashburton	Coulsdon Purley
Local Libraries	Broad Green	Shirley	Sanderstead Bradmore Green

Croydon's statutory library service offer uses the Libraries Connected Universal Offers as a framework for developing and delivering a comprehensive public library service, relevant to equalities.

Reading: To build a literate and confident society by developing, delivering and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.
Information and Digital: To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online.

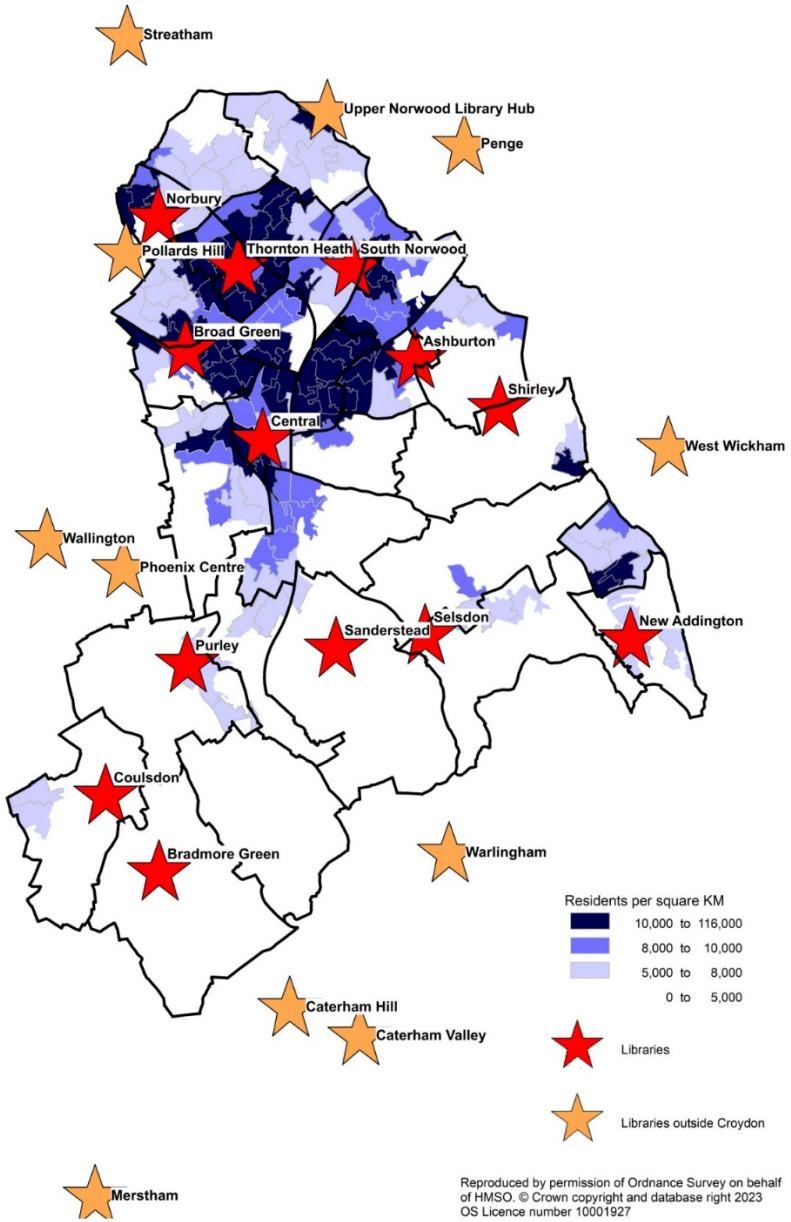
Culture and creativity: To enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences through local libraries.
Health and wellbeing: To support the health and wellbeing of local people and communities through services that inform, engage and connect.

There are currently 120,218 Croydon Library members of which 38,674 are Active Users (having used their library card at least once in the last 12 months). However membership does not capture all library usage as some services such as study space, Wi-Fi access and events do not need residents to hold or use their card.

There were 574,140 visits to the network overall in 2022/23 and 468,970 loans of items in the same period.

The maps below highlight the libraries in relation to population density and areas of deprivation.

Croydon Libraries and 2021 Population Density



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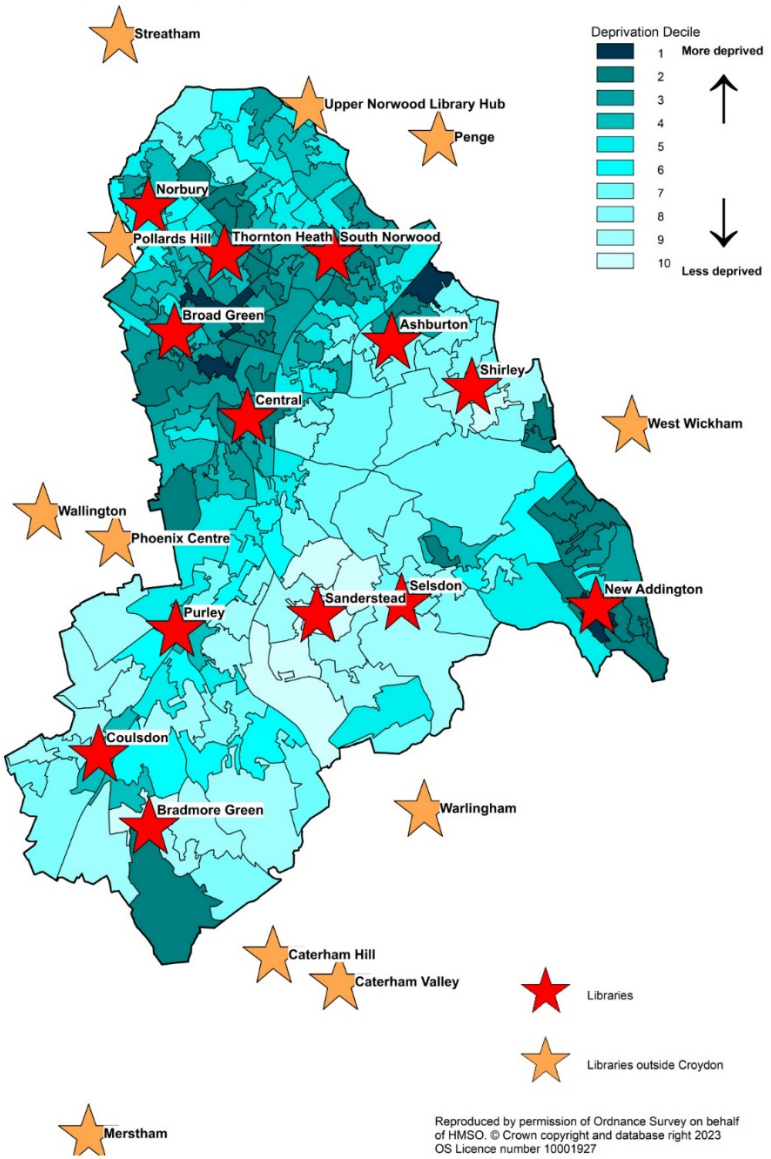
Croydon Libraries with 2019 IMD



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3. Impact of the proposed change

Important Note: It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic.
Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments http://www.croydonobservatory.org/ Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

a. Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

This EQIA considers the proposals and the impact for the population overall. Individual EQIA's for each library site to detail and assess the local impact of the changes will be developed as part of the consultation process.

1. **Age**

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources to all ages in Croydon that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	Croydon Borough Population	Library Users
Age	Croydon has 390,800 residents (ONS Census 2021 and is the largest of all London boroughs. Nearly a quarter of Croydon's population (23.1%) are aged 17 years and under compared to the average for London of 21.6. The number of looked after children in Croydon remains the highest in London.	Croydon Libraries have 120,218 registered library members at the time of this report, which is 30.76% of the total Croydon population. Most library members are Croydon residents, and those who are not residents work or study in Croydon. Some may be legacy users but inactive users are deleted from the system after 2 years of inactivity. The proportion of library users by age corresponds to the Croydon population, with the exception of the age group 10-19 which makes up the largest group (20.54%).

	In Croydon, 63.3% of its residents are in the 18-64 years age band compared to 66.6% in the same age band in London. Croydon has a higher proportion (13.6%) of residents 65 years or over compared to the average for London which is 11.9%. Croydon's population is growing and is expected to increase to just under 500,000 by 2050.	Active Users (October 2022-October 2023) are library members who have used their membership barcodes to interact with the library system within the last 12 months, either through book loans or PC use, and this data is reviewed monthly. The library service looks for regular growth in this figure to measure the effectiveness of the service to reach different age groups. The latest figure, for October 2023, is 38,674 Active Users which is 32.17% of total membership and 9.7% of the total Croydon population. Active users have declined, and in 2023 represent only 58% of the Active Users reported in 2019, a reflection of both the impact of COVID and reduction in open hours. New members join daily both online and in libraries, and last year there were 16,116 new members, an increase in new membership of 56% on 2022/23, and approximately 75% of the 2019 figure for new members. This year the rate of new members is higher, in the first 6 months 83% of the 2019 figures. The library membership figures are low overall at 30.67% of population, and although the membership corresponds as a proportion with the Croydon age groups by percentage, libraries traditionally see a higher percentage of the youngest and oldest and need relevant support activities and the right open hours to attract working adults or adults looking for employment or other support. It is important to note that these figures, particularly the active user figures, do not reflect the high number of students who use library spaces for study but might not hold a library card or use their library card for services. Events & Activities by age group: The Library service collects participation figures by age group for regular activities and these should be reported in addition to membership and active user data because not all participants are library members. There is no data available to identify unique or regular participants. **Activities by age group include:**

		•Babies/toddlers: weekly Rhymetimes (singing&playing, social for parents); Bookstart – earliest literacy support • Toddlers/pre-school: weekly Storytimes, Bookstart, sessions with King's College Hospital promoting dental health • Pre-school/Primary: Craft activities, Summer Reading Challenge, homework sessions, Lego Club, Code Club, Homework club, National Storytelling Week, World Book Day, Class visits, special author events • Secondary: Study space with free wifi, Work experience, Volunteering (Duke of Edinburgh, Summer Reading Challenge), Poetry and creative writing • Adults: free internet access & free WiFi, space for work and study, CV/employment support, business support, job clubs, volunteering • Adults/Older Adults: Reading Groups, Digital IT skill support, Craft clubs, Knit & Knatter, Coffee mornings, Talks, Volunteering, language (ESOL) classes, Ancestry, Information Sessions (Housing, Warmer Homes, Health topics) During 2022-23, there were a total of 2,214 events for all ages with total attendance of 27,418, broken down by age group below. To put these figures in context, pre COVID April 2019-March 2020, there were 6,261 activities with 73,965 participants of all ages, generating 3,839 new members over the year. After COVID and the reduction in opening (2021-22) there were 701 events, with total attendance of 7,909.
	Comparative Data	
	Summary by age ranges set in context of % of Croydon Population by age range, with indication of percentage of Active Users to Library Members	

Age Range	Library Members+	% of library members by age group	*%Members who are Active Users by age groups (used the library system in last 12 months)*	Croydon Population*	% of Croydon Population by age

0-09	15,705	13.06%	*53.73%*	50,163	12.84%
10-19	24,691	20.54%	*26.96%*	47,770	12.23%
20-29	16,089	13.38%	*23.50%*	49,150	12.58%
30-39	20,495	17.05%	*28.55%*	62,763	16.06%
40-49	16,590	13.80%	*29.32%*	54,580	13.97%
50-60	10,501	8.73%	*26.27%*	52,886	13.54%
60-69	8,125	6.76%	*37.19%*	35,583	9.11%
70-79	5,197	4.32%	*42.54%*	23,508	6.02%
80+	2,825	2.35%	*38.58%*	14,313	3.66%
Total	120,218		*32.17%*	390,716	

+From Sirsi Dynix library management system August 2023
**Croydon Population by age Source : ONS, Census 2021on Croydon Observatory*

The table below further breaks down the combined number of events and participation taking place in the four libraries proposed to close or transfer, compared to Central library for context. Local libraries overall account for 28.9% of family events and 24.4% of adult participation in events.

Events & Activities 2022/23	**All Libraries Participation**		**Four libraries proposed for closure/:**		**% All Libraries**		**Central Library**		**% of all libraries**	**% of all libraries**
	Number	**Participation**	**Number**	**Participation**	**Number**	**Participation**	**Number**	**Participation**	**Number**	**Participation**
Children (0 to 15)	1080	16,947	185	1,388	17.1%	8.2%	305	7399	28.24%	43.66%
Class Visits (ages 5-13)	165	4,261	11	270	6.7%	6.3%	52	1493	31.52%	35.04%
Family Events	33	868	14	251	42.4%	28.9%	10	221	30.30%	25.46%
Adults (18 to 49)	545	3230	99	787	18.2%	24.4%	229	1033	42.02%	31.98%
Older People (50+)	391	2112	66	290	16.9%	13.7%	53	244	13.55%	11.55%

Annual Total Events	2214	27,418	375	2,986	16.9%	10.9%	649	10390	29.31%	37.89%

From Library Events monthly stats April 2023

Feedback from 2021 consultation

Respondents raised concerns in regards to the following age related impacts

- Rhymetimes – respondents told us that not all parents would travel to their next nearest library for reasons of time or cost, or in some cases mobility and a sense of safety. Other parents said that rhymetimes are already busy in hub libraries and would be oversubscribed or require booking in advance, making them less accessible to families.
- Class visits would be more difficult from nearby schools and might not continue
- Volunteering would be more difficult if the opportunities were more distant and required travel fares. Local young people undertaking Duke Of Edinburgh volunteering might not have as many opportunities.

Impact Assessment	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
	A reduction in library buildings will enable reallocation of the budget to improve the service at better used and better located sites and make the library offer more sustainable in the long term for all age groups in Croydon. The remaining buildings and resources will be better utilised to improve quality of services. Local residents of all ages want to see an increase in opening hours which includes Saturdays, and the only way this can be achieved within budget is to reduce the number of library buildings. Based on indicative membership and active user figures, the current service is reaching only 10% of the population and the services are restricted to buildings because there is no capacity for outreach.	A reduction in library buildings could have a negative impact on the members and active users of each of the four libraries proposed to close. A proposed reduction in library buildings would require a consultation with local residents of all ages to understand the impact on each age group and possible location of Library Link points, particularly the following groups who might experience a disproportionate impact: • Families with young children and school children who attend local rhymetimes and borrow children's books in all four libraries • School children (after school and school visits) in all four libraries • Students who access study space and free wifi in all four libraries • Adults without digital access; jobless especially in Broad Green • Seniors who have told us it is difficult to travel (cost, fear of crime, fear of injury), especially in Shirley

	An outreach programme which is based on need and opportunity will ensure a library service offer is available for age groups in areas which are not currently served. This will include engagement with schools and early years settings and care homes. A Library Link offer would support residents to access a library offer outside of a library building and this would be designed with local residents to meet the need. This could include events targeted to support age groups in a community including storytimes and rhyme times, digital support and craft groups. The consultation would also seek out nonusers of Croydon libraries who are not currently taking part in library activities and/or do not live near a library or know what is on offer, particularly those located in areas identified as having a need, such as Tollers Estate, Shrublands, Fieldway and Monks Hill. The new model could have a positive impact on these users by establishing a local library offer for them to access.	The library service will seek feedback from residents of all ages to understand their needs and priorities, and the viability of alternatives such as Library Link spaces for co-location for key activities, and local outreach opportunities, working with local voluntary groups to understand and respond to need. Where eligible, residents could access the services of the Home Library Service and receive books of their choice delivered and collected from their home. Events and activities: The consultation will seek feedback from those residents who attend events and activities, to find out whether the participants are library members and access other library services, or whether they come primarily as participants. We will design a mitigation with residents and community partners to ensure there is continuity as far as possible to maintain the social and health benefits of library activities. For example a Library Link point could offer rhymetimes once a week, as well as access to books for early years and parents. This would maintain a local offer, continuing to provide social and health benefits, as well as a starting point for early literacy. If the local library building closed, there would be additional open hours and activities arranged at the nearest larger library, most within 1.5 to 2 miles. This mitigation will be tested again with local residents, reviewing the previous consultation in 2021, when regular library users provided feedback on how they travel to their libraries

2. Disability

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources accessible to all residents in Croydon without excluding those with a disability, in compliance with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	Croydon Borough Population	Library Users
Disability	Croydon residents with a disability under the Equality Act represents 14% of the population (54,852 of 390,719 residents) including residents for whom day-to-day activities are limited a little: 5.62% (21,978) and limited a lot: 6.1% (23,716) Source: https://www.croydonobservatory.org/2-disability/ From 2011 to 2021, there has only been a slight increase in the proportions of people in Croydon whose day to day activities are limited a lot or a little. Source: ONS Census 2021, data released 19. Jan. 2023. Data from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities estimates the prevalence of common mental disorders to be 18.4% for those aged 18 and over and 10.4% for those aged 65 and over (2017). For depression alone the rate is 9.1% of the over 18 population (2022). The impacts of Covid-19 continue to cause adverse mental health outcomes for people in the borough, particularly those from already marginalised or disadvantaged groups. (DPH report 2022). Over the last 5 years, the estimated dementia diagnosis rate for 65+ years has been increasing and has been higher than the rate in London and England for the past 2 years. Source: Borough Profile June 2023	Of the 120,218 library members on the library management system, 6,285 (5%) disclosed a disability, and the largest groups were those with a Mobility (19%) or Mental Health (18%) disability, a change from analysis in 2021 in which Visual impairment (30%) and Mobility (27.6%) were the largest groups and Mental Health was 7%. However we do not hold comprehensive data on this as it is optional for members to provide it. Volunteers: there are local volunteers with disabilities working across libraries, supporting Summer Reading Challenge, coffee mornings, reading groups. Staff: 15% of library staff have disclosed a disability and managers have taken this into account when creating rotas and timetables. It is currently unknown whether there could be a negative or positive impact on staff due to a change of location or working patterns and this would be kept under review and explored through staff consultation on proposed changes. Source Equality Analysis compiled 2021 by Maxine Benjamin, HR Policy and Equality Manager, reviewed internally 2023

Comparative Data

Below Disability categories of library members by age:

Disability	Mobility/ Dexterity	Mental Health	Visual	Learning Difficulty	Hearing	Multi-disability	Other	Total	Percentage by Age
0-09	28	2	16	46	18	24	112	246	4%
10-19	58	112	26	146	14	39	130	1105	8%
20-29	83	332	68	254	18	124	176	836	17%
30-39	82	289	48	138	74	140	256	809	16%
40-49	92	162	64	131	42	60	200	503	12%
50-59	255	132	70	50	56	46	148	543	12%
60-69	207	62	110	32	111	46	206	248	12%
70-79	183	8	190	4	84	42	44	1064	9%
80+	189	6	244	8	86	22	40	1312	9%
Total	**1177**	**1105**	**836**	**809**	**503**	**543**	**1312**	**6285**	
Percentage	19%	18%	13%	13%	8%	9%	21%		

Membership data from Sirsi Dynix library management system August 2023

Feedback from 2021 consultation

In 2021, feedback from 2,510 survey respondents told us that 62% majority walk to their local library, and only 17% would be able to walk to an alternative library, with at least 12% stating they would have no other options.
They also raised concerns that:

- Existing volunteers who are older or disabled said they would not be able to travel to the next nearest library.
- Established reading groups, craft groups, Knit & Knatter groups would not relocate to another library, and would have to find another local venue.

Impact Assessment	**Positive Impact**	**Negative Impact**
	A reduction in library buildings will enable reallocation of the budget to improve the service at better used and located sites	Feedback from residents during the previous consultation in 2021, both online and in person, provided a summary for impact, especially about

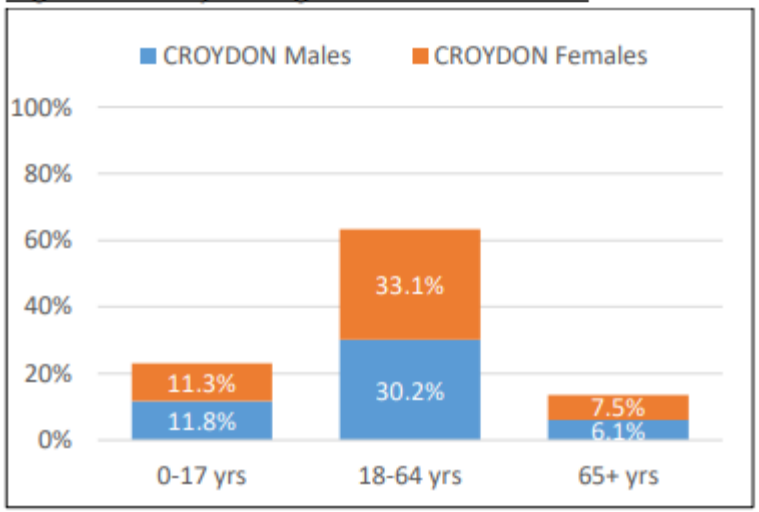
	and make the library offer more sustainable in the long term for all age groups in Croydon. The remaining buildings and resources will be better utilised to extend opening hours and improve quality of services and accessibility. This includes delivery of the library Health offer through access to information, event programmes and health improvement advice to support people living with disabilities and ill health. We note that libraries are not currently serving all areas of Croydon and would investigate how the service could be more accessible to residents with a disability. Specifically we would work with the One Croydon Alliance, the framework which brings together public health, social care, health care providers and the VCFS to enable joint collaboration on health initiatives with a strong focus on community leadership and co-production and a local healthcare offer based on local need and priorities. For example, a new Library Link point could enable the library service to improve the service reach benefitting residents with a disability who are not able to access the current library buildings. Volunteers who are not able to travel to one of the retained libraries could support delivery of the Library Link in a local venue, creating more local opportunities for participation. A consultation with Croydon residents is now proposed to understand the opportunities and impact of a new outreach programme for residents that could be tailored to the needs and priorities of residents with a disability.	travel reported above. Closure of library buildings or relocation of library services could have a disproportionate negative impact on local residents with a disability, especially those who take part in regular activities in a specific branch near their home, including volunteering who might have difficulty travelling to other libraries. The consultation with this group would include research into opportunities for Library Link points based in local venues, and opportunities for outreach, particularly with partners and voluntary organisations that support residents with disabilities. For residents with a disability who cannot travel to a library, but still want to borrow books, there is a Home Library Service which delivers books to their homes. There are currently over 150 Croydon residents receiving this service which would be offered as an effective mitigation.

3. Gender

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources to all genders in Croydon that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	Croydon Borough Population	Library Users
Gender	**ONS Census: Gender breakdown of Croydon's 390,727 residents:** • 187,641 (48%) are Male • 203,086 (52%) are Female There is a slightly higher proportion of males compared to females in the 0-17 years age band in Croydon. There is a higher proportion of females to males in the 18-64 years age band. The 65 years plus age group makes up 13.6% of the total population in Croydon compared to the average for London of 11.9%. *Source: ONS, Census 2021, released 2. November 2022.*	**Library Database Membership: Gender breakdown of 120,218:** • Male 46,490 (38.7%) • Female 71,385 (58%) **Library Database Active Users: Gender breakdown of 38,764:** • Male 13,976 (36.1%) • Female 21,528 (55.7%)
	Comparative Data	

Figure 5 – Croydon Age and Gender Profile



Source: ONS, Census 2021, released 2. November 2022.

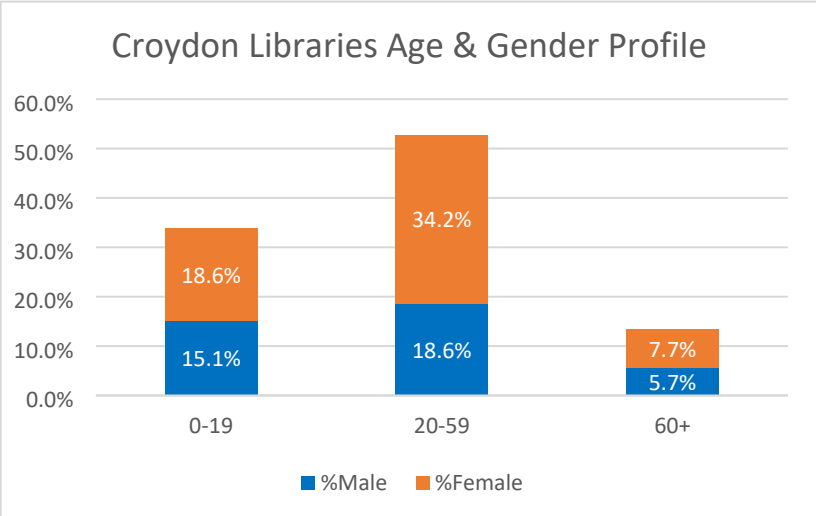
Library Membership by gender

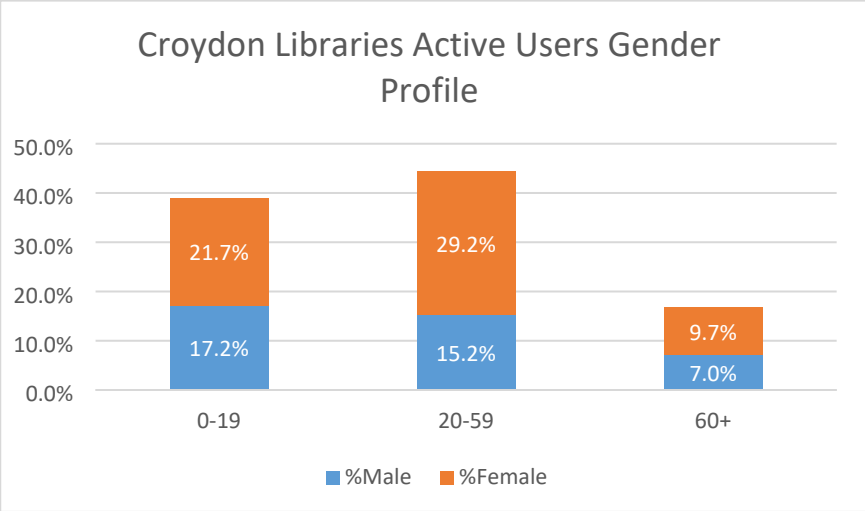
Age Range	Female	Male	Other	No Data	Total
0-09	8421	7125	1	159	15706
10-19	13557	10722	32	379	24690
20-29	9911	5775	36	367	16089
30-39	13724	6312	48	410	20494
40-49	10479	5762	8	343	16592
50-59	6158	4128	3	212	10501
60-69	4669	3309	0	146	8124
70-79	2847	2237	0	113	5197
80-89	1619	1120	0	86	2825
Total	**71385**	**46490**	**128**	**2215**	**120218**
% Total	*59.40%*	*38.70%*	*0.10%*	*1.80%*	

From Sirsi Dynix library management system August 2023

Library Active Users by gender

Age Range	Female	Male	Other	No Data	Total
0-09	4090	3527		822	8439
10-19	3626	2564	7	459	6656
20-29	2198	1223	16	344	3781
30-39	3678	1621	11	541	5851
40-49	2946	1527		389	4862
50-59	1534	1025	4	196	2759
60-69	1662	1169		191	3022
70-79	1192	899		120	2211
80+	602	421		67	1090
Total	**21528**	**13976**	**41**	**3129**	**38674**
	55.7%	36.1%	0.1%	8.1%	





	Feedback from the 2021 consultation: Of 2,510 respondents, 1,397 (56%) provided information on gender, majority women, and over half aged between 31 and 50. Survey responses suggest there might be a disproportionate impact on the following groups who could be the focus on mitigations: • women who looked after children and participate in rhymetimes and other under 5 activities, especially those who attended library activities to and from the local school run. • Women 60+ took part in reading groups, craft activities, coffee mornings and knit & knatter.	
Impact Assessment	**Positive Impact**	**Negative Impact**
	The library service membership is often comprised of more women than men, possibly because services are traditionally attractive to people caring for small children (often majority female) and women 60+. However, in the past libraries also offered job clubs and digital support which attracted more men, and this has not been possible to the same extent within the current opening hours. This may be a factor in the current disparity in use by men. We also understand from feedback to date that the current opening hours limit access for particular groups including working people and this may also have a disproportionate impact on gender disparity. The proposed opening hours which will extend the offer at the retained libraries could make it easier for both genders to access library services. Further engagement is needed through the consultation to understand how men who are not library members are using library spaces, and to test whether additional open hours in a smaller number of libraries, a more extensive programme offer and an outreach provision in community venues would encourage more men to access the services.	The gender split across the borough is relatively consistent so we would not expect a disproportionate impact on either gender as a result of the library closures, when looked at solely on that basis. Further consultation and research is needed to understand the needs and priorities of residents of different genders and the intersectionality with other equality characteristics to inform design of the new service offer.

	The consultation would seek out those not currently served by libraries in all areas of Croydon, and would investigate how the service could be more accessible to residents. For example, there is public health evidence that there are mental health and wellbeing needs specific to men, and libraries could create a conversational reading group through outreach in an area not currently served by a library.	

4. Gender Reassignment

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources to all genders in Croydon that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	Croydon Borough Population	Library Users
Gender Reassignment	91.6% of the population identify with the same sex as registered at birth	The library service does not hold sufficient data on this category
	Comparative Data	

Croydon residents by gender identity

Croydon	Residents	%
All residents aged 16 years and over	310398	100.00%
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	284319	91.60%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	1420	0.50%
Trans woman	515	0.20%
Trans man	558	0.20%
Non-binary	165	0.10%
All other gender identities	107	0.00%
Not answered	23314	7.50%
Source: ONS Census 2021.		

Impact Assessment	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
	The closure of some library buildings to extend and improve the offer at the remaining sites and deliver an outreach service could benefit residents with different gender identities through the opportunity to deliver more programming and partnerships to celebrate and support them. Due to the inclusive nature of libraries nationally, and Croydon's dynamic partner organisations, Croydon libraries would aim to increase activities and resources that are inclusive of all gender identities. In addition to providing books specific to the transgender community, the annual Cultural Calendar for Croydon Libraries always includes Transgender Day of Remembrance in November, as well as LGBTQ History Month in February and Pride in summer. For many years Croydon Central Library has hosted the Rainbow Reading Group as well as the annual LGBTQ History Month display from CAGS (Croydon Area Gay Society est 1971).	If library buildings closed and there were fewer buildings, there could be a reduction in physical space for books, information displays, and inclusive space and cultural activities for this community. There is no demographic data available from library membership database to understand the number of residents from the transgender community who use libraries, but the consultation process provides an opportunity to find out if libraries are serving this community and to better understand the impact and opportunities. Croydon Libraries will consult with local Croydon groups, including TransPals, The Bridge, Queer Croydon, CAGS, Aurora, and the LGBTQ Croydon Council staff forum.

	The consultation with Croydon residents will support the service to understand the opportunities and impact of a new outreach programme for residents that could be tailored to the needs and priorities of all residents. We note that libraries are not currently serving all areas of Croydon and there is an opportunity to create a service which is more responsive to communities who might not access library services now.	

5. Marriage or Civil Partnership

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources to all residents in Croydon that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	Croydon Borough Population	Library Users
Marriage or Civil Partnership	In 2021, just over 4 in 10 people (41.6%) said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 43.2% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Croydon that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership decreased from 8.2% to 8.1%. The increase in the percentage of people aged 16 years and over who had never been married or in a civil partnership was greater in Croydon (3.2 percentage points) than across London (2.1 percentage points, from 44.1% to 46.2%). Across England, the percentage increased by 3.3 percentage points, from 34.6% to 37.9%.	The library service does not collect this data

	These figures include same-sex marriages and opposite-sex civil partnerships in 2021, neither of which were legally recognised in England and Wales in 2011. Same-sex marriages have been legally recognised in England and Wales since 2014 and opposite-sex civil partnerships have been recognised since 2019.	
	Comparative Data	
Impact Assessment	**Positive Impact**	**Negative Impact**
	It is anticipated that the proposed changes will have a neutral impact in regards to marriage or civil partnership as the service does not currently deliver a focused offer related to these criteria, or collect data on it. We anticipate that the proposals will have a net benefit overall for residents by improving the library service offer and that marital status would not be a factor in this regard.	The Library service does not collect information regarding marriage and civil partnership because it is not required for the service and would exceed GDPR limits for collecting data. Consideration of the characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships need only be in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination, and library services would not seek to identify or exclude library members, volunteers or staff who are legally married or in a civil partnership. Therefore, this characteristic should not be disproportionately affected in a negative way under any of the proposals for libraries.

6. Religion or belief

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is “comprehensive and efficient” within its resources to residents of all religions in Croydon that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 ‘to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons’.

Protected Characteristic	Croydon Borough Population	Library Users
Religion or Belief	Just under half (48.9%) of Croydon respondents for the Census 2021 stated they were "Christian" compared to 56.4% for the Census 2011. About 1 in 4 (25.9%) stated that they had no religion compared to 1 in 5 (20.0%) for Census 2011. Croydon people following the Muslim religion are the second biggest religious group, after Christians, increasing from 8.1% to 10.4% over the 10 years to March 2021.	The library service does not collect this data
	Comparative Data	
Impact Assessment	**Positive Impact**	**Negative Impact**
	A reduction in library buildings will enable reallocation of the budget and make the library offer more sustainable in the long term for all residents in Croydon. Remaining buildings and resources will be better utilised to extend opening hours and improve quality of services, and there would be increased capacity for outreach and promotion. Libraries nationally are inclusive and encourage visitors and partners who operate in libraries to welcome residents of all faiths. It is part of Croydon Libraries' plan to provide representative resources as well as activities and displays that are inclusive of all religious communities and celebrate a diverse range of cultural holidays throughout the year. Additional capacity for outreach, partnerships and event planning generated through the new service model could positively impact the connection with all faiths.	If library buildings closed, there could be a reduction in physical space for books, information displays, and inclusive space and celebrations to highlight the diverse range of faiths and cultures in Croydon. The consultation will seek to engage residents of all faiths to understand any negative impacts arising from the proposals and mitigate against them.

7. Race

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources to all Croydon residents of any race that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	Croydon Borough Population	Library Users
Race	Croydon is an ethnically diverse borough with 51.6% of the population from a global majority background with the largest groups being people of Black ethnicities at 22.6% and people of Asian ethnicities at 17.5%. Croydon has seen a shift in ethnic profile over the last 10 years with an increase in global majority populations and decrease in white population. Source: ONS Census 2011 & 2021	Of the 120,218 library members on the library management system, only 49,945 (42%) library members provided ethnicity information, so the analysis below is indicative. Disclosing ethnicity when joining the library is not mandatory for membership but is collected to ensure there is a statutory provision of service. Please note that many library users who visit and take part in activities are not registered on the system. See below the breakdown of 2023 library membership and active users by ethnicity set in context of Croydon figures from 2021 Census. Reviewing just the data provided on ethnicity, the balance of white members is 42% compared to overall global majority members 36% on the library membership system. Library staff ethnicity profile is in proportion to the Croydon community in terms of race demographics, and is crucial to an inclusive service. The current staff profile is 38.20% White and 34.82% global majority, and 26.98% not disclosed. It is not believed that change proposals would have a negative impact on staff on the basis of race.

Comparative Data

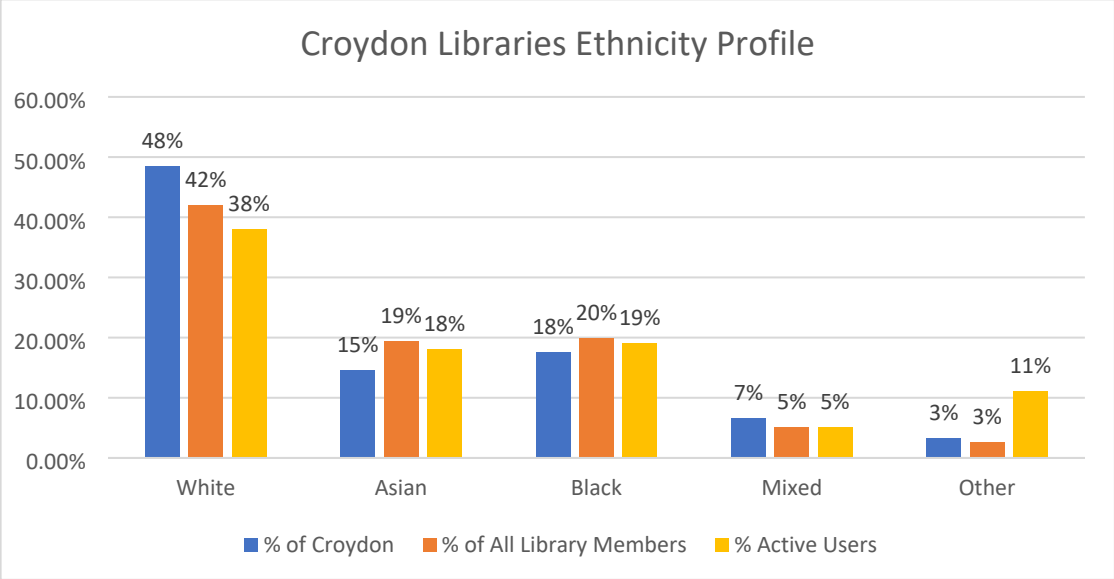
Croydon	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Other
2011	55.10%	20.20%	16.40%	6.60%	1.80%
2021	48.40%	22.60%	17.50%	7.60%	3.90%

Croydon borough population by ethnic group

Croydon libraries members and active users by ethnic category

User Barcode	All Libraries	% of All Libraries (63% no data)	Active Users	% of Active Users (66% no data)	% of Croydon
White	20971	17.44%	6161	15.93%	48.40%
Asian	9664	8.04%	3144	8.13%	14.60%
Black	9935	8.26%	2835	7.33%	17.50%
Mixed	2512	2.09%	767	1.98%	6.50%
Other	1266	1.05%	324	0.84%	3.20%
No Data	75870	63.11%	25443	65.79%	
Total	120218	100.00%	38674	100%	

From Sirsi Dynix library management system August 2023
** Source: ONS Census 2021*



Library staff by ethnic group

Ethnicity	Staff	% of All Staff
White	34	38.20%
Black	12	13.49%
Asian	14	15.72%
Mixed	3	3.36%
Other	2	2.25%
Prefer Not to Say	24	26.98%
Total	89	

Impact Assessment	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
		If library buildings closed and there were fewer buildings, there could be a reduction in physical space for books, information

	A reduction in library buildings, will enable reallocation of the budget and make the library offer more sustainable in the long term for all residents in Croydon. Remaining buildings and resources will be better utilised to extend opening hours and improve the quality of services. An outreach programme which is based on need and opportunity will enable the library service to provide an offer more flexibly in locations trusted and used by different communities to meet them where they are. The new model will also provide more resource for partnership working and programming and we would look to engage with relevant local partners include the Croydon BME forum and Asian Resource Centre of Croydon in developing this. An analysis of the current membership and active user based has revealed an imbalance in the communities served by our libraries, especially at Broad Green where we do not seem to be serving the wider population of Black African and Caribbean residents in the community. In this case a more flexible outreach service and Library Link offer designed with local residents could be more impactful in meeting local need. In general, we note that libraries are not currently serving all areas of Croydon and would investigate how the service could be more accessible and inclusive to residents. The consultation with Croydon residents will enable us to understand the opportunities and impact of the new service model further.	displays, and inclusive space and activities to raise awareness of issues for the global majority communities. Individual library closures may have a disproportionate impact on the communities who use them and we will seek to understand this further and explore mitigations through the consultation. The Broad Green area has a higher percentage of global majority residents than other areas, and the Asian community makes up the majority of Library membership (55%) and Active users (54%) at that site, particularly the Tamil community nearby who regularly use the library as a community space. The closure of Broad Green Library would have an impact on this community and the consultation would explore this impact, and possible mitigations, with residents in that area.

8. Sexual Orientation

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources to all Croydon residents that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	**Croydon Borough Population**	**Library Users**
Sexual Orientation	In the 2021 census Croydon's population was recorded as 87% straight or heterosexual. The full response rates are below.	The library service holds insufficient data to measure this meaningfully
	Comparative Data	
	Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over — 310,397 Straight or Heterosexual — 272,523 Gay or Lesbian — 4,696 Bisexual — 3,661 Pansexual — 855 Asexual — 123 Queer — 97 All other sexual orientations — 98 Not answered — 28,344 **ONS 2021 census**	
Impact Assessment	**Positive Impact**	**Negative Impact**
	A reduction in library buildings will enable reallocation of the budget and make the library offer more sustainable in the long term for all residents in Croydon.	If library buildings closed and there were fewer buildings, there could be a reduction in physical space for books, information

	Remaining buildings and resources will be better utilised to extend opening hours and improve the quality of services. An outreach programme which is based on need and opportunity will ensure library services are delivered inclusive of all communities regardless of sexual orientation. The new service model would also support more partnership working and programme delivery which would build on events piloted under the Queer Arts strand of London Borough of Culture. Due to the inclusive nature of libraries nationally, and Croydon's dynamic partner organisations, Croydon libraries would aim to serve all communities and increase activities and resources that are inclusive of all LGBTQ+ communities. In addition to providing books specific to the LGBTQ+ community, the annual Cultural Calendar for Croydon Libraries always includes LGBTQ History Month in February and Pride in summer. For many years Croydon Central Library has hosted the Rainbow Reading Group as well as the annual LGBTQ History Month display from CAGS (Croydon Area Gay Society est 1971) The consultation with Croydon residents will generate insight into the opportunities and impact of a new outreach programme for residents that could be tailored to the needs and priorities. We note that libraries are not currently serving all areas of Croydon and would investigate how the service could be more accessible and inclusive to residents.	displays, and inclusive space and activities to raise awareness of issues for the LGBTQ+ community. It is difficult to assess the potential impact without further consultation with Croydon residents. There is no demographic data available from library membership database to understand whether there would be an impact on residents from the LGBTQ+ community. Croydon Libraries will consult on proposals with local Croydon groups, including TransPals, The Bridge, CAGS, Aurora, the LGBTQ Croydon Council staff forum.

9. Pregnancy and Maternity

Statutory Duty: In addition to the responsibility for legal compliance with Equalities Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to provide a statutory library service that is "comprehensive and efficient" within its resources to all residents in Croydon that complies with Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'.

Protected Characteristic	**Croydon Borough Population**	**Library Usage**
Pregnancy and Maternity	The Croydon Public Health Inequality Report for 2022 highlighted lower rates of access to maternity care for women in Croydon compared to London averages and significant racial disparities in maternity care.	The library service does not hold data on this characteristic
	Comparative Data	
	Feedback from 2021 consultation: In the previous 2021 survey, feedback relevant to Maternity and Pregnancy highlighted the significant negative impact to reducing service hours if the opening hours were not accessible. Accessible hours would include Saturdays and evenings for working mothers, and local mothers wanted to be involved in decisions about opening hours and the scheduling of activities, because this group could not easily travel to a nearby open library when their local library was closed. Survey and Webinar feedback identified the importance of libraries to the wellbeing of mothers and babies, the value of the access to early years books, and the benefits of activities on child development and the wellbeing of parents.	
Impact Assessment	**Positive Impact**	**Negative Impact**
	A reduction in library buildings will enable reallocation of the budget and make the library offer more sustainable in the long term for all residents in Croydon. From recent engagement we know that the reduction in opening hours has had a negative impact on accessibility of the libraries particularly for parents and working families, so an improvement in	If library buildings closed, there could be an impact on pregnancy & maternity, with a possible reduction in local activities and resources on offer, as well as a decrease in the number of local baby changing facilities and public toilets in the area. However, this could be mitigated by creating a Library Link point, working with Family Hubs programme, Children's Centres and other

	opening hours through this programme could have a positive impact on this group in many areas across Croydon. The remaining buildings and resources will be better utilised to improve the quality of services. An outreach programme which is based on need and opportunity will also deliver a library offer to more communities across the borough through other buildings including children's centres and Family Hubs. The service is actively seeking to develop partnerships and collocate services with these services to improve the offer for parents and families and make services more accessible. All Croydon Libraries provide books and information on pregnancy health and child development and nutrition, to support residents in this category. There are also regular free activities led by library staff for mothers and fathers with babies and toddlers, such as Baby Bounce and Rhymetime, activities which have a positive impact: new parents benefit from as they build social networks and get support from other parents; babies and toddlers are introduced to singing, their first books, and parents say it's an opportunity for all to bond and socialise. The new model will continue to deliver and build on this offer. The consultation will inform the development of the new service model and offer and enable it to be tailored to meet local needs and priorities.	community partners, or providing outreach to targeted areas, which could improve access to resources and activities. More research and consultation is needed to understand the intersectionality and possible impacts of racial disparity and maternity and opportunities to mitigate this with the library service offer. The consultation will provide further insight into these impacts and inform development of possible mitigations.

Important note: You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics. **Please use table 4 to record actions that will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact**

3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:

Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings	Information source	Date for completion
Public consultation on proposals including digital and in person, quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis	Online consultation, face to face sessions, survey responses	15 April 2024
Targeted engagement with groups identified as at risk of negative impact of changes to understand need and develop mitigation further	Survey responses, workshops and drop in events, qualitative research findings	15 April 2024

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation

3.3 Impact scores

Example
If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)

2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact)
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood** (2) x **Severity** (2**) = 4**

Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

Severity of Impact				
	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	Likelihood of Impact			

Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
6 – 9	High
3 – 5	Medium
1 – 3	Low

Equality Analysis

Table 3 – Impact scores

Column 1 PROTECTED GROUP	Column 2 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **likelihood** of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 3 SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **severity** of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 4 EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE Calculate the **equality impact score** for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group. **Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.**
Age	**2**	**2**	**4**
Disability	**2**	**2**	**4**
Gender	**1**	**1**	**2**
Gender reassignment	**1**	**1**	**2**
Marriage / Civil Partnership	**1**	**1**	**2**
Race	**2**	**2**	**4**
Religion or belief	**1**	**1**	**2**
Sexual Orientation	**1**	**1**	**2**
Pregnancy or Maternity	**2**	**2**	**4**

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Equality Analysis

4. Statutory duties

4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups ☐

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation ☐

Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups ☐

Important note: If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

Important note: Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

Table 4 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.

Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Disability	Reduced ability to access library service or activities	Further research on service impact through consultation of users and community organisations	Joan Redding	15 April 2024

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Equality Analysis

Race	Disproportionate inability to access library service for a particular ethnic group	Consult users and community organisations for insight into alternative provision	Joan Redding	15 April 2024
Sex (gender)	Disproportionate access	Consult users and community organisations for insight	Joan Redding	15 April 2024
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact specific to gender reassignment	Consult users and community organisations for insight	Joan Redding	15 April 2024
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact specific to sexual orientation	Consult users and community organisations for insight	Joan Redding	15 April 2024
Age	Disproportionate inability to access library service for a particular age group	Analyse age profile of each area. Consult users and community organisations for insight	Joan Redding	15 April 2024
Religion or belief	No known negative impact specific to religion or belief	Consult users and community organisations for insight	Joan Redding	15 April 2024
Pregnancy or maternity	Disproportionate inability to access library service for this group	Consult users and community organisations for insight	Joan Redding	15 April 2024

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Equality Analysis

Marriage/civil partnership	No known negative impact specific to marriage/civil partnership	Consult users and community organisations for insight	Joan Redding	15 April 2024

6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter **X** in column 3 (**Conclusion**) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.

Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. **If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision.**	
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. **If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form** The service is about to undertake extensive public consultation which will generate much more in depth understanding of the equality impacts of the proposals and will infirm the further development of the proposals and mitigations. A further EQIA will be undertaken following this process to consolidate this knowledge and make an informed assessment on the final proposals.	**X**
Continue the proposed change	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to	

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	unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. **If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.**	
Stop or amend the proposed change	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet	Meeting title: CABINET Date: 6 December 2023	

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision	
Equalities Lead	**Name: Naseer Ahmad** **Date: 15/11/23** **Position: Interim Senior Equalities Officer**
Director	**Name: Kristian Aspinall** **Date: 15/11/23** **Position: Director of Culture & Community Safety**

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Equality Analysis

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Appendix E

Engagement findings so far

Draft

1. Our approach

Introduction

1.1 In this appendix, we describe our engagement methodology, our findings, and list the various individuals and organisations that we have engaged with during this phase of the project.

1.2 **This summary takes into account the most recent public consultation in 2021 ahead of the next round of public consultation on the proposals summarised in the main report (Appendix A).**

Our methodology

The scope of our work

1.3 Our research has combined primary and secondary research to analyse previous consultation responses, which led to the changes implemented in 2022, as well as current views among community groups, library staff and Council officers.

1.4 We used four main methods for gathering people's views:

- **A desktop review of 2021 consultation findings,** where members of the public were consulted in two phases on potential service options and subsequently 3 shortlisted options.
- **3 external briefings** with friends groups, community groups and members of the public who were active participants in the last consultation.
- **Staff 'idea generation' workshops** with a cross-section of library service staff.
- **Interviews** with key Council senior officers and service leads.

1.5 At this stage, external engagement has focused on groups who feel strongly about libraries in Croydon.

1.6 During the next round of formal consultation on future proposals it will be essential to canvass Croydon residents widely, particularly those under-represented in previous consultations, especially those likely to be most affected by any proposals.

Our research brief

1.7 Together with the Council's project team, we agreed the principal themes for our research through our 'Key Lines of Enquiry' which are a set of themes we aimed to explore in our research.

Table E1: our key lines of enquiry

a. How the current service meets the greatest needs in the borough.
b. The quality of Croydon's library network.
c. The impact of the 2022 changes.
d. Making more efficient use of assets.
e. Learning from elsewhere.
f. How people feel about future changes to their libraries.
g. Scope for more voluntary and community involvement.

Desktop review of 2021 consultations – overview

1.8 We conducted a desktop review of the two rounds of public consultation hosted by the Council. In the first round the public were invited to share their broader priorities and ideas for what could change in the library service, and a set of options including closures, community management and cuts to opening hours.

1.9 A second round of consultation followed in July after Cabinet had decided to consider three shortlisted options in order to achieve the savings target – Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough; outsource all libraries; or reduce service hours (two days per week) in eight libraries and create five community run libraries.

1.10 As the participants were self-selecting, their views may or may not be representative of the diverse demography of the people and communities who live, work and study within Croydon.

External briefings – overview

1.11 We conducted three external briefings (September/October 2023) involving 18 people, who spoke on behalf of a range of Friends Groups, community groups and as members of the public. The external briefings were targeted at groups who had participated in previous Croydon library consultations and were designed to explore the perspectives of both library users and non-users. External briefing participants were invited to participate through the library service's existing network of groups and known users.

1.12 The discussion themes for the three external briefings were informed by our Key Lines of Enquiry and the national library Universal Offers.

1.13 We are grateful to all external briefing participants for taking the time to volunteer, attend and share their thoughts with us. We were struck by participants' demonstrable passion for their local libraries and their awareness of what each library currently offers and has the potential to do more of in future. We have anonymised their comments in this report.

1.14 It should be stressed that these were short meetings designed to brief attendees that the Council had begun a review of the changes made in 2022 and to ask some initial

questions about their views on those changes. In the formal consultation process on the proposals, there will be opportunities for more extended and in-depth discussions.

Staff 'idea generation' workshops – overview

1.15 A cross-section of Croydon library service staff were invited to participate in three 'idea generation' workshops. The workshops were intended to offer staff an opportunity to take stock of the impact of previous changes to the library service and to contribute their ideas to help shape the future service. The workshops also offered opportunities for informal Q&A and open discussions.

1.16 Staff shared their thoughts on how far they felt the current service was from 'good', focused on four core perspectives – customer, processes, staffing, finances – plus 'anything else' that they felt was key. We have included summaries of their contributions in the sections which follow.

1.17 The workshops were positive, and we were struck by the enthusiasm and knowledge shown by all of the attendees. We are very grateful for their time and input.

Interviews – overview

1.18 We conducted 14 interviews and small group conversations with 23 key Council senior officers and service leads. Their practical knowledge and experience has been invaluable to the findings in this report.

The strength and breadth of people's perceptions and opinions

1.19 We have not sought to evaluate or 'weight' people's perceptions or opinions, but we have drawn out those that we think highlight a key theme or shared viewpoint effectively. We have drawn out those views that were particularly common but have also included examples of significant or interesting 'minority' views that should be heard. At the end of each section, we have also highlighted the key findings that inform our recommendations.

1.20 The list of external organisations we have spoken with so far is included at Annex 1 to this appendix.

Draft

2. Review of 2021 consultations

Introduction

2.1 In the sections below, we review the results of the two rounds of consultation in 2021 and report a summary of the most significant responses.

2.2 During these previous consultations, the public were invited to share their thoughts on Croydon's libraries; their priorities and ideas for what could change in the future, and the options for realising required savings of £500,000 from the library budget.

2.3 The consultation surveys were publicised via the Council's communication channels and in each library. The Council received 2,510 survey responses to the March 2021 (Phase 1) consultation and 1,411 survey responses to the July 2021 (Phase 2) consultation.

2.4 Whilst these two surveys generated several thousand responses, we stress that it should be kept in mind that the consultation was openly publicised and available to anyone to complete. As a result, the participants were self-selecting, and their views may not be representative of the diverse demography of the people and communities who live, work and study within Croydon.

2.5 It is also worth noting that the consultation activity took place during periods heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which may have limited the response rate and opportunities for people to engage with public meetings and share feedback directly with library staff.

The key documents we have reviewed

Background

2.6 The **key documents** covering the process for, and findings from, the public consultation exercises, are:

Phase 1

- "SUMMARY OF 17 May 2021 CABINET MEETING OUTCOME"
- "Libraries Consultation Phase 1 Summary of Survey Feedback 2021"

Phase 2

- "Appendix one – Croydon Libraries consultation Phase 2 Summary July 2021"
- "Libraries Consultation Phase 2 Results"

March 2021 (Phase 1) – key findings

Consultation methods and response rates

2.7 We observe the consultation methods used, and the following points, from the documents, including the weight of feedback from local residents:

- There were 2,510 survey responses which include 38 paper forms and 2 telephone feedback calls which were added to the online survey. Also:
    - 2 letters
    - 15 direct emails
    - 3 Focus group reports with young people:
    - Croydon Savings survey results
    - SPRA (Spring Park Resident's Association) Response to the Library Consultation on closure plans (Shirley)
    - Petition of 4,007 signatures from Save Croydon Libraries Campaign

2.8 We observe the consultation process followed, and the following points of note, from the documents:

- 'The first phase of the libraries public consultation ran from 14th January to 14th March 2021. This was a formative process that allowed residents to provide feedback on options to close up to five libraries, consider community run opportunities, or to look at other models that would achieve the savings target'.
- 'Libraries services have savings targets of 15% in 2022/23. As a statutory service public consultation must be conducted if there is a reduction in service'.
- '… Feedback from residents and 30th March 2021 Scrutiny meeting shaped a second, more detailed, proposal on the future of Libraries provision in Croydon'.

2.9 We also note the following points made by the Council referring to **the next steps that *followed* the end of the Phase 1 consultation**, and were **the basis for the Phase 2 consultation**:

'The report appraises several options based upon achieving the savings target and the impact upon the service and residents.

The options were considered at Cabinet meeting on Monday 17th May 2021 and there was an agreement that the three which achieved the savings would go back out to public consultation.

Cabinet rejected the proposal to close five libraries or create completely separate community run libraries on the basis that those proposals would not deliver all the required savings.

Below are the options considered, with the three options going forward **highlighted**:

- Close five libraries

- **Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough**
- Five community run libraries
- **Outsource all libraries**
- Hybrid – reduction in service hours (one day per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries
- **Hybrid – reduction in service hours (two days per week) to eight libraries and five community run libraries**

The final survey results were reported on 30th March 2021 to Scrutiny & Overview Committee, which recommended developing the emerging options in more detail. The Cabinet Paper and supporting documents presented six detailed options for review on 17th May 2021, recommending the three options which could achieve the £500,000 savings. Cabinet agreed the three options initially, and the decision was called back into Scrutiny on 27th May 2021. Following the discussion in Scrutiny, it was decided to proceed with the Cabinet decision to take the following three options to a Phase 2 consultation from 1st June 2021:

- Reduce service hours by 21% across the borough
- Outsource all libraries
- Reduce service hours (two days per week) in eight libraries and create five community run libraries'.

Survey results – Phase 1 consultation

2.10 The overwhelming majority of respondents, **over 90%, were members of Croydon Libraries.** In addition, feedback from the free text question identified that many non-members were the parents of children who are members; use Libraries for other activities that do not require membership; or have previously been a member or plan on becoming a member after lockdown.

2.11 In response to the question, 'what are your three most important library services?' 2299 respondents out of 2510 respondents (91.59%) replied:

Table E2: responses to 'what are your three most important library services?'

Response	Number of Respondents	% Respondents (2302)
Browsing and borrowing books	**1995**	**86.78%**
Rhymetimes/children's activities	**740**	**32.19%**
Space to work or research	**512**	**22.27%**
Using computers	**411**	**17.88%**
Printing	316	13.75%
Talks for adults	308	13.4%
Space to sit and relax	297	12.92%
Seasonal and craft activities for children	293	12.74%
Storytimes	248	10.79%
After school/homework	233	10.13%
Online virtual library	186	8.09%
Free Wi-Fi	186	8.09%
Wellbeing activities	179	7.79%
Reading groups	148	6.44%
Seasonal and craft activities for adults	125	5.44%
Other	106	4.61%
My library app	70	3.04%
Digital skills/job clubs	57	2.48%
Home library service	40	1.74%

2.12 To the free text question "Is there anything you feel is missing from our library service?", residents identified: more books; access to refreshments; longer opening hours/outside of normal working patterns; improved promotion of events and activities; modern and welcoming spaces; improved furniture; contactless/card payment.

2.13 Other feedback reported by the Council includes:

"Respondents told us that the following would make libraries more relevant to them: Opening their local libraries post-COVID, more comfortable modern spaces, better resources including books, more digital resources, a café, better local promotion and more activities.

Opening hours: 137 respondents from Question 8, and 13 respondents from Question 9 said opening hours pre-COVID19 were not suited to their needs or prevented them from using Croydon Libraries, and suggested longer opening hours and additional open days.

- *Later opening times, maybe one or two evenings per week so I could visit on the way home from work.*
- *Opening later in evenings and on Sundays. Opening times exclude working people."*

July 2021 (Phase 2) – key findings

Introduction

2.14 From our desktop review of previous consultation findings, we observe the following points and feedback from Croydon residents.

Consultation methods and response rates

2.15 We note the consultation methods used, and the following points, from the documents, including the weight of feedback from local residents:

- 'Summary of Consultation Feedback
    - Online/paper survey accessed by 1,411 respondents
    - Webinars; Recordings and FAQs from the two sessions
    - Face to face discussions with 343 residents at meetings in all libraries
    - Spring Parks Residents Association (SPRA) Response to the Consultation March 2021, resubmitted for July 2021
    - 3 emails and 1 letter submission'

Recurring themes

2.16 We note the 'recurring themes' that came out of the Phase 2 engagement forums, including 'face to face events, the webinars and completed surveys'. It was indicated that the Council would 'incorporate' these into the library service's 'new operating model to improve services':

- **'Better publicity about opening hours and activities;**
- **Call on Resident's Associations and other community networks for support**
- Pleased with digital services but request **support sessions for use of online resources**
- Interested in **volunteering to support the libraries'.**

2.17 In relation to Option 1 ('reduction of service hours by 21%'), we note the highlighted resident concerns and requests:

- 'When you reduce hours, you **must be open on Saturdays and evenings** or you discriminate against working people and students
- **Could the community provide support by providing relevant activities and making the building available out of out of hours**?

- We **do not feel safe with the concept of Open+** and feel this will discriminate against women and young people'.

Survey results in response to the proposed options

2.18 We note from the document that there were 1,411 returned survey forms.

2.19 We have **highlighted in bold** to draw attention to the highest percentage of respondents received for each Option and other key points of interest.

Table E3: Phase 2 – consultation survey responses (July 2021)

OPTION 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 1: Reduce library service hours by 21% across the borough? 987 respondents		
Responses	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage of Respondents**
Strongly agree	183	18.54%
Agree	**369**	**37.39%**
Disagree	159	16.11%
Strongly disagree	211	21.38%
Not sure	65	6.59%

OPTION 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 2: Outsource the management of all 13 libraries? 957 respondents		
Responses	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage of Respondents**
Strongly agree	32	3.34%
Agree	131	13.69%
Disagree	191	19.96%
Strongly disagree	**481**	**50.26%**
Not sure	122	12.75%

OPTION 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option 3: Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8 libraries? 939 respondents		
Responses	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage of Respondents**
Strongly agree	42	4.47%
Agree	189	20.13%
Disagree	231	24.60%
Strongly disagree	**312**	**33.23%**
Not sure	165	17.57%

2.20 In summary, feedback from respondents to the survey in Phase 2 was:

- Option 1 (**reduce library hours by 21%): 56% agreed**, or strongly agreed, with the proposal; 37% disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

- Option 2 (**outsource the management of all 13 libraries**): 17% agreed, or strongly agreed; **70% disagreed,** or strongly disagreed.

- Option 3 (**five community run libraries and reduced opening hours for eight libraries**): 25% agreed, or strongly agreed; **58% disagreed**, or strongly disagreed.

2.21 We note the significant **drop-off in the response rate** between the total forms received and the number of people answering the questions about preference between the three options proposed (roughly 30% of the total).

2.22 From the documents, we note the points that:

- 'There is a **significant preference across all ethnic groups for option one**: Reduce opening hours by 21% across all libraries, with some agreeing that either outsourcing or community managed options are viable alternatives'.

- 'In the free text responses to options one and two, **respondents urged the Council to seek support from the community**, and to **ensure there was more community involvement and resident engagement with libraries in future**, and **a co-production approach to libraries service development**. The **Council will continue to work with community groups with the aim of addressing this aspiration'**.

- 'Although **the offer of the Home Library Service and digital services were a mitigation for some** residents, they **did not replace an open local library**, accessible to those with **disability**, providing library staff, books and activities. There will be **future engagement with this group during implementation'**.

- 'The overall feedback was that **option one – reduce service hours by 21% across the borough – would be the only acceptable option of the three**, but **a reduction in services and opening hours would have a potential significant impact on residents with certain protected characteristics**, including age (older adults, babies, children and mothers), maternity/pregnancy, disability and ethnicity. There will be **future engagement with this groups about opening hours and activities during implementation** to ensure equalities concerns are monitored and mitigated'.

Equalities Impact Assessment

2.23 We observe the following points of note summarised in the documents:

'The Equalities Impact Assessment identified that for specific residents with protected characteristics there might be a more significant impact, and so it was important to analyse responses in detail to plan mitigations.

Age Groups

Options 1 and 2: Reduction in opening hours is likely to have **a disproportionate impact on some age groups:**

- **Families with young children** (time, logistics, cost)

- **Adults without digital access; jobless** (especially in Broad Green and South Norwood)

- **Seniors** who have told us it is difficult to travel (cost, fear of crime, fear of injury)

- **School children after school and school organized visits** (not reflected in data, in free text)

Feedback from over 50% of residents responding to the Phase 2 Libraries Consultation expressed a preference for Option 1 because it would mean a Council managed service and felt that a distribution of reduced hours across all libraries was a fair approach. However, the actual opening hours needed to be convenient for the community and further engagement with residents is essential for implementation.

Maternity & Pregnancy:

The EIA noted that proposals were considered likely to have an impact on certain age groups, including the youngest and oldest adults, mothers, school children, adults seeking jobs

Regarding Maternity and Pregnancy, there was feedback from the survey and from face to face meetings highlighting the **potential for a significant negative impact to reducing service hours if the opening hours were not accessible**. **Accessible hours would include Saturdays and evenings** for working mothers, and local mothers wanted to be involved in decisions about opening hours and the scheduling of activities, because this group could not easily travel to a nearby open library when their local library was closed. To mitigate this impact, **the Council will continue to engage with communities in implementing the reduction of hours at specific libraries**.

Option 1 Reduce library service hours by 21%: Respondents from this group chose “disagree” and “strongly disagree” because they did not want any reduction in hours; if this option went ahead, they wanted regular Rhymetimes and opening hours that were mother & child friendly, and offered **Saturdays and evenings for working mothers…**

Option 2 Outsource libraries: Some respondents preferred this option because it kept all libraries open and some pointed out that it worked in other boroughs. Other respondents were concerned that an organisation dependent on profit would not be focussed on the community and would start charging for baby and toddler activities.

Option 3 Five community-run libraries and reduce opening hours for 8 libraries: Many respondents preferred this option because they **felt a community run library would provide more activities for mothers and toddlers**, but were not pleased about reduced hours in the other libraries. Some respondents expressed **concern that community run libraries, with a dependency on local volunteers, would not be sustainable** and that the libraries would eventually close.

Disability

The overall feedback regarding the impact of the options for disabled library users was that **option one would be the only acceptable option of the three**, but a reduction in

services and opening hours would **have a significant impact on the wellbeing of residents with a disability**. It was noted **that residents with mobility issues could not easily travel to other libraries,** especially not to those without parking nearby. Opening hours needed to allow for quiet times which were more disabled friendly, activities and volunteering opportunities. To mitigate the impact**, the Council will continue to engage with residents with a disability during our planning to implementing reduce hours across the specific library sites**.

Option 1 Reduce Service hours by 21%: this option was preferred over the other options, but many saying **reduced access to the library set out in this option will have a negative impact on vulnerable and disabled residents**. They **disagreed or strongly disagreed with all three options on the basis that any reduction in service would have a negative impact on them**.

… Although Home Library Service and digital services were a mitigation for some residents, they did not replace an open local library, accessible to those with disability, providing library staff, books and activities.

There are **over 1,000 registered library members who have stated they have a disability** and they are registered in all library branches, so the impact is across the entire service. If reduced, **the service will work with disabled residents in each branch to ensure the opening hours are suitable for people with disability'**.

2.24 We suggest that these headline observations about the impact on Croydon residents should continue to be considered by the Council in any future options proposed for the library service, and to help ensure the service's future statutory duty compliance in line with previous DCMS consultation advice.

Draft

Summary of findings from two phases of consultation in 2021

Table E4: Previous public consultation in March 2021 (Phase 1) – our key findings

- Residents taking part highlighted that although many did have access to the internet from home that they were aware that other local residents did not have internet access at home and that **the library service helped to bridge the digital divide**.
- The four **most important library services to** respondents to the survey were: **browsing and borrowing books; Rhymetimes/children's activities; Space to work or research and Using computers**.
- The three **most important things that respondents reported as missing from the library service** were: **Resources** (books, newspapers) ('Improvements to quality book stock; more books'); **Activities** ('Improved and additional activities for all ages'), and **Opening Hours** ('Lack of evening & weekend opening hours a barrier').
- Further feedback indicates the **additional thoughts that participants have about the things they feel are missing from the library service** including**: more books; access to refreshments; longer opening hours/outside of normal working patterns; improved promotion of events and activities; modern and welcoming spaces; improved furniture, and contactless/card payment.**
- Participants in the consultation said that **the following would make libraries more relevant to them**: **Opening their local libraries post-COVID, more comfortable modern spaces, better resources including books, more digital resources, a café, better local promotion** and **more activities**.
- On the specific issue of **opening hours**: 137 respondents said **opening hours pre-Covid were not suited to their needs or prevented them from using Croydon libraries**, and suggested they **would like longer opening hours and additional open days**.

Table E5: Previous public consultation in July 2021 (Phase 2) – our key findings

- The headline consultation findings from both phases, including the quantity of responses indicating **the strength of local resident feeling**, should continue to be recognised by the Council in any future options proposed for the library service.
- In response to the Option 1 proposal (**reduce library hours by 21%**): **56% agreed, or strongly agreed**; 37% disagreed, or strongly disagreed.
- In response to the Option 2 proposal (o**utsource the management of all 13 libraries**): 17% agreed, or strongly agreed; **70% disagreed, or strongly disagreed.**
- In response to the Option 3 (**five community run libraries and reduced opening hours for eight libraries**) proposal: 25% agreed, or strongly agreed; **58% disagreed, or strongly disagreed.**
- There were a number of **recurring themes** that were noted as part of the consultation findings. It was indicated that the Council would incorporate these into the library service's 'new operating model to improve services':
  - 'Better **publicity about opening hours and activities.**
  - **Call on resident associations and other community networks for support**.
  - **Digital services support sessions** for use of online resources.
  - **Volunteering** to support the libraries.
- There were a number of resident concerns noted as part of the consultation findings, including:
  - The importance of ensuring that residents understood the supporting information.
  - Concerns that library closures during COVID lockdown were permanent closures.
  - Concerns that local libraries would close. Libraries were recognised by residents as being 'important for wellbeing'; 'a lifeline'; 'respite', and 'brings community together'.
- The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies that specific user groups (**especially families with young children; adults without digital access; unemployed people; seniors, and school children**) are **likely to be disproportionately affected** by any changes to Croydon's library service offer.

3. KLOE a: how the current service meets the greatest needs in the borough

What people have told us

What's come out of the external briefings

3.1 In our external briefing conversations with Library Friends and community groups, we heard the views summarised below.

3.2 The most significant requirement we heard was the need to **revisit the current opening hours** at all libraries. Almost every group told us 'the hours aren't working', and of the need for 'more accessible hours of opening'. Many groups felt '**Saturday and evening opening'** was **highly important**. One person suggested this was particularly the case 'for students and working people', in particular 'working parents', which the majority of people in that particular discussion agreed with.

3.3 Conduct '**wider engagement' with users** ('and national bodies, campaign groups') to understand local needs in order to have **'locally informed solutions** for each library'. Two people underlined the importance of the '**EQIA'** and 'looking at **local data on usage**' to inform a future service offer that responded to local needs but urged the Council to offer a library service '**not just for the hard to reach and vulnerable'**.

3.4 Libraries as **'community' and/or 'wellbeing' hubs**: the concept of 'hubs' came up several times in conversations. The definition of 'hub' wasn't strictly defined in the conversations but could perhaps be interpreted as a focal point for local community activities, accessing information, and somewhere to access co-located public services. People told us these hubs could be '**more than somewhere to just take out a book**'; 'a **community resource'**; somewhere for '**cohesion** and **mental wellbeing'** and that 'if we were able to develop our libraries to do all those things, that would be really good'. One person suggested that libraries have 'to **be a destination**', sharing a range of ideas for collocated activities including 'Councillors bringing their surgery back; the library opening on a Saturday; housing; or a credit union bringing in sessions'.

3.5 An **expanded technology offer**: some individuals asked that it be deployed 'carefully' and not at the expense of paid staff. Several individuals identified **the role that Open+ could play** with 'support to librarians' and expanded 'opening hours'. There was also a perception amongst several people that there are 'particularly **high usage rates for PCs'** in Croydon.

3.6 Address individual **security concerns** and '**response times'**: several anecdotal examples were shared where alarms had been rung on site and security response times had been considered slow. These experiences had been concerning to the affected people, who had shared their observations back with fellow users and groups, which in turn had grown further local fears and concerns.

3.7 **At least one 'professional' librarian on site**: several groups told us that 'having a professional member of staff really makes a difference' to user experience. Positive

feedback about the library staff and an appreciation of the job they did **in challenging circumstances** was received across all of the groups.

3.8 Several people felt that many of the needs that others had highlighted as part of the group discussions were 'all **consistent with what we've found in the past'** and acknowledging that there was **''no obvious solution'**.

3.9 Issues around **the approach to communication, and consultation**, about **local needs** and keeping residents **informed about Croydon's library service offer** was mentioned several times. People made a number of observations, including that 'the service needed to get out and reach the people who you are not reaching at the moment – (*use*) social media, WhatsApp groups… word of mouth – try everything'; 'people are willing to lend expertise and time – the Council needs to use it – if you don't tap in, it will go away again', and 'spreading and getting information out there'.

What's come out of the officer interviews

3.10 In our conversations, we heard how it was **important for the Council's strategic leaders to agree a new vision for the future role of libraries** in Croydon, in response to the changing needs of Croydon's residents.

3.11 Libraries are perceived by officers to continue **to play a valued role within the community** and are increasingly seen as **a platform to support people beyond the written word**, e.g. with addressing digital exclusion, digital poverty and health outcomes.

3.12 Officers told us that residents require **signposting support to help them navigate public services.** We heard how the Council, and libraries, need to **adapt its approach to the promotion and marketing of its services** to residents.

3.13 Some officers perceive that wider social appetite for free physical books via public libraries may be in decline.

3.14 Reflecting on the range of views and ideas expressed, we observe that **there is no clear shared officer 'future vision' for what Croydon's library service should be**.

3.15 Some perceive that the library service is currently **trying 'to be all things to all people'** but could also be considered '**very traditional'** and **'sleepy'**.

Which aspects of the library service offer are currently most in demand? How does this relate to the local community profile (demographic and infrastructure)?

3.16 Officers perceive that Croydon's library service offer **can be 'so much more'** and that there is an opportunity with this transformation project to explore those possibilities further.

3.17 It is generally perceived that Croydon's libraries are providing something locally **for people who can't afford or access things any other way**, whether that is books, workspace, community space, socialising opportunities, warm spaces or safety.

3.18 We heard frequently in our conversations that there are **growing requirements** for more **translation, ESOL** and **refugee/asylum seeker support**.

3.19 There is also understood to be **growing demand** in Croydon in relation to **health support requirements (both physical and mental) and** increasing interest in **environmental or climate change activities**.

3.20 Several officers felt that **the Council's**, not just the library service's, **workforce** may need '**upskilling'** to respond to these changing local needs. It was implied in our conversations that the 'traditional' librarian's role has changed significantly.

What needs are not being met and how could they be?

3.21 We heard a wide range of suggestions and ideas about the perceived needs of Croydon residents that are currently not being met in full by the existing library service offer,

3.22 These included:

- **London Borough of Culture-related arts and creativity:** including digital creativity: some questions raised about how libraries should complement this.
- **Physical and mental health**: including safe havens for diverse user groups and loneliness; join-ups with local partners and Public Health focused on prevention.
- **Housing**: significant challenges; responding to recent high-profile reports on housing standards and pressures and the need for local transformation.
- **Community spaces**: general perception that there are not enough reasonably priced spaces on offer to the VCS.
- **Translation and ESOL support**: increasing demand locally.

What services operate in the wider landscape which meet some of this need? Is there potential for collaboration and closer alignment?

3.23 We received a number of suggestions about services operating in the wider landscape, offering potential for collaboration and closer alignment including: Resident Contact, Housing Services, Public Health, Community and Voluntary Sector team, Children's Services: especially the Family Hubs programme, Croydon Music and Arts.

4. KLOE b: the quality of Croydon's library network

What people have told us

What's come out of the external briefings

4.1 We were told of the importance of **making the existing spaces more 'vibrant'** to help with their appeal (and marketability for external hire).

4.2 The importance of **toilet accessibility**: we heard a number of times how 'accessible' toilet facilities were important to users, with individual sites requiring 'renovation' and one individual offering a volunteer's services as a professional surveyor in order to help address accessibility challenges – 'it would be good if we could talk with someone about this'. One person gave an anecdotal example where group use at their library has to be regularly 'curtailed' due to the lavatories not being open.

What's come out of the staff workshops

What good looks like

4.3 Staff told us that Croydon's libraries need to be accessible, providing free services in comfortable, warm and safe environments that have a welcoming atmosphere and 'buzz'. The library buildings should feel modern and be well embedded within their communities. Internally, they must be 'well organised', with plenty of spaces set out for different activities and user groups. The libraries need to be 'well resourced', with 'knowledgeable' and 'friendly' staff on hand to provide clear advice and support to people about what is on offer – reading, especially, should be celebrated, and the IT infrastructure throughout must be reliable.

4.4 *Gap analysis: how far is our service from 'good'?*

4.5 Staff shared their thoughts on how far they felt the current service was from 'good', using a balanced scorecard approach focused on four core perspectives – *customer, processes, staffing, finances* – plus '*anything else'* that felt was key.

4.6 *Customer*: staff told us there is a need for more book stock. We heard how opening hours and staffing levels needed overhauling in order to help meet shifting customer expectations, including people experiencing homelessness, IT support and more study space. The internal fabric of buildings and IT infrastructure require investment. There are also pockets of challenging customer behaviour to be managed.

4.7 *Processes*: staff told us of various IT infrastructure and reliability issues, including 'awful' IT support, photocopier issues and frustrations at a lack of card payment options. Customers expect support with other public services that staff are not trained for. Inflexible policies are frustrating staff, particularly opening hours, recruitment and Internet usage.

4.8 *Staffing*: staff told us that opening hours, staffing levels and a perceived 'reliance on their good will' were of particular concern and required addressing urgently. Staff are loaded with additional responsibilities and are frustrated at not being able to provide continuity at some sites. Staff perceive they are doing well in spite of the challenges they face but understand they could do more if there were more resources available.

4.9 *Finances*: staff are extremely frustrated at the lack of funding available for them to do a good job, including available stock, events and activities, physical fabric and materials.

4.10 *Anything else*: staff particularly referred to the 'state' of the physical fabric in libraries and the various accessibility issues, including the need for improvements to the comfort of buildings. The combination of all these challenges was affecting the morale of a number of staff.

4.11 Staff were invited to offer their suggestions and ideas for change for the future library service offer.

Table E6: Staff workshops – ideas for change

Ideas for change
• Appearance and physical fabric of libraries: including improved accessibility, comfort, and physical fabric repairs. • Career development: more opportunities for staff redeployment and secondment. • Events – revised offer: including social media use and marketing approach. • Funding – new approaches: fundraising and ideas for income generation. • IT: improved infrastructure reliability; up to date payment systems. • Location of libraries: accessibility improvements. • Opening hours: to be overhauled; reducing branches to expand staffed hours. • Outreach: explore the potential to reach more respondents. • Safety and security: improve accessibility; equipment and security reliability. • Staffing: improve job security, development, training and progression; support staff morale; communication improvements; working patterns and staffing levels. • Stock: more copies of popular stock; staff input into stock choices. • Van deliveries: quicker and more frequent deliveries to library branches.

What's come out of the officer interviews

4.12 **There have been suggestions made that the current 13-strong library network is** '**excessive'** and should be consolidated with other Council physical assets across Croydon.

4.13 Several officers agree with the principle of the library service operating from **'fewer but better'** physical library buildings, but it is recognised that Croydon has **a significantly larger population relative to other London Boroughs**. Some officers queried how

this should best be reflected in the quantity of physical buildings on offer to residents across the borough.

4.14 We heard loudly that a **'one size fits all' approach will not work** for Croydon's library service. There is a perceived 'loose' divide in Croydon – of the North (perhaps more work/study focused in terms of need) and the South (perhaps more culture-focused in terms of needs) – that could help to inform the future library service offer

4.15 We understand that **the Council has a wider physical assets (or 'disposal') review in progress**, and that the library service's review needs to align with the asset review's drivers. A number of **Croydon regeneration projects and placemaking opportunities** were suggested to us that the library service's transformation could align with. Suggestions we heard included:

- Central Library, the Clock Tower redevelopment and overall masterplan for the area: noting some recognitions of past failed attempts to make this work.
- Croydon 'Campus': future Council ambitions to be explored further.
- East Croydon: considered a location that is 'on the up'.
- Purley redevelopment.
- Regeneration team's 'placemaking' agenda and HRA housing priorities.
- South Norwood Neighbourhood Plan, including ideas for a 10-year redevelopment of the site and surrounding local area.
- Town Centre development, and work with Westfield/Whitgift Shopping Centre.

The condition of the libraries that are in the right place and any changes needed

4.16 There were strong views that **each library should have a 'different',** or locally tailored, **offer**.

4.17 Some were interested in the idea of **reconfiguring the library network** to be '**fewer but better'** and **adjusting the layouts and spaces** inside the physical buildings.

4.18 The libraries that currently exist are generally considered to be **located in the right geographic areas** and that there are **no obvious provision 'deserts'** in Croydon.

Suggestions for targeted capital investment

4.19 We were told that any '**asset transfers'** must be '**viable'**, which may include associated '**capital investment'** first.

4.20 Once any asset transfers have been completed, it has been suggested that 'ring-fenced' investment should be made in **the 'retained' and 'rationalised' library network**.

4.21 Suggested areas for investment include:

- **Physical fabric:** including decoration and general modernisation.
- **Physical infrastructure**: including space reconfiguration to enable e.g. new security doors/internal walls to allow for extended chargeable hire of spaces that need separation from other parts of the building.
- **Hardware**: including IT for self-service opening, digital access and activities.

Draft

5. KLOE c: the impact of the 2022 changes:

What people have told us

What's come out of the external briefings

5.1 On the whole, people expressed **unhappiness** and **frustration** at the impact of moving to part-time opening, seen by some as '**disastrous**'. There was a clear understanding that the impact of the changes was **far worse than the nominal 21%** reduction in hours proposed, given how poorly Open+ and extending volunteering were perceived to have worked so far.

5.2 The importance of reviewing the opening hours was highlighted with various **examples of parents, young children and people with traditional 9-5 working hours being unable to access libraries**. Several people told us how the lack of '**opening on a Saturday'** was **an issue**, as well as a lack of **evenings** and **after school**. We even heard reports of **people sitting outside libraries on closed days trying to access free Wi-Fi**.

5.3 There was a majority feeling amongst the groups that there had been a 'one size fits all' approach adopted for the whole service, which didn't work in Croydon. One person told us there was a need for local '**bespokeness'** in the library offer.

5.4 We also heard how perceived **miscommunication** and **poor signage** had confused some residents. There were several anecdotes shared with us of **people didn't understand 'the hours the library was open'**, thought their local library had completely closed and simply 'don't understand' why their library was now open part-time. One person stated that the usage figures showing a recent decline in library usage 'doesn't surprise me'.

5.5 Some people felt the cuts to the service, understood to have driven the requirement for such significant changes, were '**short-sighted'**. One person asked whether 'the savings have now been achieved once and for all?'. Another individual expressed their frustration at having observed local politicians 'celebrating at local events' without acknowledging the cuts to the library service, and at the likelihood of further library building closures being stated unofficially to members of the public.

5.6 A number of people described how residents 'are **struggling'** and '**need more help'**. A handful of people **rued the loss of 'community and family space'**, and that **access to Wi-Fi and computers** had been taken away from '**those who need it most'** – one person felt that access had been especially reduced for '**deprived'** areas in Croydon.

5.7 People described to us how they perceived **the library workforce to be 'spread'** across the borough. Several individuals **queried the financial logic** of 'getting rid of staff, then putting in a machine, then paying a security guard', telling us that 'there should be a librarian, not a security guard' in place. A number of people perceived there were library service **volunteer recruitment and retention challenges** in Croydon.

5.8 There were some **individual views** (a minority) where **the change had had a positive impact**. A handful of people told us they felt their local library was 'thriving' or similar, and that 'things were picking up' after taking a little while for residents to 'become familiar with the new hours'. One person told us they felt 'the online system for loans' was 'working quite well'.

What's come out of the officer interviews

5.9 It is broadly perceived by officers that the Council '**didn't do a great job'** by implementing part-time opening across its library network.

5.10 Officers understand that the Council's political leadership are **committed to providing a 'good library' offer** in Croydon.

5.11 Officers recognised that societal, and public sector, moves towards increased use of IT and online services means it is **timely to review, and potentially adjust, the library service's online offer** as part of its transformation and any revised whole service offer.

5.12 The library transformation project is understood to operate in a highly challenging financial context, as well as carry **significant local consultation history** for all officers to be mindful of. Officers expect the outcomes of the library transformation project to help contribute towards the challenges that the whole Council faces.

5.13 Officers recognise that the previous library transformation projects **did not achieve a satisfactory outcome** for either Croydon residents or the Council.

5.14 In response to the above, and within this strategic future planning context, we heard how all transformation projects, including the library service, are encouraged to be **'aspirational, but pragmatic'**.

5.15 From our conversations, it is clear that library service staff, and senior Council officers, are **keen for the library service offer to change**. However, past resourcing and staff turnover issues have meant it has been difficult to do successfully. We heard at least one reference to **'ridiculous' timetables for transformation,** affecting the Council's ability to be thorough with exploring all possible opportunities and ideas for services.

5.16 One person suggested to us that there was a new service offer '**balance'** to be struck between '**how many / distance'** and '**hours / access'**.

5.17 Another person advised that the library service's **traditional 'physical' presence** was highly valued by residents and shouldn't go.

6. KLOE d: making more efficient use of assets

What people have told us

What's come out of the external briefings

6.1 People were keen to **make more use of underused spaces**. Several people, on behalf of their groups, told us about their 'ideas for delivering from (*underused spaces*)' in library buildings.

6.2 One person told us 'we want to work with you – we have local groups who want to use it' (with reference to one particular space); another mentioned 'as a VCS organisation, we're always looking for spaces – there's a bit of a match there'. We also heard how the extra **income** from hiring these underused spaces (albeit with improvements) could be a way to 'free up money for (*more*) staff'.

6.3 During one briefing, a number of people highlighted the **accessibility** and **transport challenges** facing residents, recognising that whilst the option of going to 'other (*library building*) locations' was available to people in Croydon, this was 'not easy if (*you were*) not a car driver'.

6.4 Many people reflected on a need for physical fabric improvements to Croydon's library buildings – one person said that **the 'right initiative and investment** (***was needed***) to make the most of libraries'.

6.5 Every briefing group expressed **concerns and local perceptions of the possibility that some library buildings might be 'sold off**'. One person felt the Council would solve a 'short term problem' but create 'a longer-term issue' by doing this, with another telling us that 'once you've closed the library, it's gone forever'.

6.6 One person told us they found the idea of a library 'building being sold' in order to help save the service, or Council, money was 'unsettling'. Another individual also shared a strong belief that 'community run libraries just won't work'.

What's come out of the officer interviews

6.7 We received a number of suggestions for **services, groups and organisations**, that the library service **could co-locate, partner or integrate more closely with**, including:

- Family Hubs.
- Asian Resource Centre.
- South Norwood, working with the Friends Groups.
- CALAT.
- Housing/Resident Contact: with significant caveats about the safe division of spaces for users with violent/challenging behaviours and e.g. family and children's activities.

- Public Health: building on existing relationship and funding opportunities.
- Neighbouring London boroughs: exploring a perception that some residents 'boundary hop' to use library, and other public, services.

6.8 However, we were told that if co-location and deeper integration is going to happen and be successful, **the Council must learn the lessons** of previous projects' '**ridiculous timetables'** and not rush the **relationship building**, and **preparatory work with services**, that would first be required.

The effect and performance of self-service access and the lessons learned

6.9 Despite best intentions, there is an officer perception that the self-service opening (SSO) implementation **could have gone better**. We understand that, whilst initial teething issues have been worked through, there remains **some resident** '**confusion'** about how it all works.

6.10 Several people told us that **the underlying issue** remains - that **library opening hours are not what residents want them to be** - and that this needs to be reviewed.

The site footprint of other public and voluntary services in the area of each library

6.11 Several people described perceptions **of a 'generous' Council that had helped prop up financially struggling sites**, meaning there was a 'proliferation' of physical assets across the borough that had **not been strategically deployed or maintained**.

6.12 We also heard how the Council's physical assets may have been **handily located to meet the past needs** of Croydon residents. It was suggested that, as the borough's needs are likely to have changed in recent years, some of **these locations may no longer be as useful as they used to be**, so **'hard truths' may now be required** about their **sustainability** and **value for money**.

7. KLOE e: learning from elsewhere

What people have told us

What's come out of the external briefings

Suggestions about what can be done

7.1 Several people suggested there were **local 'successes' that could be 'built on'**, flagging the work of 'the Brutalist Library campaign', and that 'Upper Norwood and West Norwood' in particular had been 'fabulous and innovative'.

7.2 One person suggested **more could be learnt by working closely with Croydon's voluntary sector**, noting that 'there was a bit of a match' in terms of offering available space at a reasonable price to local charitable organisations and groups in need.

The most important issues that the Council should take into account

7.3 Exploring the **income generation possibilities** was mentioned at one discussion, with one person suggesting the service could improve its **'entrepreneurial approach**… (*the Council should*) **explore up and down the country and learn** from that'

7.4 One individual suggested it might be beneficial for the library service to **speak with other related interest groups and VCS organisations about 'priorities and inwards investment'**, pointing to the example of a recent significant ACE grant award to Croydon and highlighting that the service, with others, 'could do partnership bids to seek funding'.

What's come out of the officer interviews

7.5 Our interviewees recognised that there was **no shortage of ideas** regarding the potential for the library service to do more, and enable more, using new and additional IT. However, it was generally recognised that to venture into this area **would require capital investment in equipment and workforce development** in order to do it well and 'get ahead of the curve'.

7.6 We received a suggestion to build on the technology work that South Bank University are currently doing, working in close partnership with Croydon's Public Health team.

7.7 There was a **general awareness of**, and a range of officer viewpoints on other library and related services for Croydon to learn lessons from, including: Havering, Hammersmith & Fulham, Brent, Coventry – Carnegie specifically, sector insights gained from working with APPG (via Croydon Public Health).

7.8 There were also some individual perceptions of **how 'not to'** approach this concept, based on approaches that have gone badly in Croydon previously. The abortive Norwood Junction site was cited as an example by one officer.

Services that have engaged volunteers and communities in library service delivery

7.9 Several officers indicated volunteer involvement was **an interesting concept** and shared their awareness of the approach taken by other services that Croydon could aspire to. If this idea was to be explored further, Wigan Deal and Brent were suggested as case studies.

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8. KLOE f: how people feel about potential changes to their libraries in the future

What people have told us

What's come out of the external briefings

8.1 A few people also recognised **the hard reality of the financial challenges** that the Council was facing. Two people described how it was ‘better going to part-time than closing’, and ‘better to have one day a week, than not’. Another individual stated that it was important for ‘all of us to bear in mind… there is no more, but no less, money. We're having to be really hard-nosed here and how do we do this'.

8.2 The majority consensus at our discussions was that there had been **no significant change in peoples’ views on the original three options consulted on in 2021**. Comments included ‘No… (*there’s*) not enough people there’; ‘'Not really… My view has not changed'; and ’Basically, no change'. Three people described how ‘from memory, none of the four options felt good to us’; that the ‘blanket approach didn’t feel good enough’, and that ‘it sounded like running staff into the ground’.

8.3 There was a clear general feeling expressed during the briefings - as summarised by one individual – that **residents 'would have liked things to stay as they were, but (*that*) wasn't an option**'. One person told us that ‘we need to keep investing in local libraries', with another individual feeling that Croydon’s library service had been ‘cut to the bone’.

8.4 On the whole, we observed that people felt the outcome of the changes had been unsatisfactory, and it was important that the Council ‘**consulted more widely’ to look ‘thoroughly’ at what else could be done.** There was general agreement by the groups that closing libraries was not ‘a viable option’.

What's come out of the officer interviews

8.5 It has been suggested that the **urgency** of the Council's financial position needs conveying to local residents with total **transparency** to help them understand the difficult choices that need to be considered (again). We were also told that a ‘**long term / gradual change’** and ‘**reimagining** and **transformation’** approach would be needed.

8.6 It is clear **there is a community of passionate local groups and campaigners with a long history of engagement with the Council** during Croydon’s library service transformation. We have heard that it will be important to stay closely engaged with these groups, and to engage with their concerns sensitively, informed by the lessons and feedback of past consultations.

8.7 Given the difficult financial situation Croydon faces, in more than one discussion, we heard it was essential the Council was now **frank about money** with residents and **did not ‘fudge’ difficult financial decisions** as it was perceived to have done in the past.

9. KLOE g: the scope for more voluntary and community involvement

What people have told us

What's come out of the external briefings

9.1 A handful of people raised **security concerns in relation to volunteers having access to library members' personal data**. One person said they 'don't like idea of volunteers having access to my data ', with another asking, 'are they (*volunteers*) DBS checked?'.

9.2 We received a couple of queries about **the level of training that volunteers receive**. One person told us 'They (*volunteers*) don't' replace staff'.

9.3 During the discussions, several people raised their **frustrations** at community groups being **unable to access to use library spaces for themselves on building 'closed days'**.

9.4 Several people told us about **a lack of confidence in, and a strong aversion to, the concept of community run libraries**. Comments we received included:

- 'Community run (*libraries*) is a disaster waiting to happen'.
- '(*I*) don't think local community libraries can rely and run on volunteers'.
- 'My perspective on volunteer run libraries has hardened'.
- ''Just don't think it would work in Croydon - has it worked anywhere else?'.

9.5 We heard that some people from community group backgrounds had also found **the current process of applying to become a library volunteer quite difficult.** One person told us they had heard anecdotally how 'people who wanted to get involved as volunteers (*had*) found the process quite difficult', recommending to the Council that 'if you want volunteers, you need to make sure the process is straightforward''

9.6 Several people said that the Council could **make it easier for 'people (*to*) understand how they can get involved** in the service'.

9.7 We heard during one discussion a handful of examples of **the cafe spaces** located in different Croydon library buildings that were **perceived to have commercial potential** and 'available for use', however '**no one was running them'**.

9.8 The Council were encouraged a handful of times to **'explore how volunteers can help'** the service. One person said that the Council needed to **'trust (*the*) groups'**, with another mentioning exploring 'what activities people (*could*) run themselves'.

9.9 People in the groups also stated that the use of volunteers needed proper resourcing and support to recruit and retain people and make it work and that the Council should factor this into any plans to develop the role of volunteering in the library service.

What's come out of the officer interviews

9.10 We heard loudly in our conversations that as there had recently been big cuts to the funding for the local VCS, there are **likely to be some tensions and ill feelings** in the sector's relationship with the Council.

9.11 Several officers recognised volunteers as a route to offer extra '**capacity'**.

9.12 There were perceptions that **the capacity and skill** levels of local VCS organisations **varies greatly** - from those who are functioning well, through to those who struggle despite their best intentions.

9.13 We were told clearly that the local VCS is **generally struggling for resources**. One person described how some have been forced to 'give up buildings' due to rising costs and recently reduced funding.

9.14 One person described how there had been **a number of past 'credible proposals'** from local VCS and faith groups who were interested in taking over certain sites for the Council that might now warrant revisiting.

9.15 It was suggested to us that some VCS groups **may have the skills and connections in order to be able to develop certain sites commercially** (i.e. generate a commercial income from their use/hire of space, or subletting), which the Council could/should then see a commercial return from.

9.16 It was indicated to us that it would be **timely to re-explore** this whole topic. It was suggested that **a dedicated coordinator** would be required to make any CAT opportunities happen in reality.

9.17 Suggestions were shared for '**enabling' buildings for more usage** - e.g. Sunday opening. It was recognised that some sites **would require physical infrastructure works** and capital investment to overcome these existing 'barriers' (e.g. introducing new walls and doors to block off parts of the library building) and the development of new key holder responsibilities and policies for non-library staff. There would also be significant associated culture shift and changes to operational ways of working in order to make this happen.

10. Next steps

10.1 The main report recommends in-depth public consultation and engagement over the proposed changes to the service.

10.2 The data from the last two rounds of public consultation in 2021 and feedback from the external briefings and staff workshop and interviews in recent months will inform the design of the public consultation in the next phase of this review.

Draft

Annex 1 to Appendix E – List of organisations we have spoken with

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Table E7: list of external organisations spoken with

Job title and organisation
The Hive (Coulsdon Library garden)
Brutalist Library Group (South Norwood)
Save Croydon Libraries Campaign
Norbury Green Residents Association
Purley Panel
Love Norbury
Spring Parks Residents Association
Coulsdon Church of England School
Friends of South Norwood Library
Asian Resource Centre of Croydon (ARCC)
Friends of Sanderstead/Residents Association
Spring Park Residents Association (Shirley Library)
The Library Campaign
Purley Baptist Church

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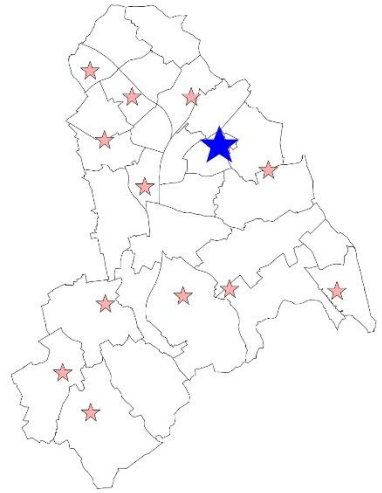
Ashburton Library Profile

Shirley Road, Croydon, CR9 7AL	
Tel: 020 7884 5175	
Email: ashburtonlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Addiscombe East Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	10am – 6pm
Tuesday	10am – 6pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10am – 6pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday	9am – 5pm
Hours open per week:	32
Year built:	2006

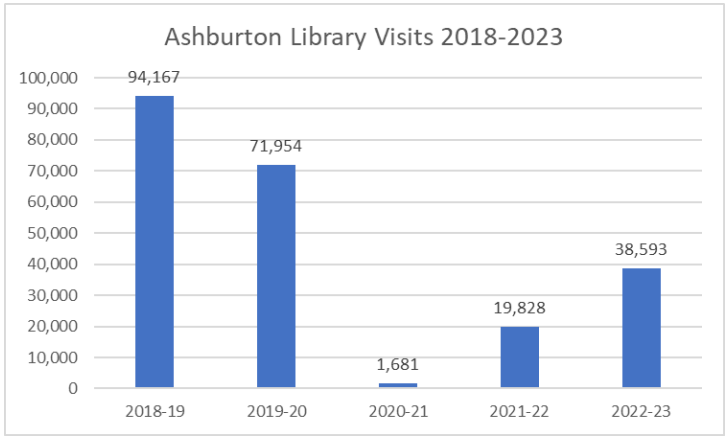
Indicative net internal area:	571 sq m

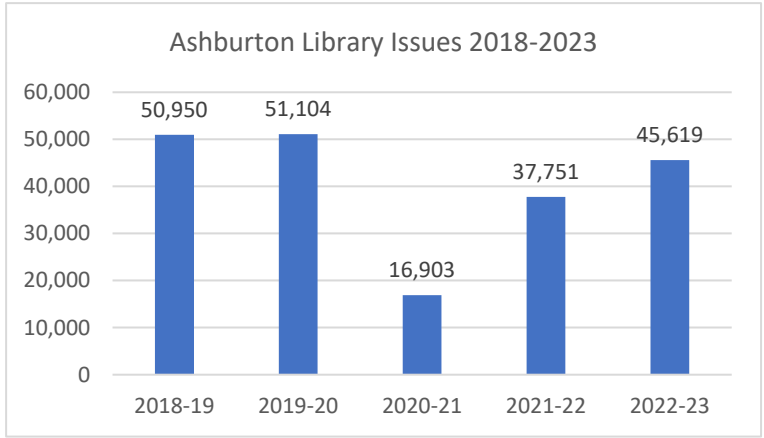


Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	38,593	6.71% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	23.86	Annual running costs	£323,732
Annual issues	45,619	6.67% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	28	Running cost per hour	£198
PC usage (hours used)	3,020	7% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	35%	Cost per visitor	£8
Users who have logged onto a PC	1,194	5.03% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	9,860	Income	£2,822
Active users	1,833	4.99% *of Croydon total*	Events run	235	Lending stock	25,589
New members	678	4% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	2,997	New Stock	1,222

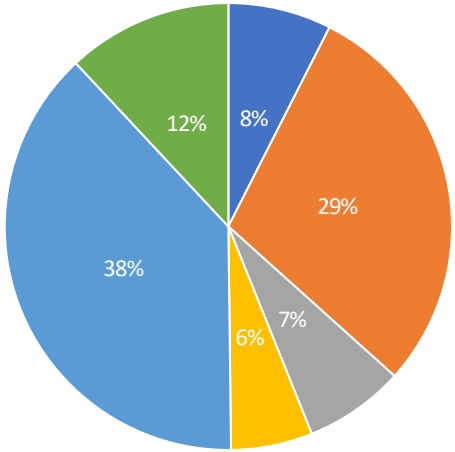
Building and location summary	
Location type: • The building is in a predominantly residential area	**Footfall:** • Short distance from shopping parade limiting shopper footfall • Busy on weekday term times with students from school next door
Visibility: • Prominent, glass fronted, modern building • Part of the Ashburton Learning Village (including Oasis Academy) • Set back from road, but visible signage (except at entrance)	**Adaptability:** • The shelving units are static and so cannot be moved • The children's library space is used for talks • Scope for additional uses within the library
Suitability: • The library is double height at the front and airy • The interior and the furniture are basic and utilitarian • Sufficient space and some sectioning off	**Condition (visual impression):** • The exterior of the building is well-maintained and clean • Regular maintenance and cleaning are part of the PFI contract

Ashburton Library Profile

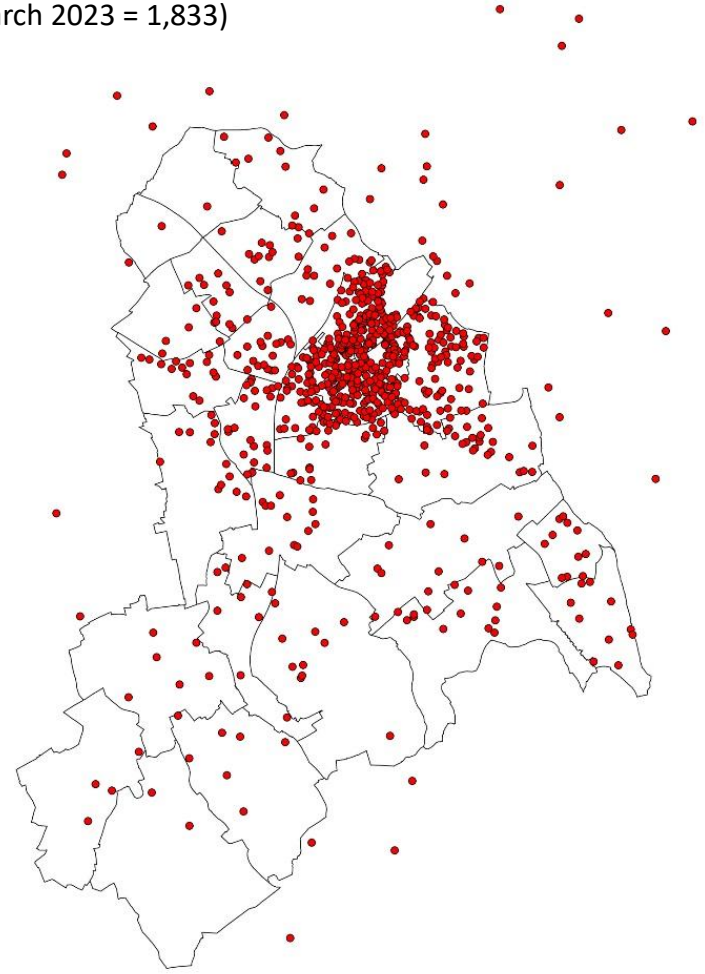




Ashburton Library Active Users (March 2023 = 1,833)



- CHILD 0-4
- CHILD 5-11
- TEEN 12-15
- TEEN 16-17
- ADULT 18-59
- SENIOR 60+



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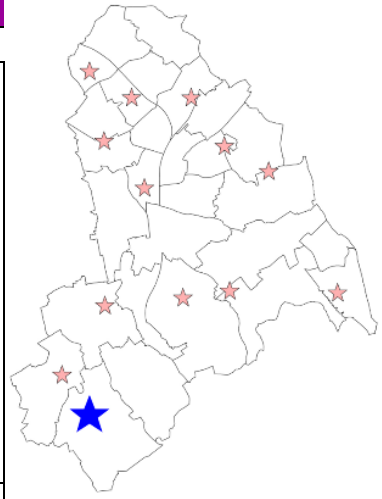
Bradmore Green Library Profile

Bradmore Way, Old Coulsdon, CR5 1PE	
Tel: 020 7884 5220	
Email: bradmoregreenlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Old Coulsdon Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10am – 6pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	Closed
Friday	10am – 6pm
Saturday	Closed
Hours open per week:	16
Year built:	1963

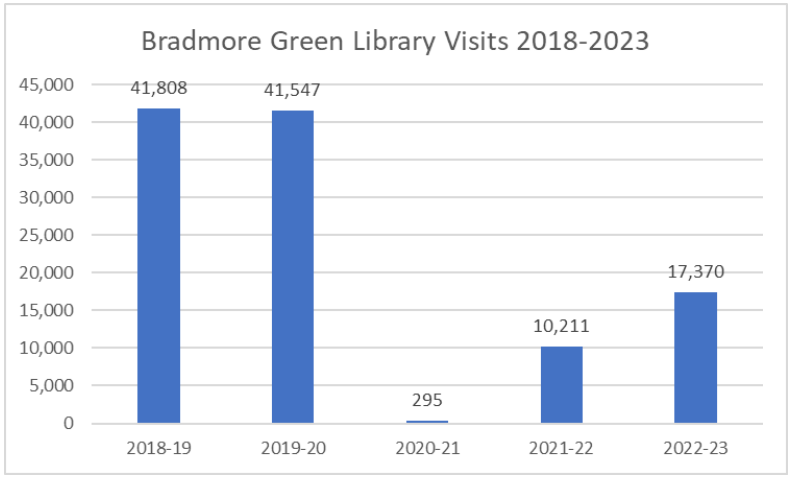


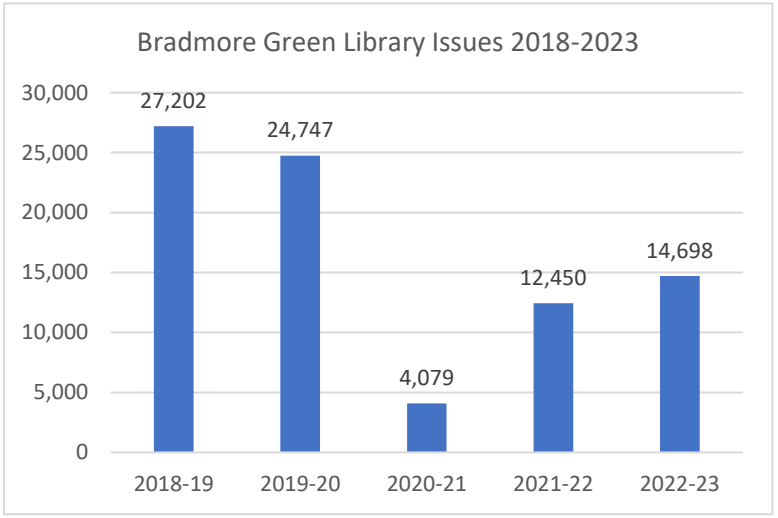
Indicative net internal area: 180 sq m

Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	17,370	3.02% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	21.28	Annual running costs	£95,790
Annual issues	14,698	3.1% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	18	Running cost per hour	£117
PC usage (hours used)	177	0.42% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	12.3%	Cost per visitor	£6
Users who have logged onto a PC	149	0.62% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	1,442	Income	£661
Active users	496	1.35% *of Croydon total*	Events run	57	Lending stock	10,460
New members	37	0.2% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	574	New Stock	572

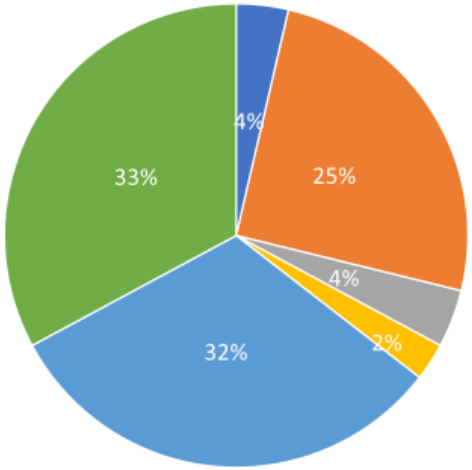
Building and location summary	
Location type: • The building is in a predominantly residential area	**Footfall:** • Next to primary school which provides some footfall • Limited other footfall and some distance from shops •
Visibility: • Limited visibility as on side residential road • Poor signage	**Adaptability:** • Fixed shelving so not easily adaptable • No underused space as it is too small
Suitability: • The main library space is small and cramped • Unattractive interior and poor energy efficiency • No zoning and too small for full range of library uses	**Condition (visual impression):** • The exterior of the building is in mixed condition. • Interiors dull and interiors and grounds neglected

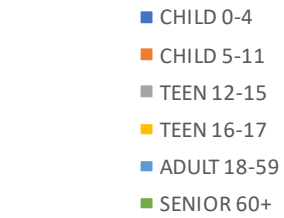
Bradmore Green Library Profile

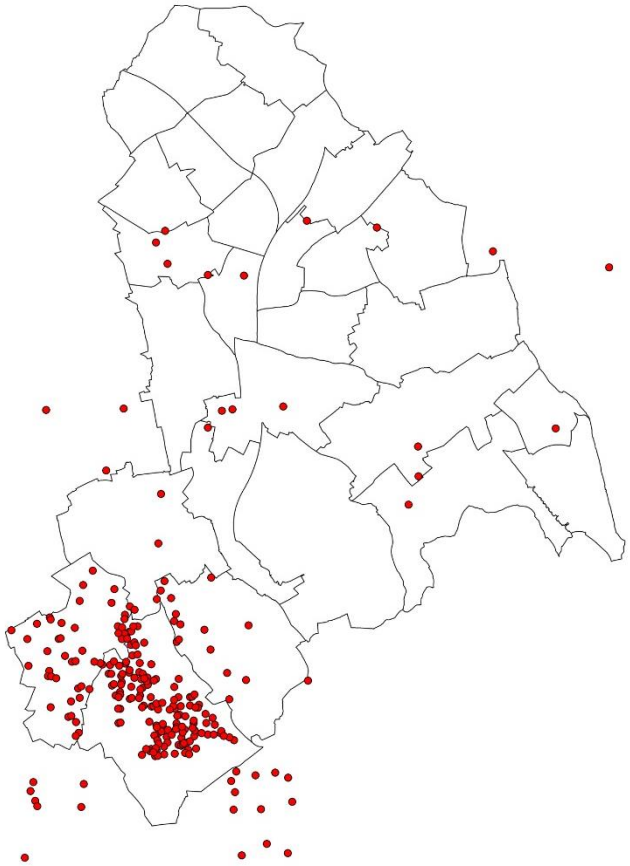




Bradmore Green Library Active Users (March 2023 = 496)







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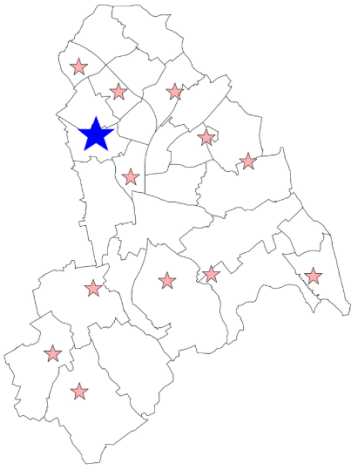
Broad Green Library Profile

89 Canterbury Road, Croydon, CR0 3HH	
Tel: 020 7884 5210	
Email: broadgreenlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Broad Green Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	10am – 6pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10am – 6pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday	Closed
Hours open per week:	16
Year built:	1998

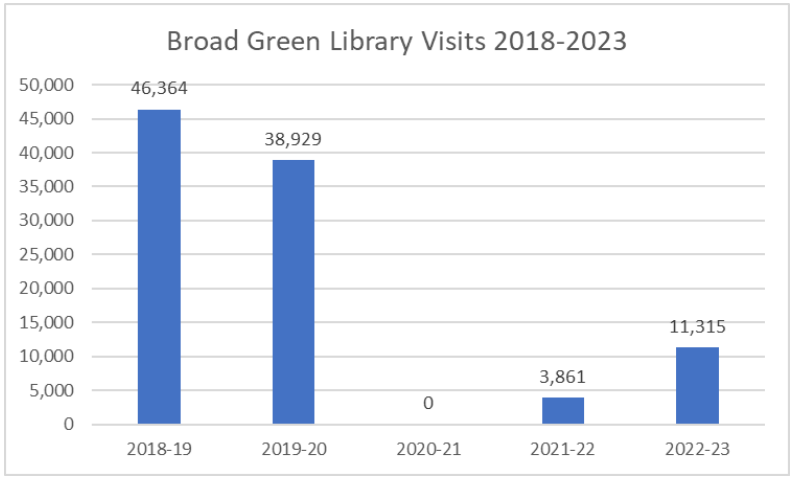


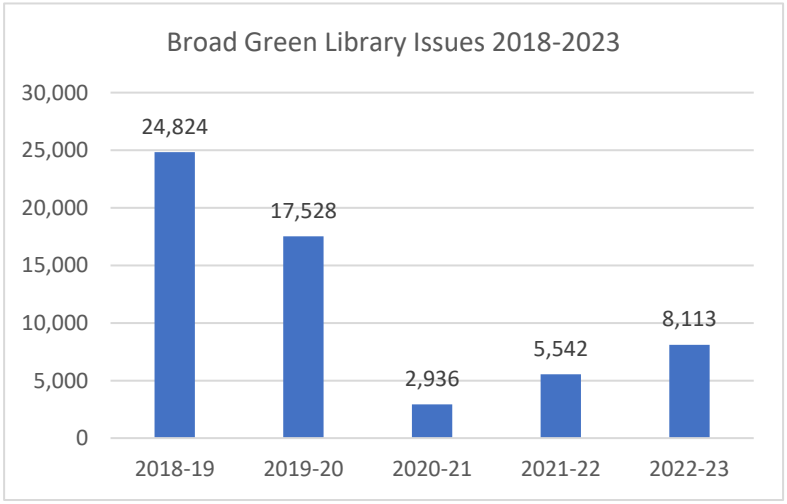
Indicative net internal area:	236 sq m

Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	11,315	1.97% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	13.8	Annual running costs	£100,817
Annual issues	8,113	1.71 *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	10	Running cost per hour	£124
PC usage (hours used)	838	1.96% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	18.36%	Cost per visitor	£9
Users who have logged onto a PC	568	2.39% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	4,563	Income	£1,716
Active users	974	2.65% *of Croydon total*	Events run	85	Lending stock	11,272
New members	456	2.83% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	688	New Stock	478

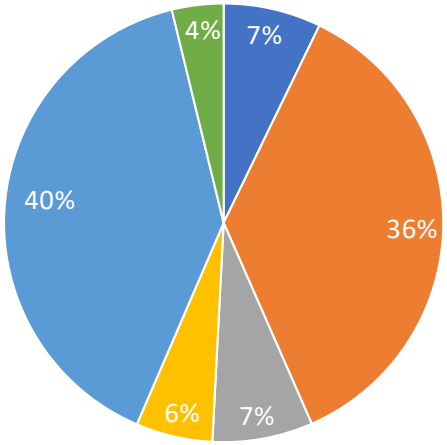
Building and location summary	
Location type: • The building is in a predominantly residential area	**Footfall:** • Area is mainly residential with few shops close by • Some footfall from school, day nursery and children's centre
Visibility: • In a prominent location but on side street • Vertical white library sign is very large and visible	**Adaptability:** • Shelf stacks in the middle of the library are static • Limited space currently due to clutter and poor furniture • Some space at the rear could be freed up
Suitability: • Single storey design is simple, plain and practical • Shelving, tables and chairs are basic and unattractive • Informal zoning with space sufficient for main library activities	**Condition (visual impression):** • Some interior water damage from previous gutter problems • The exterior brickwork and windows in reasonable condition • The interior is in need of redecoration

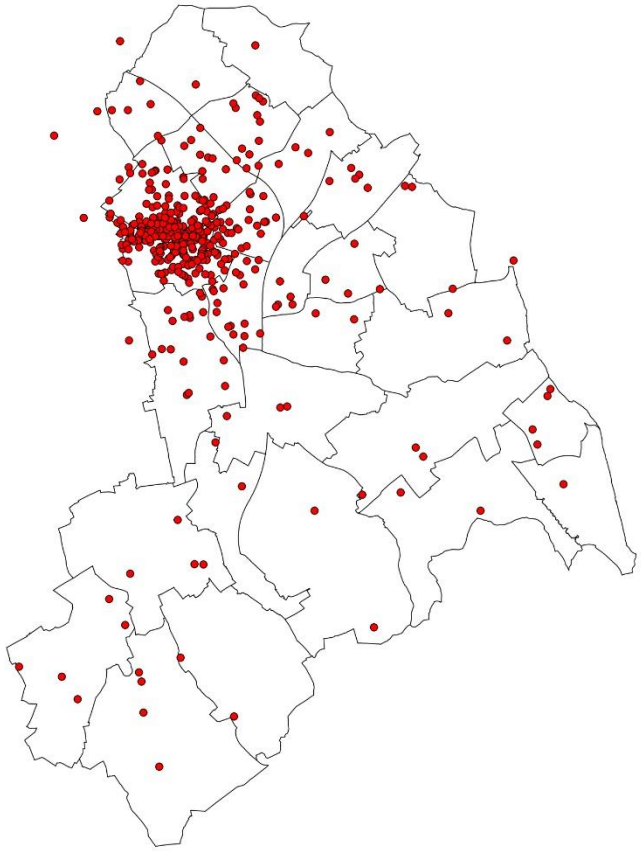
Broad Green Library Profile





Broad Green Library Active Users (March 2023 = 974)





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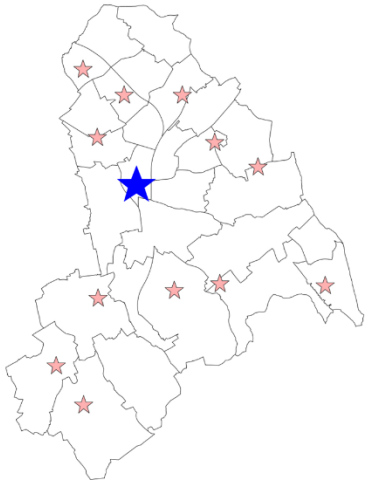
Croydon Central Library Profile

Katharine Street, Croydon, CR9 1ET	
Tel: 020 7884 5140	
Email: croydoncentrallibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Fairfield Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	10am – 6pm
Tuesday	10am – 6pm
Wednesday	10am – 6pm
Thursday	Closed
Friday	10am – 6pm
Saturday	9am – 5pm
Hours open per week:	40
Year built:	1993

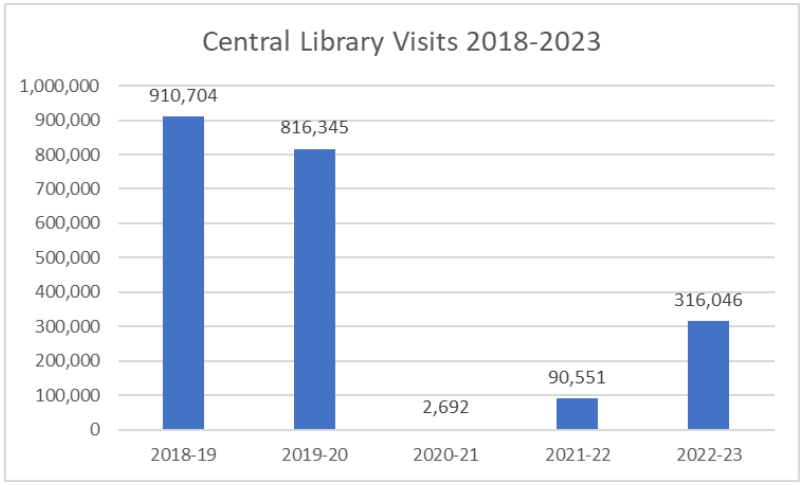
Indicative net internal area: 6,663 sq m

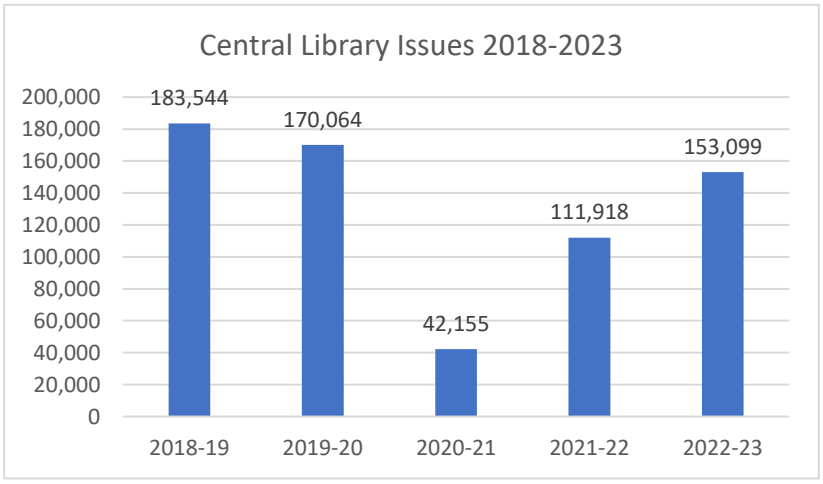


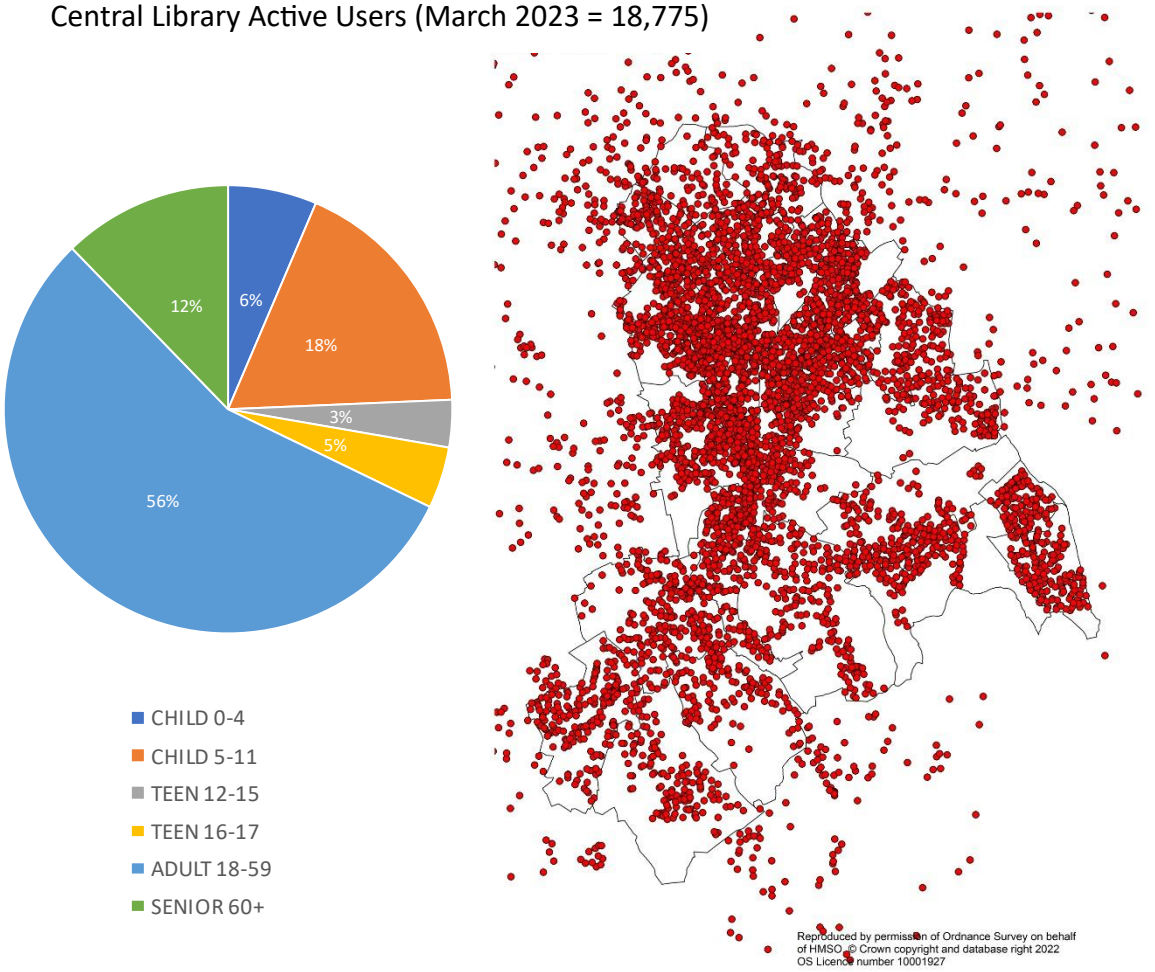
Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	316,046	54.98% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	154.9	Annual running costs	£1,129,329
Annual issues	153,099	32.25% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	75	Running cost per hour	£554
PC usage (hours used)	25,117	58.8% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	39.9%	Cost per visitor	£4
Users who have logged onto a PC	13,632	57.54% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	62,858	Income	£16,668
Active users	18,775	51.19% *of Croydon total*	Events run	649	Lending stock	109,805
New members	9,412	58.4% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	10,390	New Stock	3,809

Building and location summary	
Location type: • Town centre	**Footfall:** • Outside main town centre shopping area • Does not benefit from significant passing trade
Visibility: • Library hidden within Croydon Clocktower building complex • Entrance not visible from outside; little external signage	**Adaptability:** • Limited flexibility due to static book stacks • With further pruning of stock, space could be created
Suitability: • Severe impact from intrusive noise from escalators • Interior design utilitarian and uninspiring • Large enough for full range of central library services	**Condition (visual impression):** • Clocktower façade appears in good condition • Internal entrance hall airy and clean • Visual impact very dull (excepted children's) and dated

Croydon Central Library Profile



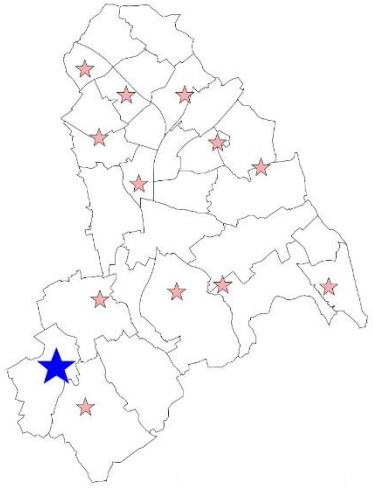




Coulsdon Library Profile

Brighton Road, Coulsdon, CR5 2NH	
Tel: 020 7884 5180	
Email: coulsdonlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Coulsdon Town Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	10am – 6pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10am – 6pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday	9am – 5pm
Hours open per week:	24
Year built:	1936

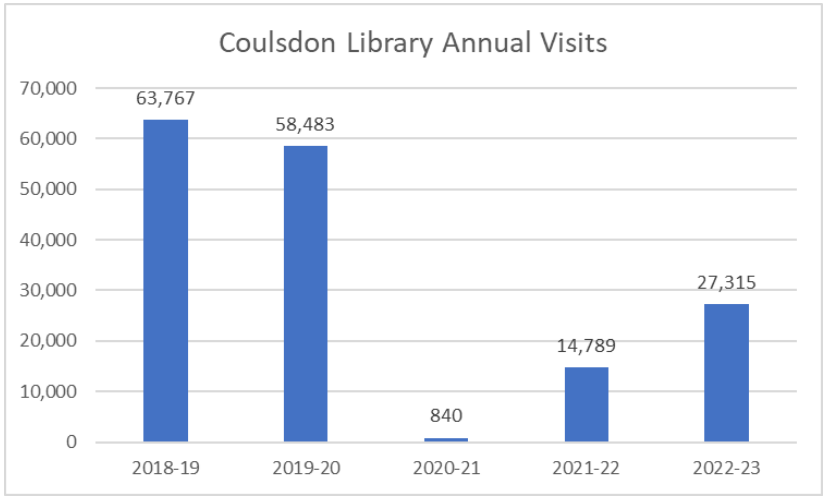
Indicative net internal area: 324 sq m

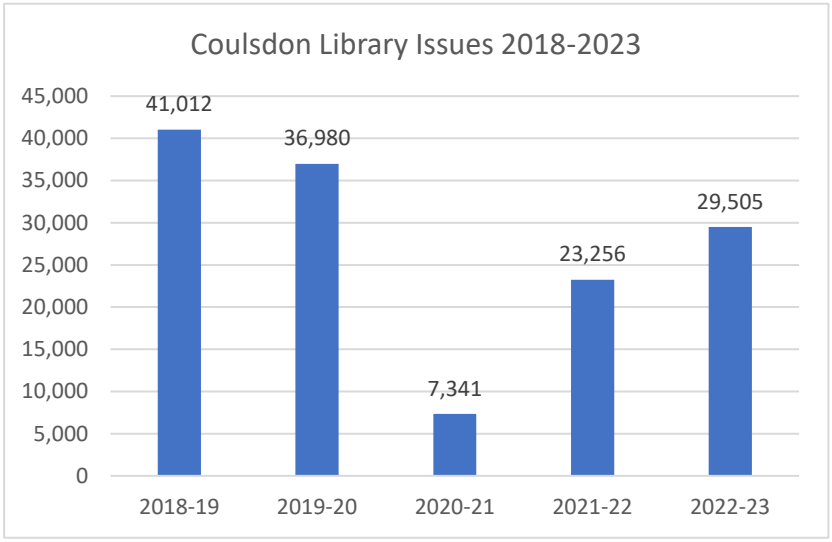


Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	27,315	4.75% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	22.3	Annual running costs	£176,739
Annual issues	29,505	6.22% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	24	Running cost per hour	£144
PC usage (hours used)	857	2.0% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	16.3%	Cost per visitor	£6
Users who have logged onto a PC	644	2.72% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	5,559	Income	£1,638
Active users	1,222	3.33% *of Croydon total*	Events run	111	Lending stock	14,567
New members	212	1.32% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	5,559	New Stock	1,219

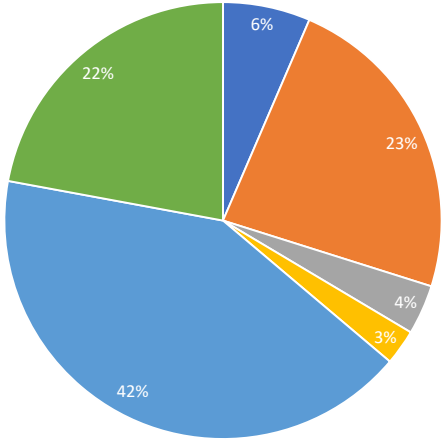
Building and location summary	
Location type: • Within shopping district	**Footfall:** • Within shopping district albeit at quieter end
Visibility: • Prominent building within extended shopping district • Signage too small	**Adaptability:** • The design limits space available for alternative uses • Some space for pop-ups (eg Barclays weekly service)
Suitability: • L-shaped design results in smaller internal size • Large, high-level windows create bright interior • The interior of the library is tired and unappealing • Enough space for core activities of small branch library	**Condition (visual impression):** • The windows have been replaced • External brickwork in fair condition, with some spalling • Interior paintwork fair, but condition suggests neglect

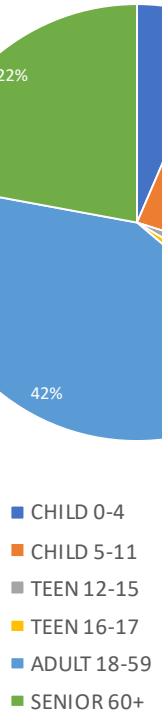
Coulsdon Library Profile

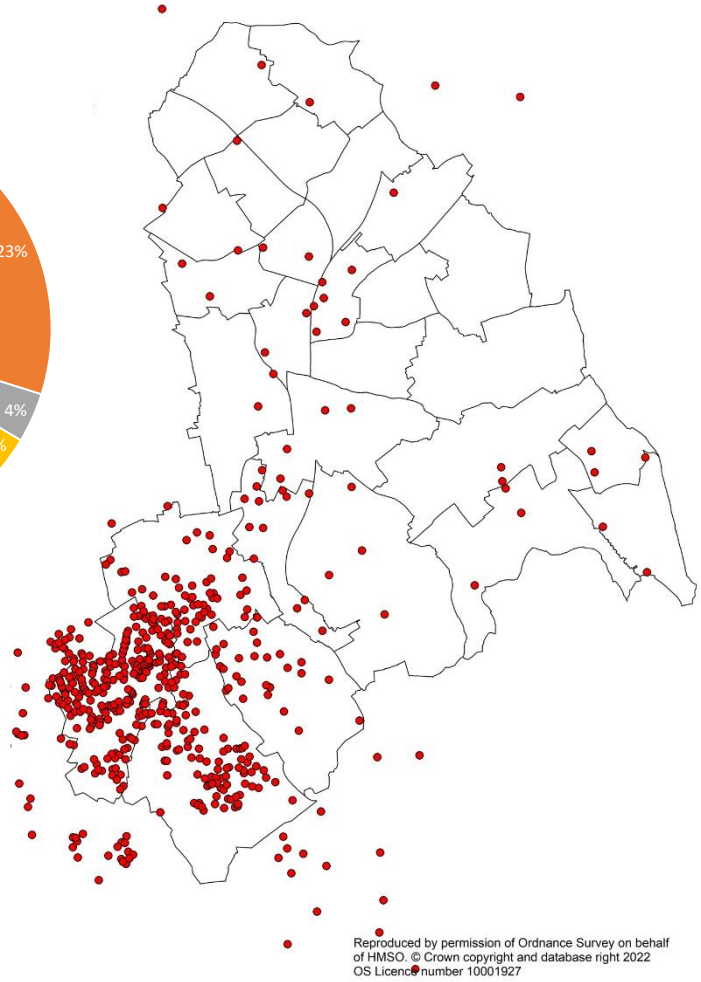




Coulsdon Library Active Users (March 2023 = 1,222)







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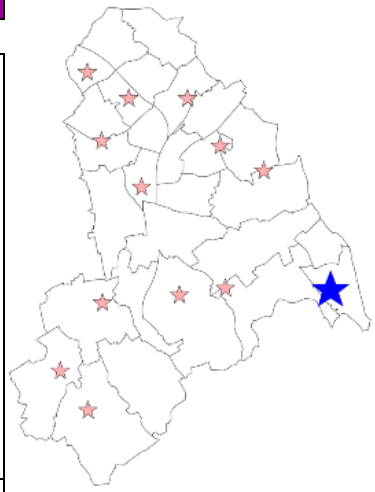
New Addington Library Profile

61 Central Parade, New Addington, CR0 0JD	
Tel: 020 7884 5205	
Email: newaddingtonlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
New Addington South Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	10am – 6pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10am – 6pm
Friday	10am – 6pm
Saturday	Closed
Hours open per week:	24
Year built:	2013 (reconfigured)

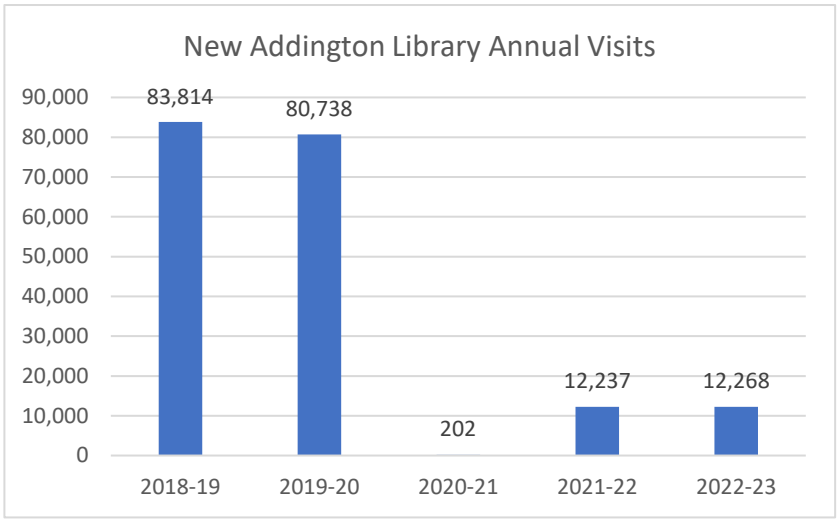
Indicative net internal area: 638 sq m

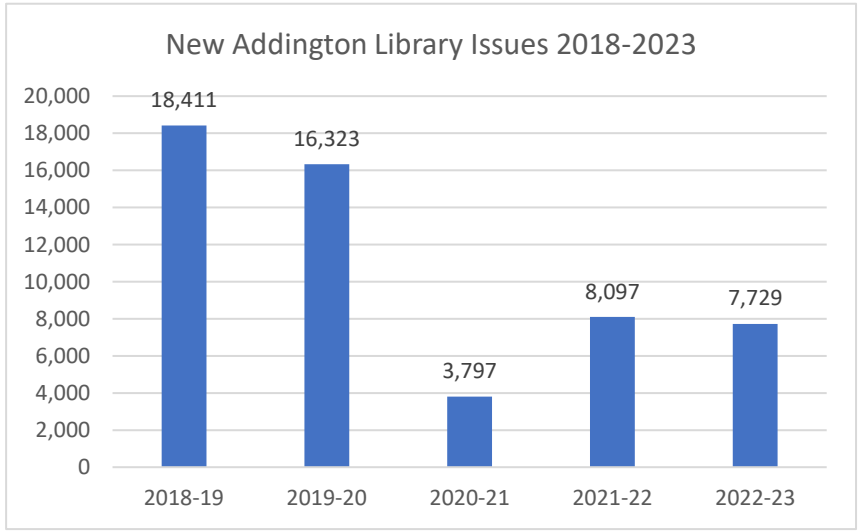


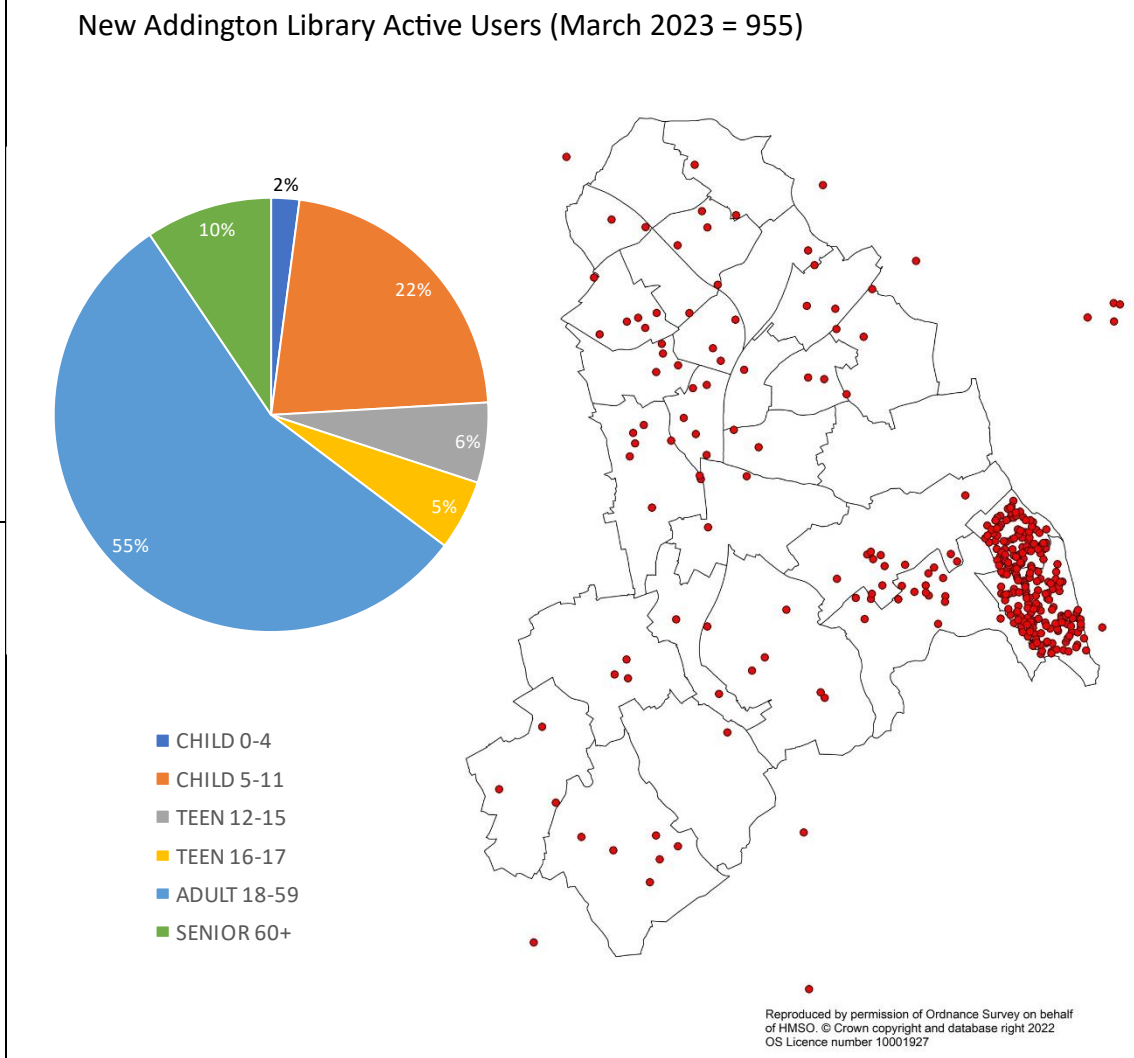
Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	12,268	2.13% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	10	Annual running costs	£149,385
Annual issues	7,729	1.63% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	6	Running cost per hour	£122
PC usage (hours used)	1,452	3.4% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	16.29%	Cost per visitor	£12
Users who have logged onto a PC	1,506	6.36% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	9,007	Income	£2,805
Active users	955	2.6% *of Croydon total*	Events run	133	Lending stock	10,948
New members	152	0.94% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	1,378	New Stock	476

Building and location summary	
Location type: • Just beyond shopping parade inside New Addington Centre	**Footfall:** • At quieter section of shopping parade on other side of road • Some footfall from users of the Centre for other purposes
Visibility: • Building dominates the sightline to one end of the parade • Signage to library very poor	**Adaptability:** • Shelving is static, but space created in past for events • Little excess space in the library, but centre underused
Suitability: • Functional building with a large area of glass at entrance • Low suspended ceiling makes space feel cramped • Some zoning, but spread over two floors impractical • Space for most activities in a small branch library	**Condition (visual impression):** • Fabric appears in sound condition, but discoloured at rear • Interior design and furniture functional and uninspiring • Interior of Centre appears reasonably well-maintained

New Addington Library Profile

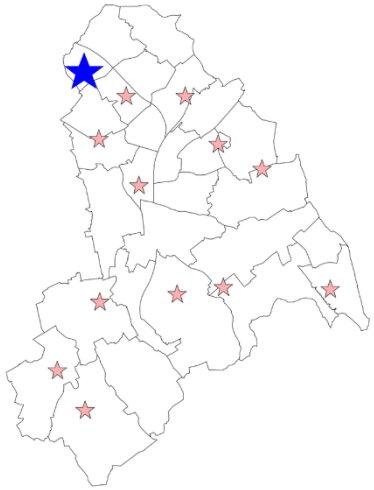






Norbury Library Profile

Beatrice Avenue, Norbury, SW16 4UW		
Tel: 020 7884 5215		
Email: norburylibrary@croydon.gov.uk		
Norbury & Pollards Hill Ward		
Opening Hours		
Monday	Open+	10am - 6pm
Tuesday	Staffed	10am – 6pm
Wednesday	Open+	10am – 6pm
Thursday	Staffed	10am – 6pm
Friday	Staffed	10am – 6pm
Saturday	Open+	9am – 5pm
Hours open per week:		24 staffed / 24 Open+
Year built:		1931 (refurbished 2021)

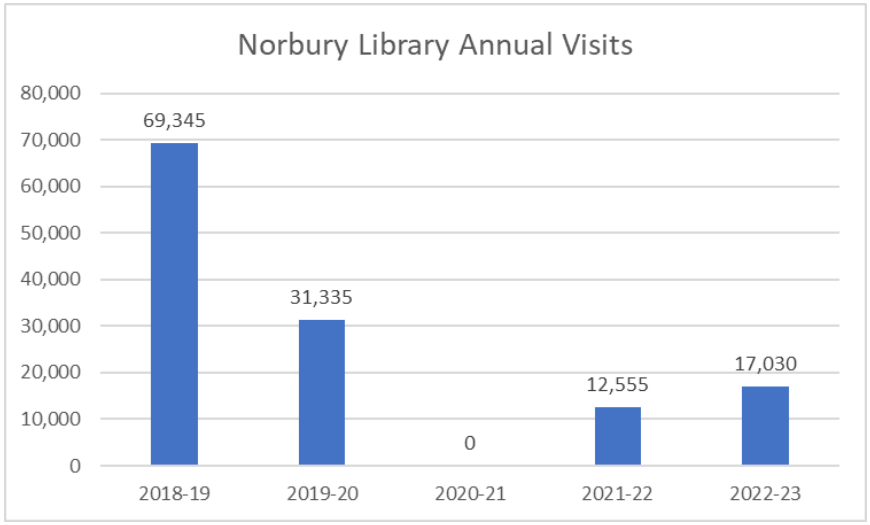


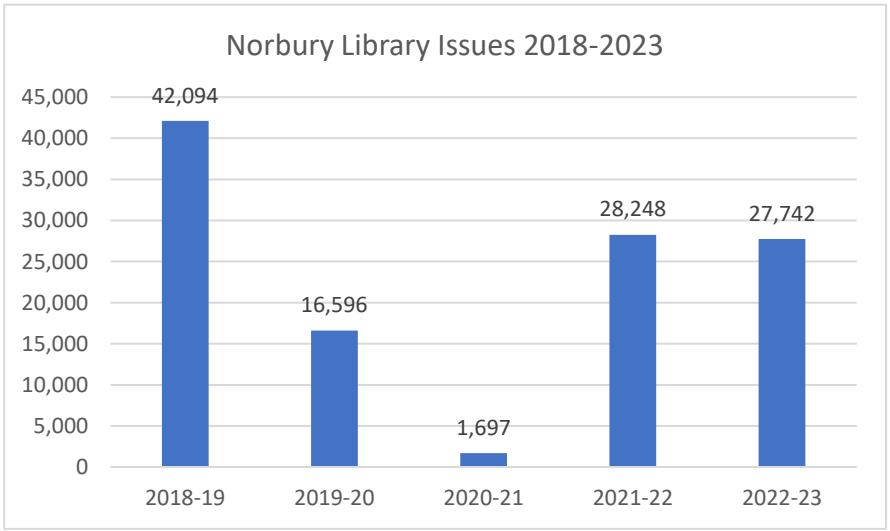
Indicative net internal area: 1,191 sq m

Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	17,030	2.96% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	13.9	Annual running costs	£187,491
Annual issues	27,742	5.84% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	23	Running cost per hour	£153
PC usage (hours used)	2,484	5.81% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	35.5%	Cost per visitor	£11
Users who have logged onto a PC	1,224	5.16% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	6,988	Income	£2,024
Active users	2,143	5.84% *of Croydon total*	Events run	102	Lending stock	13,933
New members	883	5.48% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	1,789	New Stock	1,229

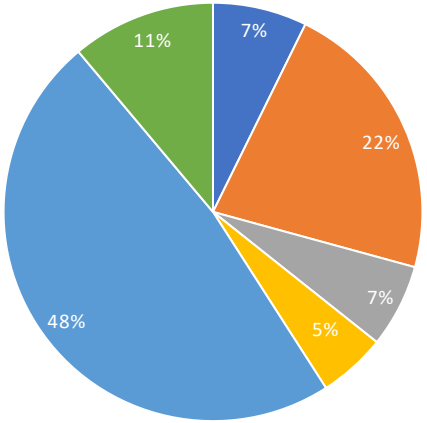
Building and location summary	
Location type: • On busy road in residential area	**Footfall:** • Some distance from the London Road shopping parade • Busy London Road provides passing traffic
Visibility: • Prominent location on A23 • Library name visible, especially illuminated sign at night	**Adaptability:** • Spaces of various sizes used for a range of activities • Shelving on castors to create space for events • Low level of visitors results in underused space
Suitability: • Height and rooflights present heating/cooling problems • Attractive interior design, including new furniture and shelving • Generous space and zoning for library's core activities	**Condition (visual impression):** • Recently refurbished exterior looks in very good condition • Interior in good condition overall as recently refurbished

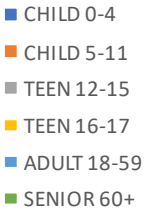
Norbury Library Profile

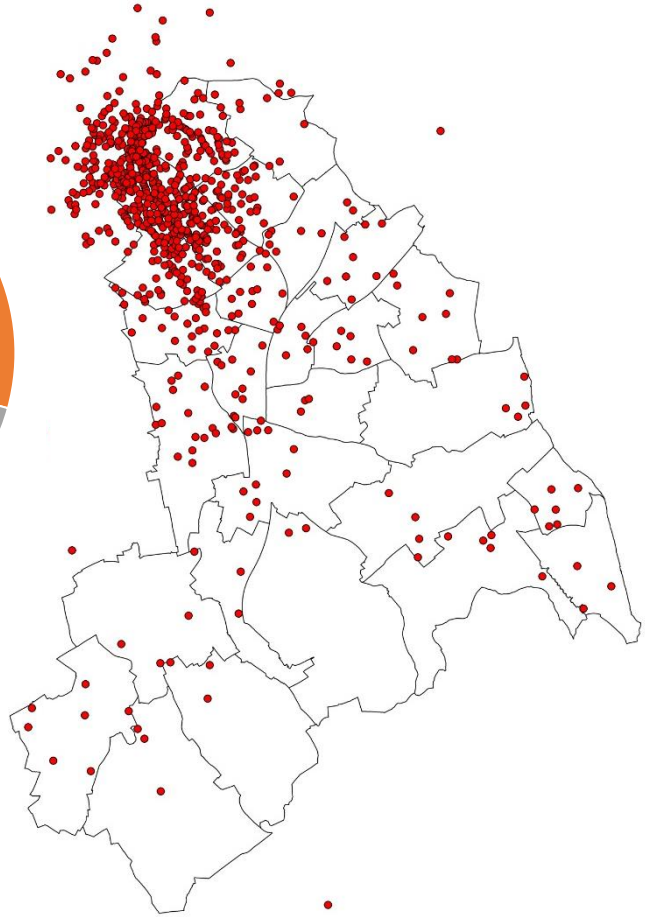




Norbury Library Active Users (March 2023 = 2,143)







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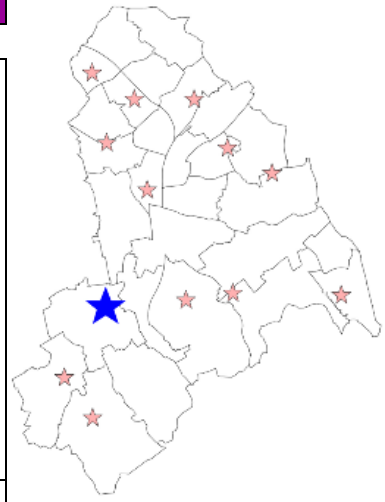
Purley Library Profile

Banstead Road, Purley, CR8 3YH	
Tel: 020 7884 5160	
Email: purleylibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Purley & Woodcote Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10am – 6pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10am – 6pm
Friday	Closed
Saturday	Closed
Hours open per week:	16
Year built:	1936

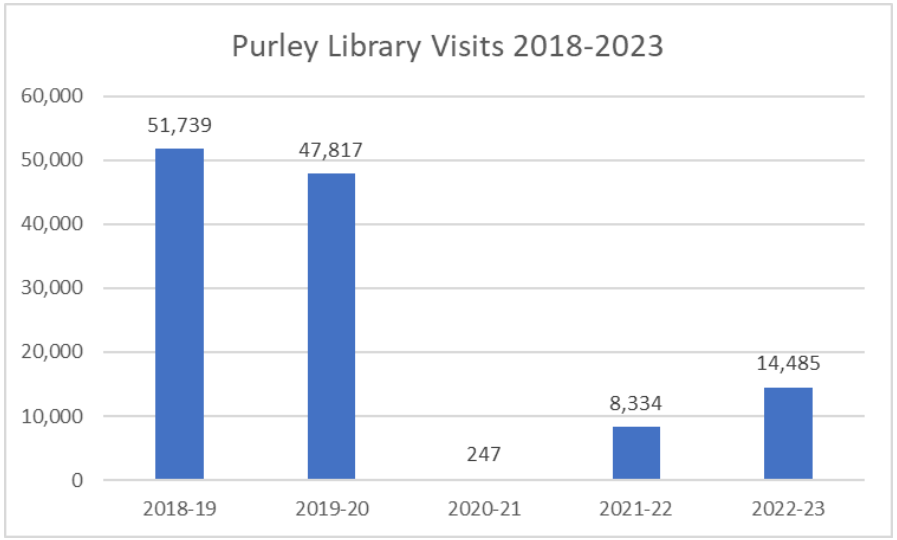
Indicative net internal area: 609 sq m

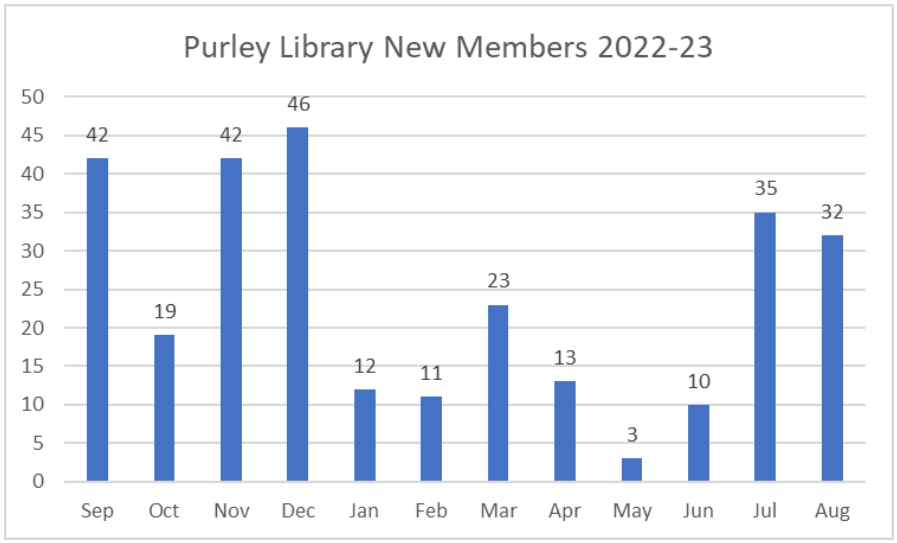


Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	14,485	2.52% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	17.7	Annual running costs	£121,080
Annual issues	22,754	4.79% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	28	Running cost per hour	£148
PC usage (hours used)	1,020	2.38% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	29%	Cost per visitor	£8
Users who have logged onto a PC	606	2.56% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	3,518	Income	£3,849
Active users	1,354	3.69% *of Croydon total*	Events run	118	Lending stock	19,265
New members	307	1.9% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	3,518	New Stock	609

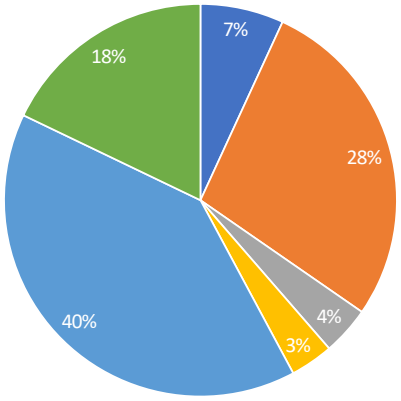
Building and location summary	
Location type: • Outside town shopping centre	**Footfall:** • The location of the building attracts little footfall • Short walk from shopping district with busy crossroads
Visibility: • Located on busy section of one-way system • Traffic speed and small signage limit visibility	**Adaptability:** • Shelving fixed, limiting reconfiguration for events • Spacious interior allows for more intensive use
Suitability: • High-ceilinged main building and single-storey side elevation • Overhead light in main area and high windows elsewhere • Interior design unattractive and furniture dated • Large, separate spaces allow for range of library uses	**Condition (visual impression):** • Some external repair and repainting required • Interior decoration poor and neglected

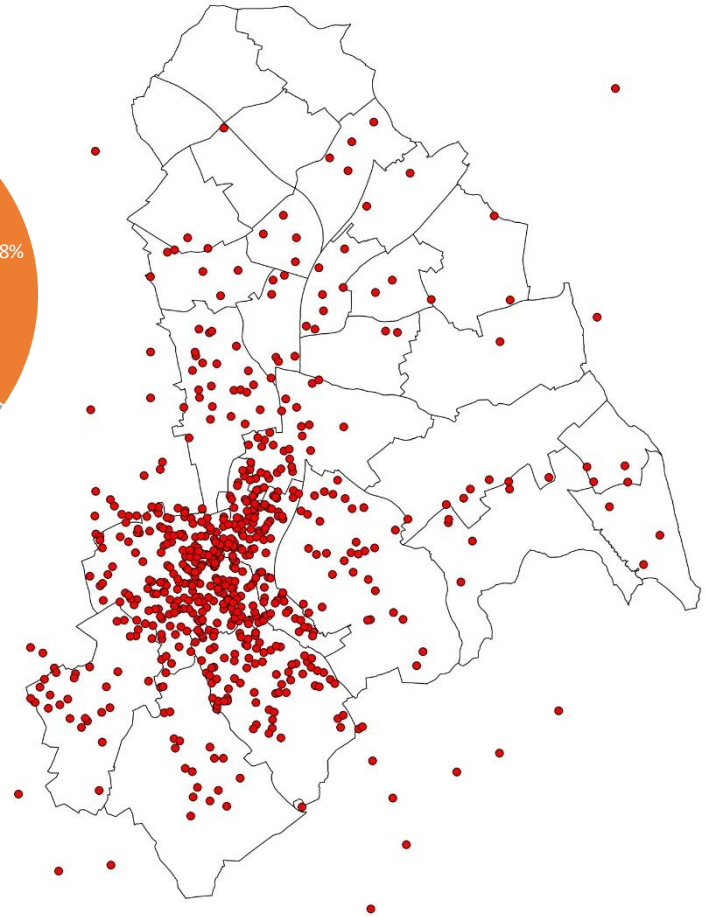
Purley Library Profile





Purley Library Active Users (March 2023 = 1,354)





CHILD 0-4
CHILD 5-11
TEEN 12-15
TEEN 16-17
ADULT 18-59
SENIOR 60+

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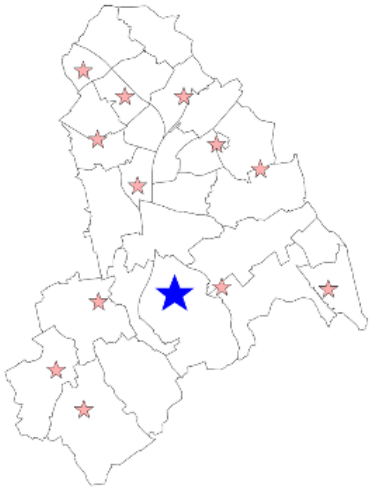
Sanderstead Library Profile

Farm Fields, South Croydon, CR2 0HL	
Tel: 020 7884 5165	
Email: sandersteadlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Sanderstead Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	10am – 6pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	10am – 6pm
Thursday	Closed
Friday	10am – 6pm
Saturday	Closed
Hours open per week:	24
Year built:	1936

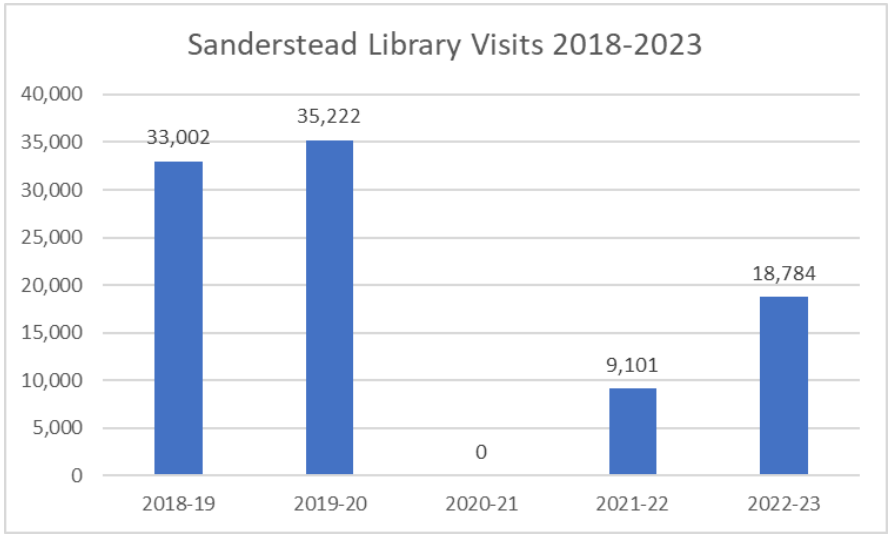


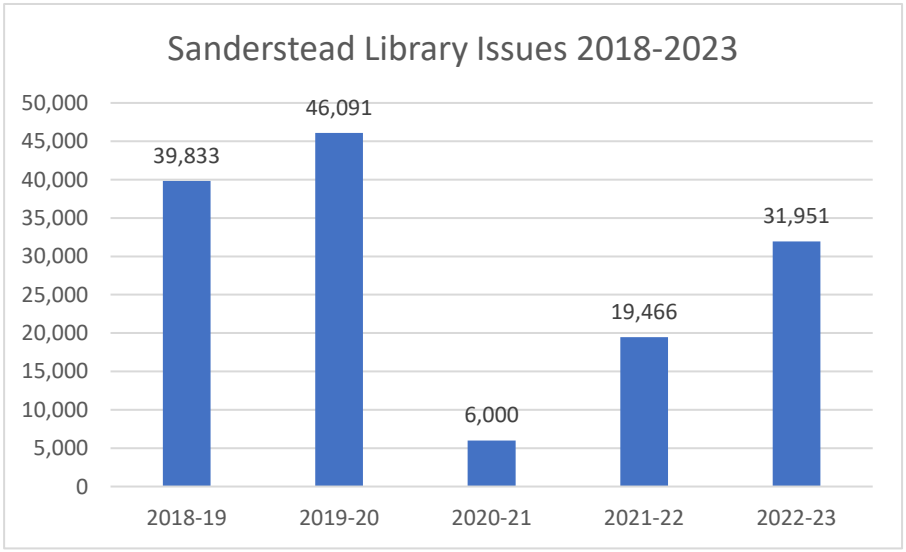
Indicative net internal area:	210 sq m

Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	18,784	3.27% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	15.3	Annual running costs	£129,033
Annual issues	31,951	6.73% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	26	Running cost per hour	£105
PC usage (hours used)	496	1.16% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	15.38%	Cost per visitor	£7
Users who have logged onto a PC	252	1.06% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	3,227	Income	£931
Active users	1,086	2.96% *of Croydon total*	Events run	69	Lending stock	15,393
New members	257	1.59% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	916	New Stock	906

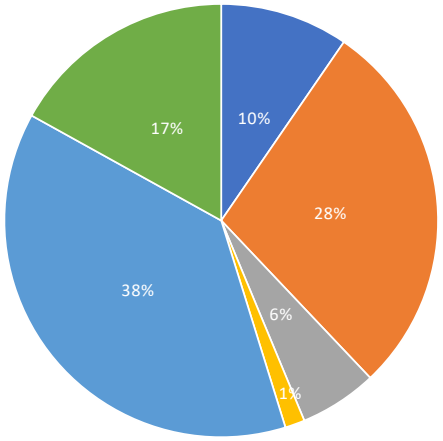
Building and location summary	
Location type: • Residential area	**Footfall:** • No nearby shops or leisure facilities to generate busy footfall
Visibility: • Prominent corner position on heavily trafficked road • Set back from road and hidden by impressive, mature tree	**Adaptability:** • Furniture difficult to move to create space for events • Library and downstairs rooms too small for additional uses
Suitability: • Bright with high ceilings and large windows at either end • L-shaped, small ground floor area, small basement rooms • Interior of the library is cramped, cluttered and dull • Size prevents zoning and full range of library services	**Condition (visual impression):** • Reasonable condition externally • Décor dull, condition reasonable, cluttered presentation

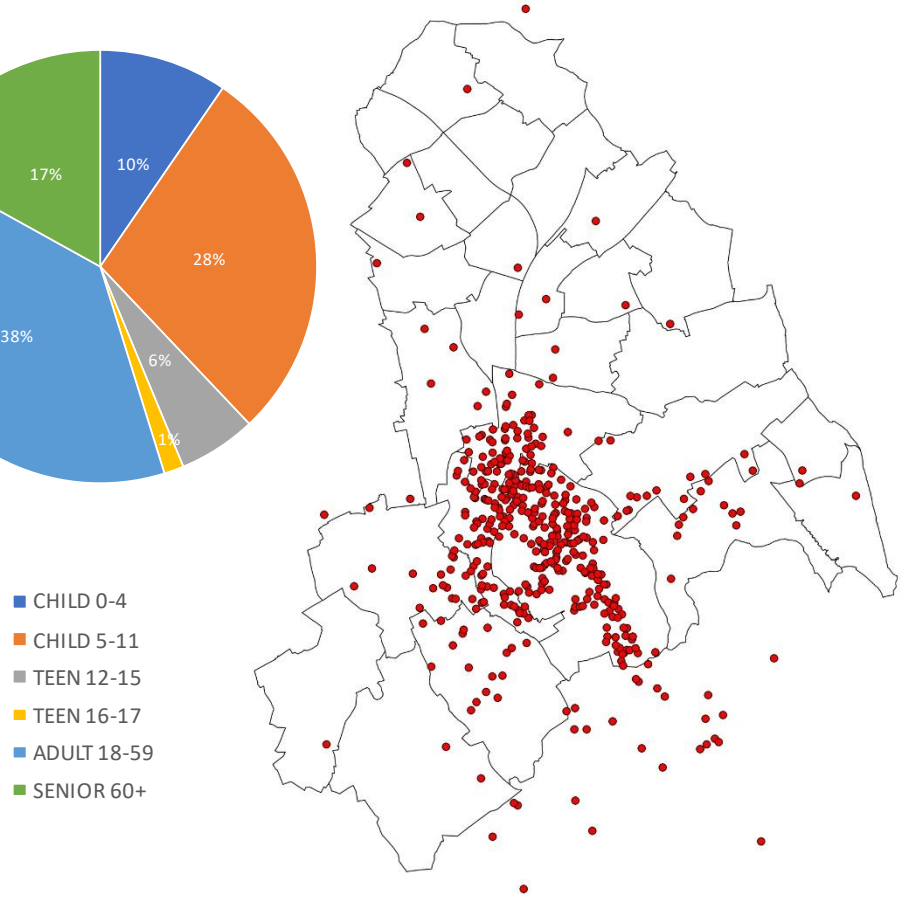
Sanderstead Library Profile





Sanderstead Library Active Users (March 2023 = 1,086)





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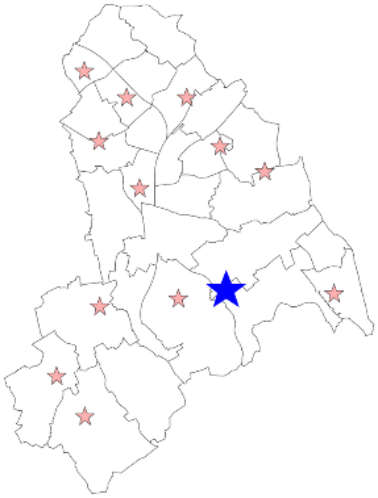
Selsdon Library Profile

Addington Road, South Croydon, CR2 8LA		
Tel: 020 7884 5190		
Email: selsdonlibrary@croydon.gov.uk		
Selsdon Vale & Forestdale Ward		
Opening Hours		
Monday	Staffed	10am - 6pm
Tuesday	Open+	8am – 6pm
Wednesday	Staffed	10am – 6pm
Thursday	Open+	8am – 6pm
Friday	Open+	8am – 6pm
Saturday	Staffed	9am – 5pm
Hours open per week:		24 staffed / 30 Open+
Year built:		2004

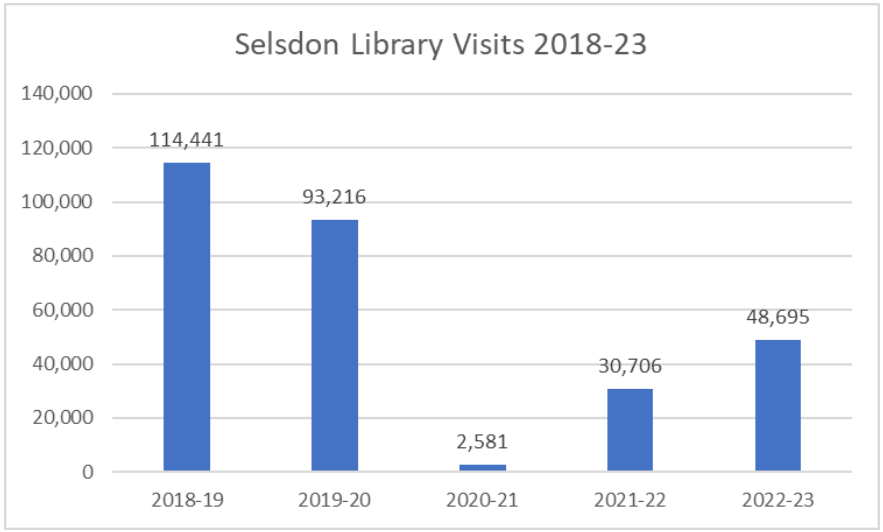
Indicative net internal area: 355 sq m

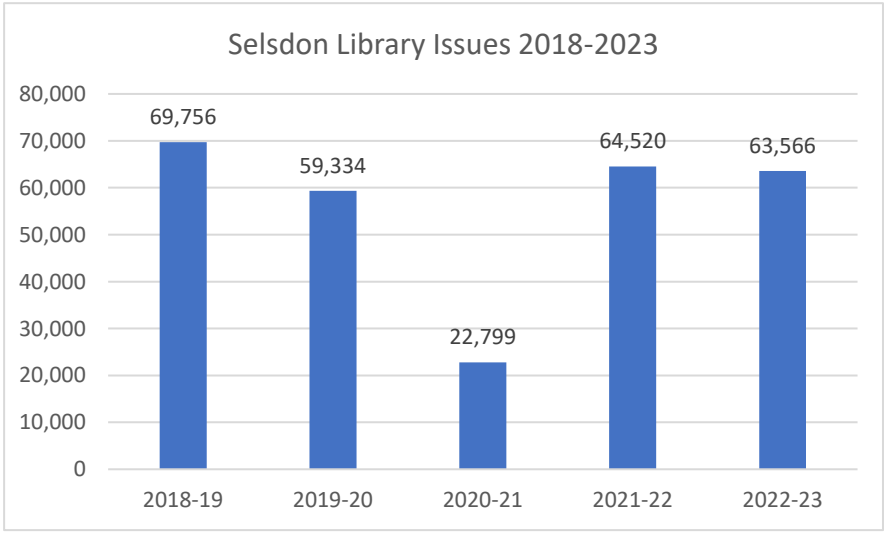


Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	48,695	8.47% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	39.8	Annual running costs	£276,691
Annual issues	63,566	13.39% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	52	Running cost per hour	£226
PC usage (hours used)	1,976	4.62% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	29.58%	Cost per visitor	£6
Users who have logged onto a PC	960	4.05% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	6,680	Income	£3,273
Active users	2,403	6.55% *of Croydon total*	Events run	213	Lending stock	21,162
New members	401	2.49% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	2,524	New Stock	1,587

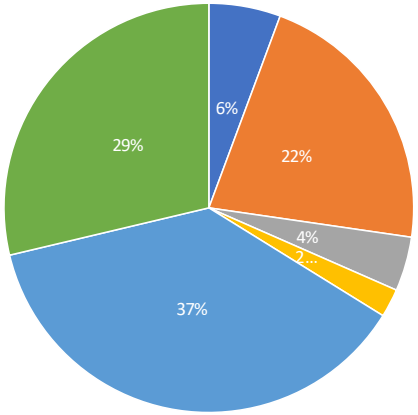
Building and location summary	
Location type: • Shopping centre (inside Sainsbury's building)	**Footfall:** • Good passing footfall from Sainsbury's shoppers • Library is outside Selsdon's shopping parade
Visibility: • Library invisible from outside • Accessed directly from the main entrance to Sainsbury's • Exterior and interior signage poor	**Adaptability:** • Central bookshelves on castors for opening up for events • Some scope for other uses, but at loss to children's library
Suitability: • Design of the overall building is functional • The library is a very bright and airy space • Interior design very attractive and comfortable • Zoning and separate space for the children's library	**Condition (visual impression):** • The overall building appears in good condition • Interior of the library appears well-maintained

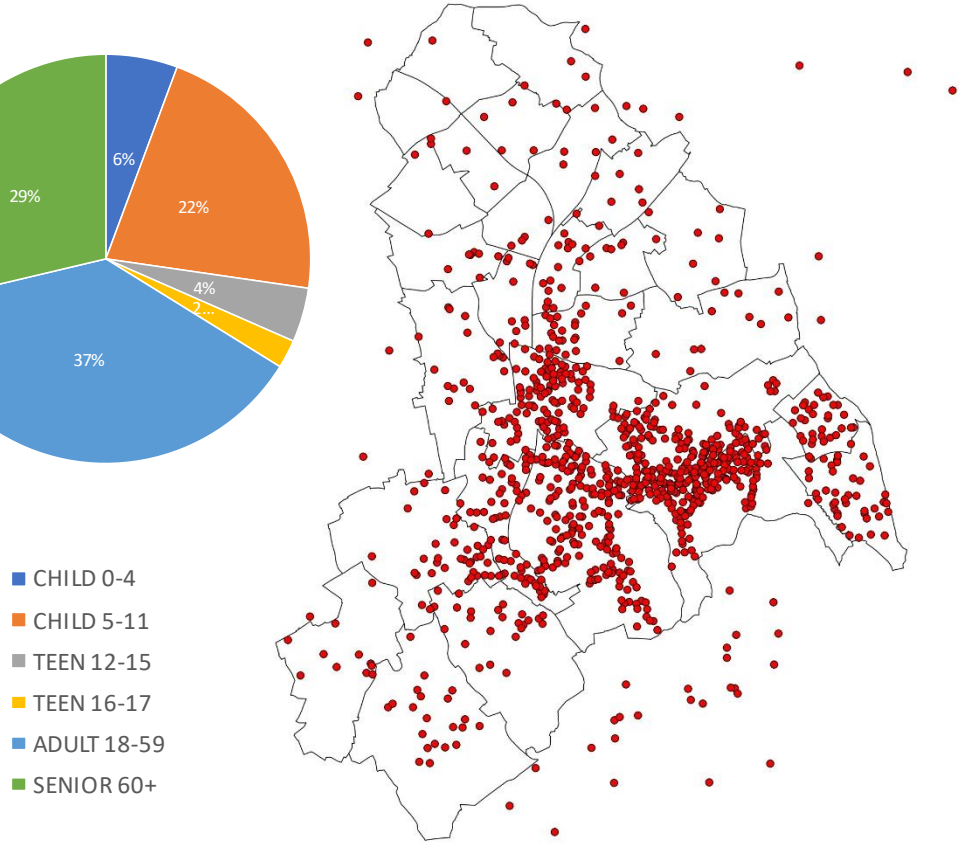
Selsdon Library Profile





Selsdon Library Active Users (March 2023 = 2,403)





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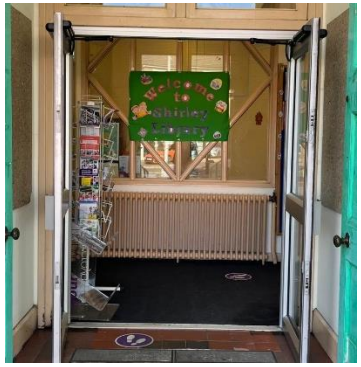
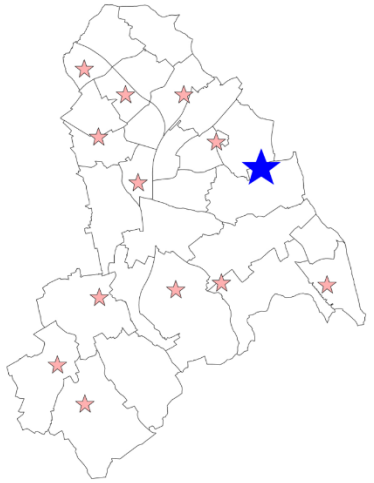
Shirley Library Profile

Wickham Road/Hartland Way, Croydon, CR0 8NH	
Tel: 020 7884 5170	
Email: shirleylibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Shirley South Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	Closed
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	10am – 6pm
Thursday	Closed
Friday	10am – 6pm
Saturday	Closed
Hours open per week:	16
Year built:	1937



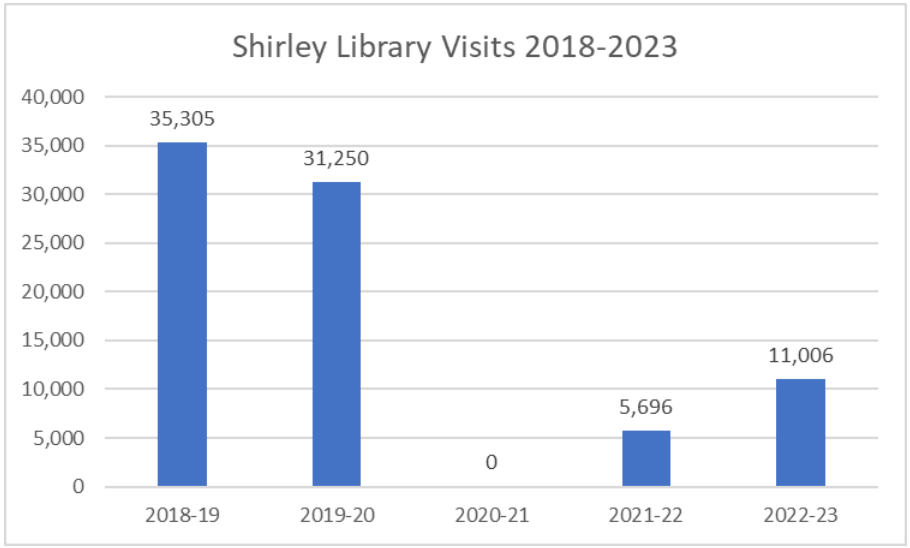
Indicative net internal area: 279 sq m

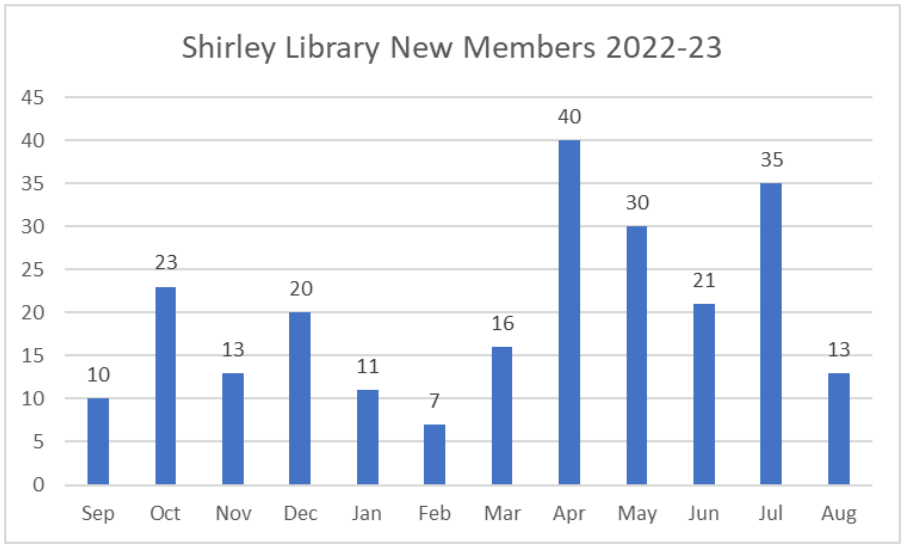


Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	11,006	1.91% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	13.48	Annual running costs	£109,346
Annual issues	12,371	2.6% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	15	Running cost per hour	£134
PC usage (hours used)	722	1.69% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	20.33%	Cost per visitor	£10
Users who have logged onto a PC	401	4.05% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	3,554	Income	£1,205
Active users	776	2.1% *of Croydon total*	Events run	164	Lending stock	16,843
New members	210	1.3% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	808	New Stock	492

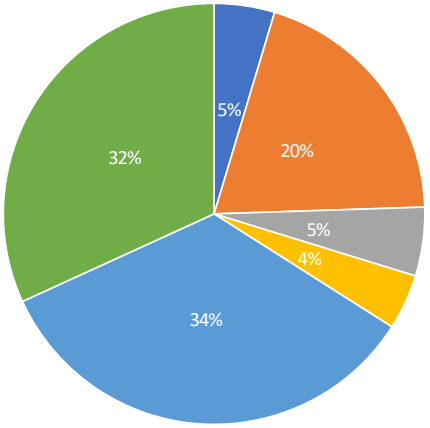
Building and location summary	
Location type: • Residential area just beyond shopping parade	**Footfall:** • Just beyond quieter end of small shopping parade
Visibility: • On corner of busy junction, somewhat screened by trees • Very poor signage	**Adaptability:** • Fixed shelving limits adapting for events • Insufficient space for additional uses
• **Suitability:** • Small one storey building with small extension • Leaded rooflight but interior unattractive and functional • Separate children's area, too small to zone rest of space	**Condition (visual impression):** • Some evidence of previous water damage to interior • Exterior requires some repair and full redecoration • Interior décor in reasonable condition, but dull

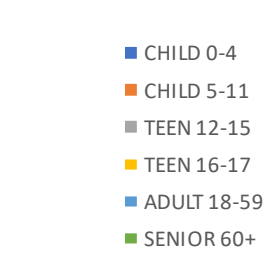
Shirley Library Profile

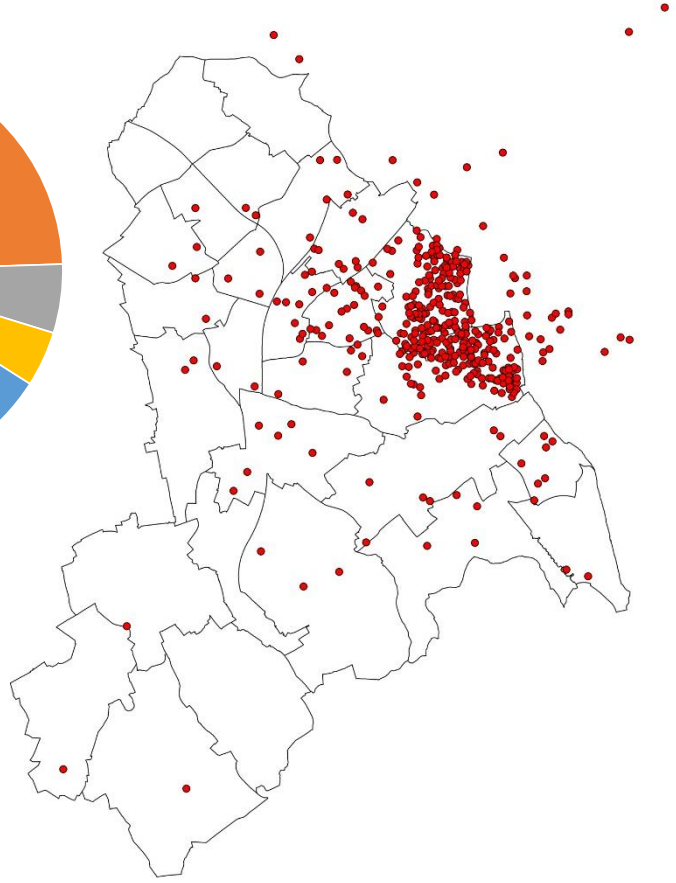




Shirley Library Active Users (March 2023 = 776)







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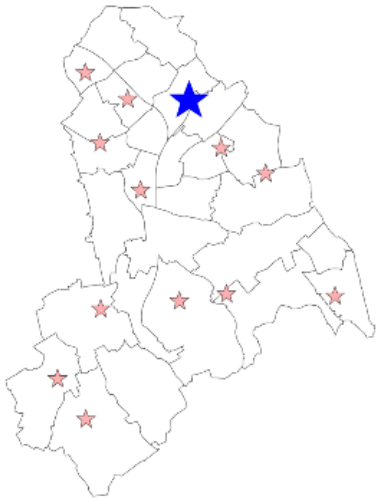
South Norwood Library Profile

Lawrence Road, South Norwood, SE25 5AA	
Tel: 020 7884 5195	
Email: southnorwoodlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
South Norwood Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10am – 6pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	Closed
Friday	10am – 6pm
Saturday	Closed
Hours open per week:	16
Year built:	1968

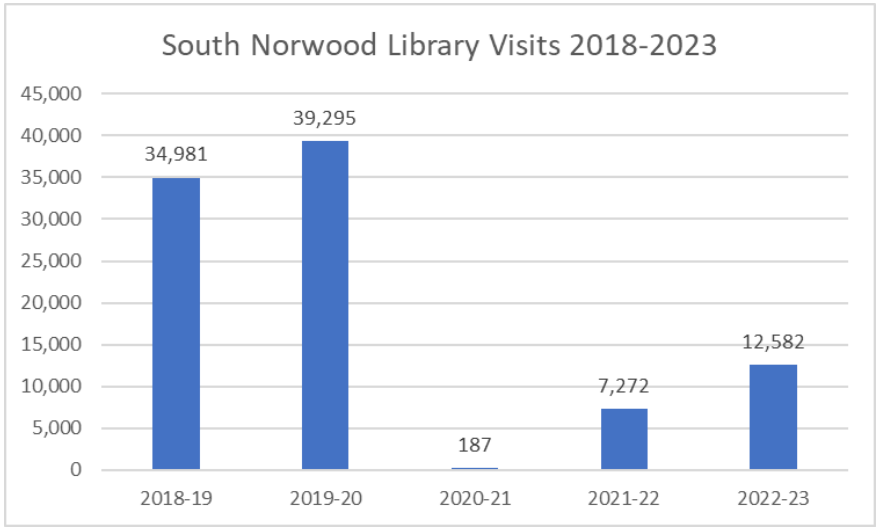


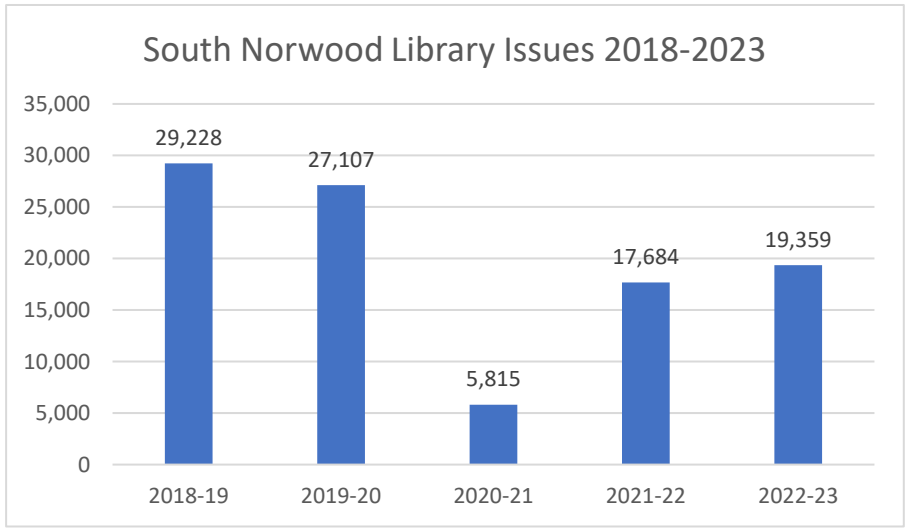
Indicative net internal area: 365 sq m

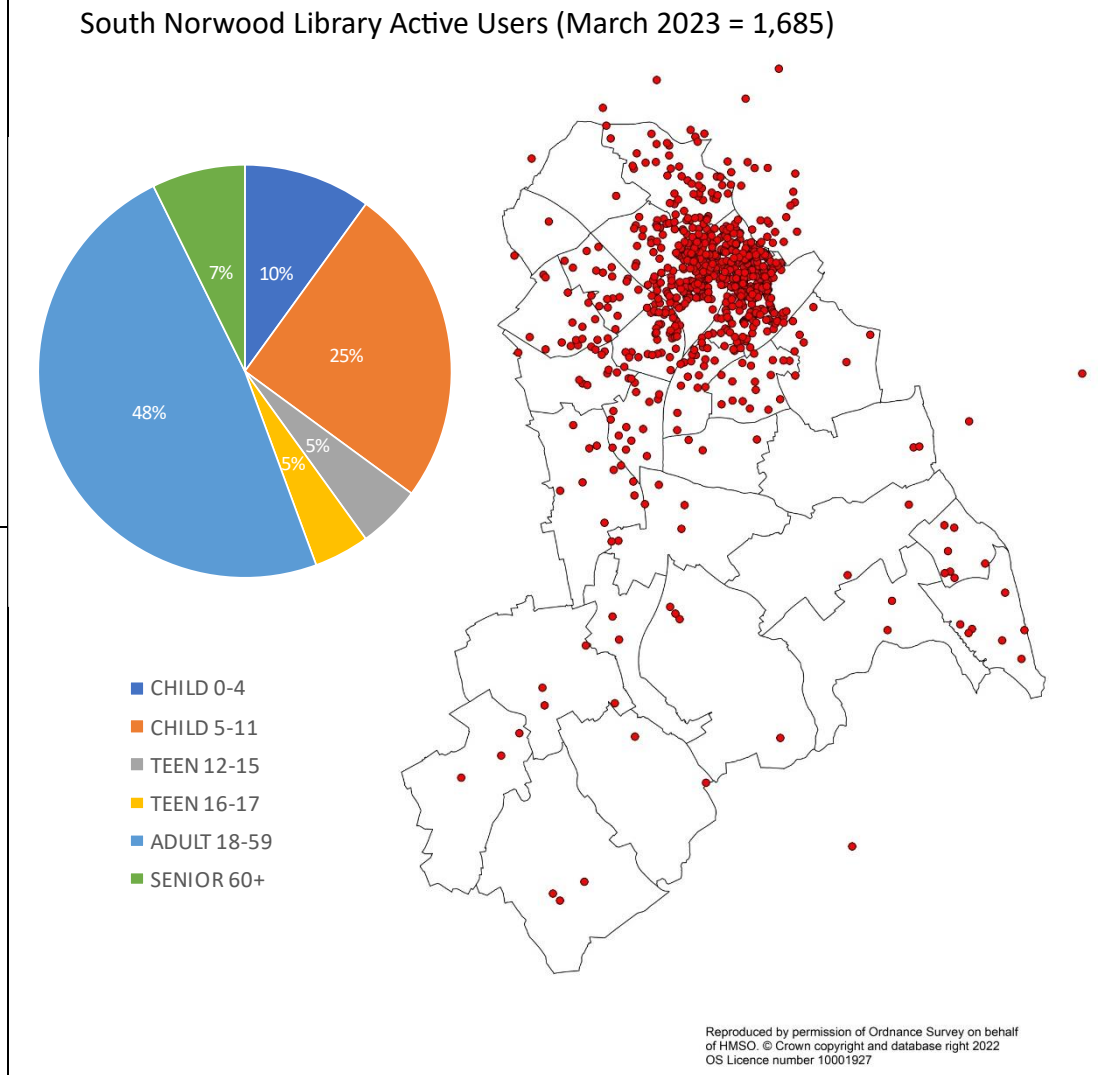
Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	12,582	2.19% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	15.42	Annual running costs	£137,396
Annual issues	19,359	4.19% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	24	Running cost per hour	£168
PC usage (hours used)	1,385	3.24% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	27.86%	Cost per visitor	£11
Users who have logged onto a PC	619	2.61% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	4,974	Income	£1,746
Active users	1,685	4.59% *of Croydon total*	Events run	100	Lending stock	13,523
New members	556	3.45% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	1,483	New Stock	1,003

Building and location summary	
Location type: • Residential area	**Footfall:** • Beyond the main shopping parade in South Norwood
Visibility: • Prominent location on corner of busy road • Signage large, but signage limited overall	**Adaptability:** • Distribution across five levels limits flexibility • Fixed shelving limits creation of event spaces • Little free space that is practical for additional uses
Suitability: • Striking exterior, extensive glass leads to poor energy performance • Five floor levels impractical for supervision • Interior design dull and uninspiring	**Condition (visual impression):** • Exterior affected by obscure and shading plastic on windows • Concrete fascia and pillars intact but require inspection • Requires full interior re-design and redecoration • Lift is out of operation preventing full accessibility

South Norwood Library Profile



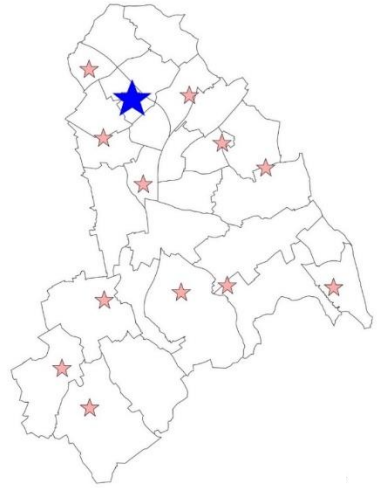




Thornton Heath Library Profile

Brigstock Road, Thornton Heath, CR7 7JB	
Tel: 020 7884 5185	
Email: thorntonheathlibrary@croydon.gov.uk	
Bensham Manor Ward	
Opening Hours	
Monday	10am – 6pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	10am – 6pm
Thursday	Closed
Friday	Closed
Saturday	9am – 5pm
Hours open per week:	24
Year built:	1914 (refurbished 2010)

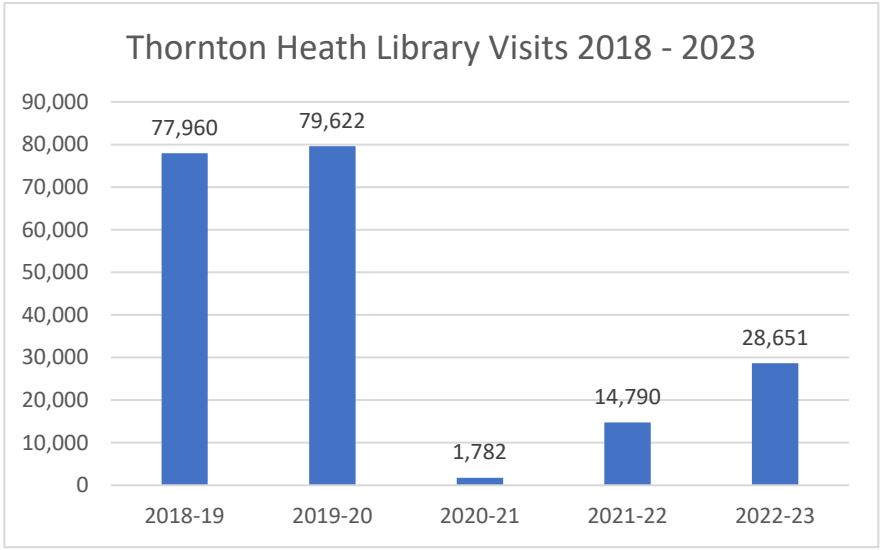
Indicative net internal area: 767 sq m

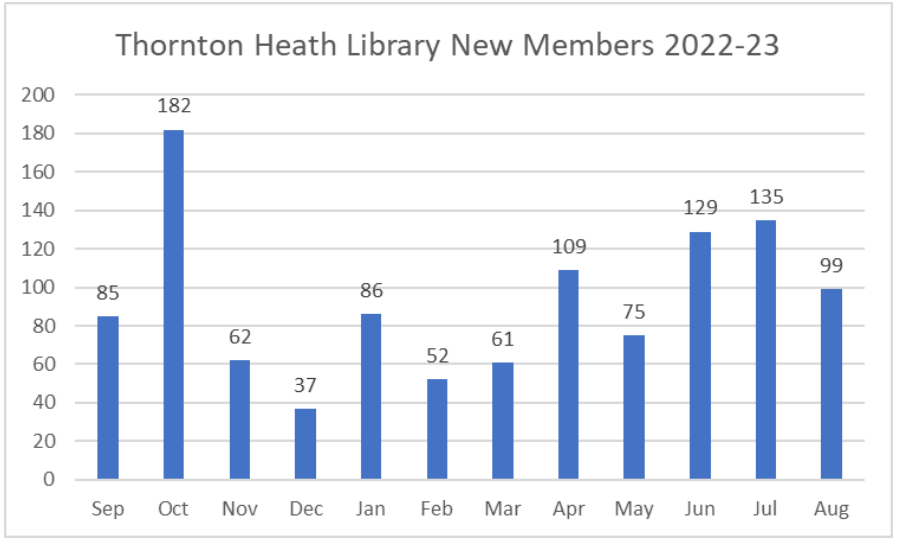


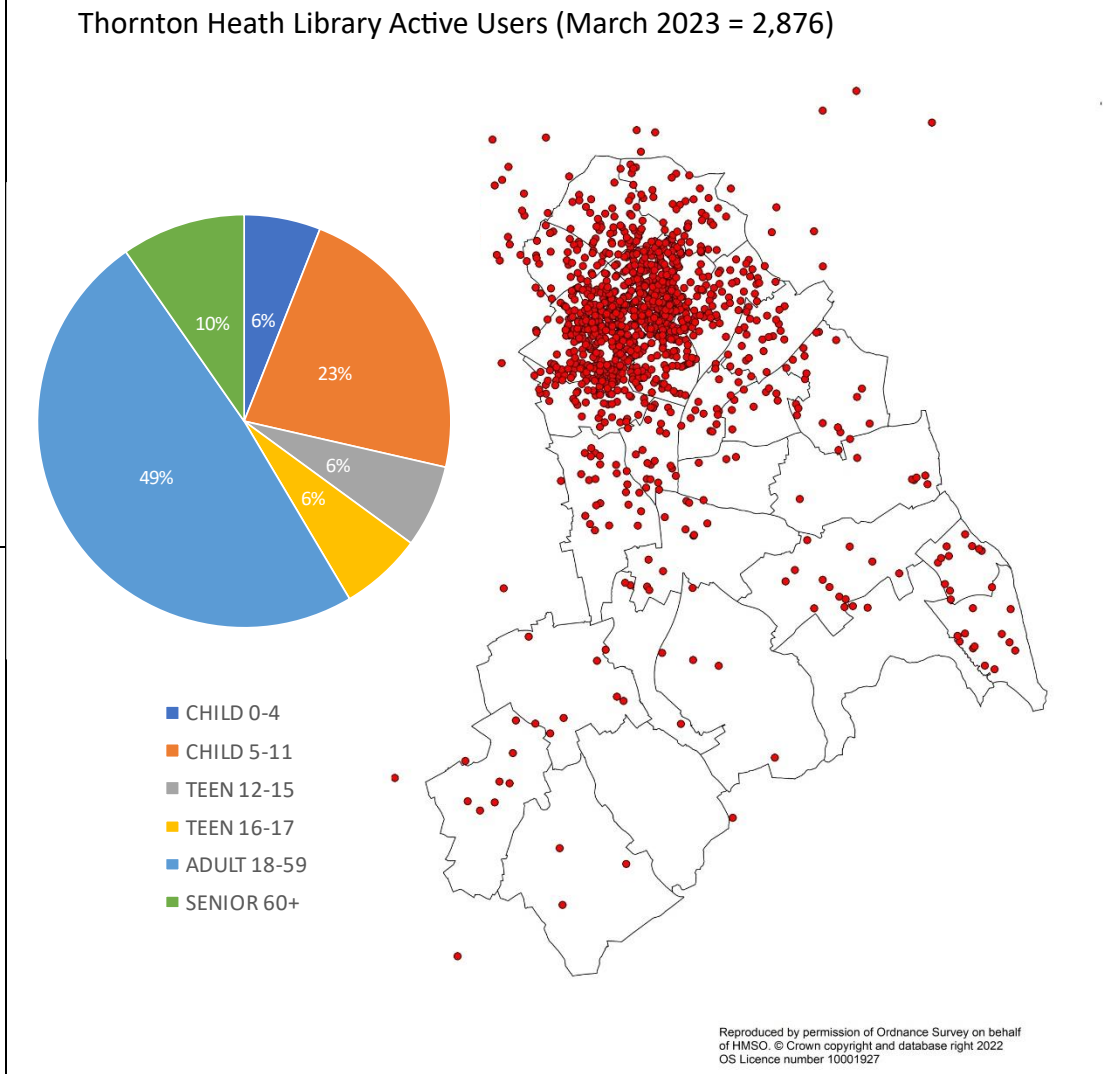
Key service statistics 2022-23						
Annual visits	28,651	4,98% *of Croydon total*	Average visits per hour	23.4	Annual running costs	£254,162
Annual issues	32,064	6.76% *of Croydon total*	Average issues per hour	26	Running cost per hour	£208
PC usage (hours used)	3,144	7.36% *of Croydon total*	PC usage as % of open hours	38.74%	Cost per visitor	£9
Users who have logged onto a PC	1,936	8.17% *of Croydon total*	Available PC hours (annual)	8,118	Income	£3,762
Active users	2,876	7.84% *of Croydon total*	Events run	178	Lending stock	18,551
New members	984	6.11% *of Croydon total*	Event participants	1,446	New Stock	1,236

Building and location summary	
Location type: • Residential area	**Footfall:** • Some distance from the edge of shopping area
Visibility: • Prominent position on the busy road • Striking large signage visible on three sides	**Adaptability:** • There are a variety of spaces available for events • The lower floor is underused
Suitability: • Interior design has created attractive spaces on two floors • Separate areas for children's library and PC users • Training and meeting rooms on lower ground • Sufficient space for full range of library services	**Condition (visual impression):** • Frontage appears in good condition, some attention needed • Interior décor worn and in need of full redecoration

Thornton Heath Library Profile







LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:		**CABINET**
DATE OF DECISION		**31 January 2024**
REPORT TITLE:		**Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Programme and Growth Zone annual budget and programme - 2024/25.**
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:		**Nick Hibberd – Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery** **Heather Cheesbrough - Director of Planning and Sustainable Regeneration**
LEAD OFFICER:		**Steve Dennington – Service Head Spatial Planning, Growth Zone and Regeneration** **Steve.Dennington@croydon.gov.uk** **Emily Webster – Senior Regeneration Manager – Growth Zone and Regeneration** **Emily.Webster@croydon.gov.uk**
LEAD MEMBER:		**Cllr Jeet Bains – Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration**
KEY DECISION? [Ref. 8423EM]	**Yes**	REASON: Key Decision – Decision incurs expenditure, or makes savings, of more than £1,000,000 and Key Decision – Decision significantly impacts on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**NO**	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:		**Fairfield, Addiscombe West & Park Hill & Whitgift**

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the status of the current and upcoming Croydon Town Centre regeneration programme. This update should be read in the context of the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022 – 26, the February 2023 Cabinet report regarding the Whitgift Indemnity and Land Transfer Agreement (ILTA) and the July 2022 Cabinet report regarding the Reconnected Croydon Levelling Up Funding bid given the positive news in November 2023 that the Government provisionally awarded the Council £18.5m to deliver Reconnected Croydon.

This report also sets out the proposed annual Growth Zone budget and high-level programme for 2024/25. It reflects the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022 – 2026, the need to regenerate and renew Croydon town centre. The Growth Zone is a business rate retention mechanism, and the income is ring fenced by the Statutory Instrument and provides additional funding. Therefore, positively contributing to the Council's financial position.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report the Executive Mayor in Cabinet, it is recommended:

2.1 to agree a £7,202,000 budget for the 'Delivery the Growth Zone' programme 2024/25; and

2.2 to delegate to the Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151) and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration authority to make necessary changes to the funding assigned to Sub Groups as outlined in Table 1, subject to the parameters previously approved in the March 2021 Cabinet report 'Delivering the Growth Zone'

to note:

2.3 the general update on the status of the current and upcoming Croydon Town Centre regeneration programme;

and

2.4 the indicative funding profile and projects for Growth Zone Sub Groups and projects as detailed in Table 1 of this report;

and

2.5 The recommendations previously agreed by Cabinet in July 2022 regarding the governance and implementation of a successful Levelling Up Fund bid.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 This report has two elements. One element addresses setting the Growth Zone budget and programme of projects for 2024/25. This is an annual requirement of Growth Zone governance. The second element provides an update on the current and upcoming Town Centre Regeneration programme.

Growth Zone annual budget and programme - 2024/25.

3.2 The Growth Zone business rate uplift retention funding mechanism was approved by Cabinet in July 2016 and the Mayor of London in October 2016, and ring-fences growth in business rates from April 2018 for 16 years. Since the inception of the Growth Zone, it has been understood that the infrastructure and interventions required to mitigate the planned growth will not be delivered by existing delivery methods, current funding availability or through planning gain. Therefore, the Growth Zone is essential to enable the delivery of critical and essential infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the planned growth (Croydon Local Plan 2018, Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework

2013 and London Plan 2021) for the benefit of existing and future residents, businesses and visitors. In addition, in recent years and this year, there has been a need to pivot this original intention of the Growth Zone to support a wider programme of projects to facilitate and enable the regeneration of the Croydon Opportunity Area.

3.3 The Growth Zone is an innovative approach to fund and deliver this infrastructure and regeneration response. The Growth Zone inception pre-dates the coronavirus pandemic, the current challenging macro-economic circumstances and the Council's financial challenges. Therefore, it is important that the Growth Zone continues to evolve to support the town centre's growth, regeneration and social and economic recovery.

3.4 The recommendation to approve the 'Delivering the Growth Zone' programme 2024/25 reflects the need to support the town centre's growth, regeneration and social and economic recovery. The budget and programme reflects the Council's current resource structures as of 2023/24 that reflect and respond to the Council's financial challenges. It is important that the programme for 2024/25 is realistic in terms of the capacity for delivery.

3.5 The 'Delivering the Growth Zone' programme 2024/25 is supported by core partners: Greater London Authority (GLA) and Transport for London (TfL). This has been secured through the well-established and functional Growth Zone governance. Indeed, to support this report the Executive Mayor and the GLA Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills – Jules Pipe met in December 2023 to discuss the proposed Growth Zone Budget and Programme for 2024/25.

3.6 This report seeks the approval of the Executive Mayor in Cabinet for the Growth Zone budget and programme – 2024/25 as set out in Table 1.

Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Programme

3.7 The regeneration of Croydon Town Centre is an ongoing programme of projects and interventions. This programme of projects and interventions is part of, or is alongside the Growth Zone programme. This report sets out an update on the overall programme from 2023 and provides a steer on the programme for 2024.

3.8 The anchor of the regeneration programme for 2024 and beyond will be the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. The Strategy is composed of 3 elements:

1. **Strategic Vision** – a realistic, inclusive and deliverable ambition on how the Croydon Opportunity Area (COA (town centre)) should function, look and feel over next 15 years and the articulation of its future role and positioning that is economically viable, resilient and sustainable.

2. **Spatial Framework** – spatial consideration of the Strategic Vision, bringing to reality the realistic and viable ambitions of the town centre. As this element evolves it will supplement the Local Plan Review – North End Quarter transformation chapter and wider Town Centre policies.

3. **Delivery Plan** – outline costed and phased series of physical, economic, cultural and environmental interventions, identified through the Spatial Framework.

The Delivery Plan will inform the Growth Zone budget and programme setting for 2025 and beyond. This will ensure the delivery of the programme is coordinated and well understood by communities, businesses and partners. It could be that the Regeneration Strategy might be adopted as statutory planning guidance as a Supplementary Planning Document and replace the Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework 2013.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 Below is a summary of the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Programme.

4.2 The Executive Mayor has reintroduced the Town Centre Advisory Board. The Board, with its wide representation of town centre partners, has continued to steer and inform the approach to town centre regeneration.

4.3 The Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022 – 26 sets out the Mayor's commitment to address the look and feel of the town centre as a key early component to the regeneration of the town centre. Examples of measures already implemented include the re-introduction of the graffiti removal service and the introduction of a town centre public space protection order. Looking forward the Council will be introducing a dedicated multidisciplinary team to oversee the operational activities under the look and feel of the town centre in a coordinated manner. This dedicated team will work in tandem with the activities of partners, such as the police, Croydon BID and landowners.

4.4 The anchor of the regeneration programme for 2024 and beyond will be the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. As set out in 3.8, Croydon Council have appointed a specialist team to prepare the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. This aligns with and supports the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022 – 2026 (Outcome 2, Priority 1), to stimulate and support the sustainable regeneration and renewal of Croydon town centre.

4.5 In terms of the Whitgift redevelopment, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) completing the acquisition of Hammerson's 50% stake in the Croydon Limited Partnership (CLP) is considered positive. The Council continues to work very closely with CLP as they begin to define in more detail their meanwhile activation programme, especially for the former Allders store. The condition of the Allders building has necessitated a considerable amount of surveys and remediation building works. CLP are at the early stages of a masterplan exercise for the Whitgift and Centrale and the Council is looking forward to that progressing into a pre planning application process this year.

4.6 The January 2023 Cabinet report regarding the Whitgift Indemnity and Land Transfer Agreement (ILTA) set out the context to the current position regarding the ILTA and the Council's engagement with CLP under the ILTA, which the Council entered in 2014 as part of the then Compulsory Purchase Order process. The Council issued the Remedy Notice referred to in the January 2023 Cabinet report to trigger the 'remedies' under the ILTA i.e. improvements to North End and a programme of asset

management initiatives at the existing Whitgift Centre (as detailed in the January 2023 Cabinet report). The recent focus has been on discussions with CLP in respect of the remedies, which have taken time but have been constructive and entirely focussed on supporting the regeneration of the Town Centre and / or provide the framework for the medium-term regeneration.

4.7 Selected Development Sites Update 2023

Recent (2023) major development sites in the Croydon Opportunity Area include:

- Cambridge House, 16-18, Wellesley Road, CR0 2DD
  Now named Aspect Croydon, this 26 storey building consists of 92 apartments (20 x 1 bed, 63 x 2 bed, 9 x 3 bed) with a mix of shared ownership and market units. Completed in 2023.

- Land between 1 & 17, Scarbrook Road, CR0 1SQ
  Now named Boulevard Point, 15 Scarbrook Road, this 11 storey building consists of 42 flats (20 x 1 bed, 9 x 2 bed, 13 x 3 bed). The development was completed in early 2023.

Recent (2023) major consents in the Croydon Opportunity Area include:

- Citylink House, 4 Addiscombe Road, Croydon CR0 5TT - 21/02912/FUL

  Demolition of the existing building and the erection of part 14 storey and part 28 storey building comprising 498 co-living units, 84 residential units, commercial space and flexible commercial and community space. Planning permission was granted on appeal on 29th April 2023.

- 96-98 George Street Croydon - 21/01785/FUL

  Demolition of 96 George Street (Norwich Union House) and 98 George Street (St Matthew's House) and redevelopment to provide an 11 storey (GIA 19, 233sqm) building comprising (Class E) office and café space on the ground floor and (Class E) office use across basement and upper floors.

4.8 Reconnected Croydon – Levelling Up Fund

4.9 In mid 2022 the Council bid to the Levelling Up Fund (round 2). In November 2023 the Government announced they had revisited previous bids as opposed to inviting a third round of funding bids. As a result of this process the Council has been provisionally award £18.5m for the Reconnected Croydon programme. The submitted bid was reported to Cabinet in July 2022 and is a background paper to this report. Work is underway to finalise the provisional award with the Government. Also, work is underway to establish the delivery mechanisms for this funding and the Reconnected Croydon programme.

4.10 The vision for the approved bid is to 'Reconnect, Refresh, Revitalise and Regenerate' the town centre. The projects will provide improved connections throughout the town centre, so residents and visitors will be able to travel more easily through safer, greener

and more pleasant routes. The programme will cover the South End restaurant quarter, East Croydon station, West Croydon station and Old Town. A key component of the bid is the delivery of a new civic square for the Fairfield cultural complex.

4.11 The work to finalise the programme and delivery of the Reconnected Croydon programme should ensure delivery before the funding deadline of March 2026 and the projects reflect the original bid and evolving regeneration needs of the town centre.

4.12 A further considerable consequential benefit of this provisional Levelling Up Funding award is that the Growth Zone budget balance can now be considered and released to fund wider regeneration projects and interventions. This work will be linked to finalising the receipt of the Levelling Up Funding and the Delivery Plan of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy.

4.13 Growth Zone Programme

4.14 Growth Zone projects that sit within the Growth Zone Programme for 2023/24 are summarised below.

Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy: As set out in 3.8 and 4.4, a Town Centre Vision is necessary to support the Council's approach to recovery and renewal of Croydon town centre. This vision will respond to the devastating socio-economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, understand the future of town centres and high streets, address challenging macro-economic conditions and the implications for current and future development activity. Also relevant are the objectives / targets of the Growth Zone on inception (23,500 jobs, 5,000 construction jobs and 10,000 new homes). These targets were part of the Growth Zone's original headline aims at its inception and this vision will help to validate these targets or support realistic and appropriate alternatives. The vision will be developed in collaboration with partners, such as the GLA, TfL and members of the Town Centre Advisory Board. To ensure the robustness of the vision, it will be informed by economic analysis. The vision will be informed by the Croydon Inward Investment strategy and action plan, the Mayor of London's and London Council's Economic Framework for London and master planning activity by key developers in the town centre, including Croydon Limited Partnership. It could be that the Regeneration Strategy might be adopted as statutory planning guidance as a Supplementary Planning Document and replace the Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework 2013.

Transport: A range of street interventions and schemes, including capacity improvements to West Croydon Station, active travel street improvements to Brighton Road Corridor, London Road Corridor, Mitcham Road Corridor, Wellesley Road and Whitehorse Road Corridor. This also includes the development and design of bus priority measures and pedestrian crossing improvements at the Northern end of Brighton Road through a Bus Priority Programme. In addition, improvements to walking and cycling under the Town Centre Loop along Dingwall Road.

In addition, the ongoing Strategic Transport Modelling study being undertaken, as part of the Transport and Parking Sub-Group, with TfL will be used to determine the

transport interventions required to support the current Growth Zone development plans, as well as those necessary to support the Purley Way masterplan and Local Plan Review. This will help project prioritisation and identify the schemes that require Growth Zone funding or necessary from development as mitigation in future years, which again will be the subject of Growth Zone governance, with core partners (GLA and TfL) and Cabinet approval.

These projects are dependant on the TfL Local Implementation Plan Funding process.

Minster Green: Located in the heart of Croydon's Old Town, Croydon Minster has been a focal point for the borough's wider history and is a key community partner for positive change in Croydon. However, the surrounding gardens and memorial spaces have lost their original purpose and link to the growing communities in the area. The public realm project will re-establish the relevance of the Minster's public realm and gardens including improvements to the layout, such as: relocation of parking; introduction of a new play area; improved wayfinding; removal of the pedestrian subway; feature lighting to the Minster; and enhancement of the landscaped areas and historic gravestone features. These changes will provide improved activation and benefits for local communities, greatly enhancing the Minster and its surrounds for the people of Croydon. The scheme has Diocese of Southwark faculty consent. The project team are well underway with finalising the procurement route for the delivery stage of the project to adhere to the project programme.

The Minster is a fundamental part of the borough's history and heritage and its public realm should celebrate the fact. The design of the scheme has been informed by engagement with the Diocese and the local community, for example the inclusion of play facilities within the design to offer enhanced green open space. It is hoped the project will leave a space that people will enjoy and dwell, and address some of the current environmental quality, safety and anti-social behaviour issues. There will be further engagement with partners on the final designs ahead of commencement of delivery.

Meanwhile Asset Audit: The Meanwhile Croydon programme commissioned in 2017/18 combined innovative spatial, public realm interventions with a multi-disciplinary cultural programme to activate key regeneration areas and provided a precursor to long term sustainable growth and development of the town centre. The Meanwhile Uses review provided an audit of the current condition of the installations and made recommendations for refurbishment and disposal. These recommendations are now being implemented.

Urban Room: The Croydon Urban Room is a physical and digital platform for public, business and wider partner engagement and participation in the revival and development of the Whitgift Centre and the wider North End Quarter area of the town centre. Situated in an existing retail unit in the Whitgift Centre, the Croydon Urban Room will be an accessible public space - an extension of the public realm that aims to catalyse the sustainable renewal, vitality and resilience of the area. It will aim to do this by improving access and inclusion, empowering the public to be meaningfully involved in future planning, regeneration and development process and in turn

contribute to expanding social, sustainable, creative and learning infrastructure, bringing investment and economic activities. The public programme of workshops, activities, events and exhibitions will be delivered through a series of programme partnerships with industry, academic and local partners - this will create a greater sense of ownership whilst providing further elements of match funding to the project.

The digital platform will reflect the physical activities and public programme in the physical space and expand the outreach of the project.

Construction Logistics: Delivery and monitoring of projects to mitigate the impact of construction logistics on the operation of the Croydon Opportunity Area and borough road network. Examples of these projects include, setting up a Croydon Considerate Constructer award scheme, utility and developer coordination and forum and introduction of mobile CCTV construction site activity monitoring.

London Borough of Culture: Continued support of the Borough of Culture programme to ensure their positive impact and success. The funding supports delivery of projects within the town centre to ensure growth and benefits derived are also available to local businesses and to enhance the perception and accessibility of the town centre as a visitor destination.

Museum of Croydon: Continued support of the Museum of Croydon as a visitor and cultural destination in 2023/24. Strong social infrastructure is critical to the Croydon Opportunity Area's regeneration, particularly as growth is directly linked to resident and visitor spend and footfall. The operation of the Museum of Croydon for the Borough of Culture has increased footfall.

Inward Investment: A dedicated concierge service that supports new businesses into the Growth Zone working with developers, commercial agents and landlords to bring a vibrant offering to the Growth Zone/ town centre. This also includes the development of a Croydon Inward Investment strategy and action plan in FY 2023/24 for the Growth Zone area; which brings together partner collaboration and attracts investment into the town centre and retains Croydon businesses. In addition, this includes supporting the retrofit and build of the London South Bank University – Green Engineering & Built Environment Innovation Centre, which focuses on green research and development - bringing local, regional and national businesses and the university together to deliver new green technology solutions to market. Additionally, Inward Investment continue to work with partners to deliver dedicated business support, advice, guidance and innovation to town centre businesses helping them to become resilient and adaptive to change. This includes a continued programme that delivers support to a minimum of 250 businesses per annum.

East Croydon Link Bridge: Maintenance and cleansing of the public side of the East Croydon Link Bridge as a contractual obligation with Network Rail. The completion of the East Croydon Link Bridge will support the regeneration of the Town Centre by improving and increasing the accessibility of the town centre and visitor experience around East Croydon Station.

Fairfield Halls Forecourt: Funding for the Council's Fairfield Halls Project Team to deliver improvements to the Fair Field Halls forecourt from the current interim state.

4.15 Growth Zone Delivery Programme – 2023/24

The notable outputs of the Growth Zone for 2023/24 are set out below.

Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy: The Project team has been appointed to deliver the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. The Strategy will be made up of three key outputs: Strategic Vision, Spatial Framework and Delivery Plan. The Strategy is underway in consultation with strategic partners and the local residential and business community. The Strategy is due to be completed in Q3 FY 24/25.

Transport: Completion of Strategic Transport Modelling Stage 2 commenced in Q1 FY 23/24. Design options have been reviewed for West Croydon Station Capacity Improvements. Further development of interventions to corridors and active travel is ongoing.

Minster Green: The Minster Green project has completed technical design. Delivery is due to commence Q4 FY 23/24 / Q1 FY 24/25.

Meanwhile Asset Audit: The refurbishment of meanwhile uses has completed and maintenance is ongoing.

Urban Room: The Urban Room project and programme has launched online in Q3 FY 23/24. The physical space is due to open in early Q4 FY 23/24.

Construction Logistics: Implementation of the One Network Module commenced in Q2 FY 23/24. In addition, repair of CCTV cameras across the Town Centre has commenced. The monitoring of site management is ongoing. This will be achieved through the Mobile CCTV monitoring programme and Automatic Traffic Counts in Q3 and Q4 FY 23/24.

London Borough of Culture: A wide ranging and diverse cultural programme delivered in the town centre including theatre, dance, fashion shows, public art trails, exhibitions and walking tours. A supporting communication and marketing campaign delivered including lamppost banners and street signage developing This Is Croydon cultural brand identity. A series of case studies developed highlighting the impact and learning from delivery of the programme which will shape future creative programme development and funding bids.

Museum of Croydon

Successful delivery of a high-quality exhibition programme including Caribbean Influencers, which transferred to the National Portrait Gallery, and Croydon from the Palette of Evacustes Phipson, which engaged visitors in dialogue with the changing look and feel of the town centre. Preparation is underway for the reopening of one of the main gallery spaces with Rewind: This Is Croydon's Music, a new exhibition of music heritage in the borough. Launch of the Music Heritage Trail application and walking tour drawing footfall and engagement across the town centre. Submission of accreditation application for museum.

Inward Investment: Completion of London South Bank University Green Engineering & Built Environment Innovation Centre refit works commenced in Q2 FY 23/24. Launch events and workshops are scheduled to follow. In addition, a consultant has been appointed to deliver the Economic Analysis and Inward Investment Plan in Q2 FY 23/24. Data collection for this will commence in Q3 FY 23/24. In Q2 FY 23/24, 100 businesses have received non-financial business support, 50 new business have been secured, 250 new jobs have been secured in the Town Centre and 200 existing jobs have been secured. Overarching business support and employment targets continue.

East Croydon Link Bridge: Quotes to be sought for the maintenance and cleansing of the public side of the East Croydon Link Bridge with Network Rail, which is due to commence in Q4 of FY 23/24 following finalisation of terms.

Fairfield Halls Forecourt: Exploration of options for forecourt upgrade and renewal. Scope to be defined further and in context with future public realm works to the area outside Fairfield Halls.

Whilst significant spend and progress on projects has happened in FY 23/24, the full programme budget was not spent. This is due to ongoing pressure on Council resource. All unspent budget will be carried to FY 24/25 as slippage.

4.16 Growth Zone annual budget and programme 2024/25.

4.17 The Growth Zone business rate uplift retention funding mechanism was approved by Cabinet in July 2016 and the Mayor of London in October 2016, and ring-fences growth in business rates from April 2018 for 16 years. A Statutory Instrument was laid in parliament which led to the formal approval of the Growth Zone by the Government from April 2018.

4.18 As further historic context, following the adoption of the Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework by the Council and the Greater London Authority in 2013, it was clear the infrastructure needs related to the planned growth required additional financial support. Therefore, from inception, the Growth Zone was developed in a collaborative approach with the GLA and TfL to secure central government financial devolution in the form of business rate retention for a designated area within central Croydon. This process resulted in the Growth Zone coming into force in April 2018

4.19 The Growth Zone programme was originally established to leverage opportunities to create the appropriate social, economic, cultural and physical infrastructure needed to ensure that the significant development and growth anticipated within Croydon town centre was sustainable. As a 16-year programme, starting in 2018, it was always envisaged the strategic direction of the Growth Zone and funding available would flex and change over time, with a governance structure established to ensure that the priorities of the programme reflect the needs of the town centre as development and regeneration takes shape.

4.20 The core objectives of the Growth Zone are to support the regeneration and renewal of the town centre and borough, and to support delivery of social, economic, cultural

and physical infrastructure align with the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022 – 2026. This report directly contributes to the Executive Mayor's Business Plan's priorities including – making Croydon a borough we're proud to call home, supporting the regeneration of Croydon's town and district centres and delivering a vibrant London Borough of Culture which showcases local talent and supports Croydon's recovery.

4.21 Whilst many of the major development projects planned for the town centre were starting to progress in the early years of the Growth Zone programme, there have been delays and reconsideration of the nature to some key town centre developments, including the proposed redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre. These delays have been compounded by the devastating economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on town centre businesses and the current development market conditions.

4.22 Growth Zone Delivery Programme – 2024/25

High level detail of the Growth Zone programme for the next financial year is set out in Table 1 below. The work of the Sub Groups and the projects are varied and demonstrate the flexibility of Growth Zone funding, under Growth Zone governance, to deliver interventions that are the appropriate response to the current circumstances and as circumstances evolve. For example, some of challenges that the Town Centre is currently facing include stalled key development sites in the retail core and Mid Croydon, incidents of anti-social behaviour, perception of the town centre and the need for improved public realm in parts of the town centre. Therefore, Growth Zone outputs for 2024/25 are anchored to the core objectives to support the regeneration and renewal of the town centre and borough, and to support delivery of social, economic, cultural and physical infrastructure, which align with the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022 – 2026. This is rather than being anchored to an overall long-term vision for the Town Centre, which is currently being prepared in the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy workstream.

Table 1

Project	FY 24/25 Budget	Summary	Detail
Minster Green	£550,000	Delivery of project, target completion Spring / Summer 25. Existing funding: £7,592,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23 for Minster Green and Meanwhile Asset Audit.	Following the completion of concept designs and RIBA stage 3 through extensive partner engagement and securing Diocese of Southwark faculty scheme consent. The project is fast approaching completion of RIBA stage 4 (technical design) and is gearing up towards commencement on

			site for delivery within the 24/25 FY. The highly detailed design proposals for the Minster Green scheme will deliver upon the promised high quality public realm regeneration for Croydon's historic quarter and the Grade I listed Minster setting. The proposals are underpinned by community and business engagement throughout. The key strategic and local deliverables are as follows: The creation of a top quality destination space, underpinned by Placemaking principles (community empowerment, a strong identity/sense of place, publically inclusive, flexibility in use, business offer, etc) The creation of inclusive play and recreational offer with central Croydon To protect, restore and enhance Croydon's local heritage assets Sustainability such as Biodiversity enhancements, Green Infrastructure improvements, nature-based SuDS provision and local flooding alleviation, Air Quality improvements to Roman Way dual carriage way and the town centre. Accessibility and wayfinding improvements through creation of an accessible and fully inclusive space. With improved navigation within the site and as a springboard into central Croydon and to local businesses.

			To tackle historic ASB issues and provide safety improvements through considered design, removal of the problematic subway, lighting, sight line improvements and increased footfall. Promotion of healthy modes of travel (pedestrian/cycling) To resolve and reorganise the current rogue parking provision.
Meanwhile Asset Audit	£20,000	Ongoing maintenance of Meanwhile Assets under the 2017 – 2019 programme. Existing funding: £7,592,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23 for Minster Green and Meanwhile Asset Audit.	The delivery of the Meanwhile Asset Audit commenced in FY23/24. It consists of the following projects: Parklets relocation (complete), and College Square street furniture removal (complete), College Square installation of more lighting (complete) and High Street Lighting (in progress, nearing completion). Maintenance programmes are being implemented as projects reach completion.
Urban Room	£250,000	Operation of the physical Urban Room unit. Continued programme of workshops, activities, events and exhibitions. The digital platform will reflect the physical activities and public programme and expand the outreach of the project. Pop-up events are also anticipated around the town centre and wider borough to improve access and participation. Existing funding: £175,500 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23	The Urban Room project commenced in FY23/24 with the launch of the physical space in the Whitgift Centre anticipated by March 2024. The project outputs will consist of: operation of the physical space including staff resource and physical equipment to support a regular public programme of events, exhibitions and drop-in activities, workshops in the physical space in addition to the Urban Room website, Instagram page and online newsletter. A Monitoring & Evaluation report will be produced at the end of financial year that outlines the progress made and impact of the project

			across the first year of the project. Through its programme of events and exhibitions, the Urban Room will serve to promote the work the Council is Undertaking to deliver town centre regeneration, to attract investment and restore confidence in Croydon. It will encourage people to get involved so as many views and voices as possible are included in framing the regeneration and development of the town centre, supporting the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, supporting the URW Masterplan public engagement, other GZ town centre projects, Local Plan and other planning documents, Levelling Up Fund projects and developers' pre app consultations.
Construction Logistics	£100,000	Continued projects to mitigate the impact of construction logistics on the operation of the Croydon town centre and wider area. Examples include: Croydon Considerate Constructor award scheme; utility and developer coordination and forum; mobile CCTV construction site activity monitoring; and CCTV monitoring of development sites. Existing funding: £100,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	<u>Croydon Considerate Constructors award scheme and Developer/Utility forum</u> To develop a Croydon Considerate Contractor award Scheme to improve construction sites, Utility companies and suppliers to voluntarily register with the Scheme and agree to abide by Croydon's Code of Considerate Practice, which will be designed to encourage best practice beyond statutory requirements to improve Respect in the Community, Care for the Environment and Value their Workforce. This will also include a quarterly forum for internal and external stakeholders to manage and work towards meeting expectations of project/developments in terms of delays and impacts on the highway network.

			Maintain yearly costs of the CCTV programme. Maintain yearly costs for the 6 existing Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) assets around the town centre, which monitors all vehicle movement within the town centre. <u>Mobile CCTV monitoring programme</u> The proposal is to introduce a mobile CCTV programme for problematic development sites that receive complaints from internal and external stakeholders. This CCTV programme will be based around a monthly mobile camera moving from site to site across the borough to monitor delivery times, agreed traffic management, vehicle movements/stacking and how the Banksman/traffic Marshalls manage the site entrance.
Inward Investment	£150,000	Continued projects including: deliver Croydon Inward Investment Strategy and Action Plan; support the Innovation Centre; work with partners to deliver dedicated business support; programme of support to 100 businesses with non-financial business support; secure 50 new businesses; 250 new jobs in the town centre; 200 existing jobs; and secure further investment. Existing funding: £139,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	Funding will implement Croydon's Inward Investment Action Plan (currently under development), this work will bring together key delivery partners to drive activity that will support the retention and recruitment of good businesses into the town centre. This will include the following programmes: Dedicated staff that will work with partners to deliver bespoke business support to businesses located within the growth zone (with a focus on the evening and night time economy, retail research and development and creative digital) – supporting

			businesses to start develop and grow. Dedicated staff resource to work with partners coordinating a strong inward investment campaign that secures investors, development and new good businesses Dedicated staff resource to develop externally funded activity with partners to support new businesses to recruit local employees and work with existing businesses to upskill and develop existing employees. Dedicated staff resource that will support the work of key workspace providers within the town centre.
Culture	£850,000	Funding to create new cultural vision, identity and strategy for the town centre, including the delivery of high quality cultural activation Borough of Culture legacy programme and public realm equipped to support creative activation and events. Existing funding: £377,500 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	The Growth Zone will support delivery of the legacy of the London Borough of Culture through: Development of a cultural strategy for the town centre which will identify the strengths and opportunities for investment and support further fundraising for the Council and cultural partners operating in the town centre New on street signage, lamppost banners and wayfinding interventions to promote cultural venues and assets, improving awareness and visibility of the cultural offer in the town centre

			A digital platform to promote the cultural programme taking place in the town centre which will help to drive footfall and economic development in the area Improved facilities to support public programming in the Croydon Opportunity Area, including power supply and portable equipment to animate the public realm, attract diverse audiences into the town centre and market central Croydon as an appealing, safe location to the creative sector to bring work into An annual festival event in the town centre to activate the public realm and venues with cultural activity, creating a stand out moment to attract visitors into the area, showcase Croydon's cultural identify, generate economic activity across day and night time activity and demonstrate the case to funders for investment in Croydon through attraction of significant audience numbers with high quality cultural programming An ancillary programme of creative activation that will run through the year to support the development of central Croydon's brand as a cultural destination, increasing footfall and developing the profile, skills and experience in the town centre based creative sector through grants and commissions

			Dedicated resource for additional fundraising in order to continue attracting inward investment for cultural activation and development into the town centre
Museum of Croydon	£290,000	Funding to ensure the operation as a visitor and cultural destination. Example of these projects include: high quality heritage and cultural programme of exhibitions and events; sector training workshops to develop research and creative skills in heritage context; digital programme supporting museum engagement; develop designs and secure funding for refurbishment of museum galleries. Existing funding: £200,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	The Growth Zone investment will enable the Museum of Croydon to deliver the following: Provision of an accessible culture and heritage attraction in the town centre which will increase footfall through access to Museum collections, events and exhibitions At least two exhibitions per annum delivered in the Museum galleries, delivered with cultural and community partners developing the profile of the town centre as a visitor destination for different communities A year round programme of events for children and families encouraging visits to the town centre and engagement with the Museum collections and exhibitions A seasonal programme of adult events including talks, walks and workshops increasing engagement with the heritage of the town centre and creative exploration of it's past, present and future An outreach programme of activity delivered in community settings engaging residents with the Museum offer and collections and building

			connections for residents to visits the Museum and the town centre A sector support programme developing the skills and capacity in the cultural sector to deliver heritage projects through training and workshops, diversifying and developing the wider cultural offer A schools engagement programme to invite classes to come into the town centre to visit the museum and engage with the area's heritage through walks and learning resources Marketing and digital promotion to build awareness of the heritage of the town centre and develop its identity as a cultural destination The funding will support the Museum to undertake its transformation programme by: - Commissioning an options appraisal on the best value governance and funding opportunities for the Museum - Digitising item records to improve accessibility and use for residents and partners to draw on in delivering programmes - Developing options and designs to reopen the closed galleries which we will use to seek external funding for to strengthen the culture and heritage offer in the town centre

Transport	£1,150,00	Ongoing development of Strategic Transport Modelling and interventions to vehicular corridors and active travel and directly link to the Local Implementation Plan 2023 Existing funding: £900,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	To support the ongoing development and implementation in Croydon metropolitan centre and key 'movement' corridors serving the centre. Work is integrated with both Local Implementation Plan and Levelling Up Fund proposals. Further improvements to the High Street and Dingwall Road schemes and new schemes on College Road and George Street are proposed. All these projects will improve the quality of the public realm and the connectivity of more a walkable (and cyclable) Town Centre. Bus, road safety, waiting and loading improvements will also be part of an integrated approach, with stronger engagement at each stage of these projects. For Wellesley Road and Old Town Roundabout we are replacing pedestrian underpasses with surface level crossings. This will reduce the severance these roads create. We will also improve the quality of the public realm, changing the character of these corridors to help knit the public realm back together. London Road is a corridor with a more traditional 'High Street' character. The recommended 2024/25 programme proposes that this project will review and assess interventions to date, engage with the community through co-design. Seeking to balance the different modes as part of a more integrated approach to this project,

			improvements to bus priority, road safety, waiting and loading, parking for local traders, active travel and public realm are envisaged. Key to all corridor projects will be engagement with residents, businesses, and ward councillors at each stage of development and delivery.
Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy	£120,000	Continued delivery of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, including associated works. Existing funding: £200,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	The anchor of the regeneration programme for 2024 and beyond will be the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. The Strategy is composed of 3 elements: **Strategic Vision** – a realistic, inclusive and deliverable ambition on how the Croydon Opportunity Area (COA (town centre)) should function, look and feel over next 15 years and the articulation of its future role and positioning that is economically viable, resilient and sustainable. **Spatial Framework** – spatial consideration of the Strategic Vision, bringing to reality the realistic and viable ambitions of the town centre. As this element evolves it will supplement the Local Plan Review – North End Quarter transformation chapter and wider Town Centre policies. **Delivery Plan** – outline costed and phased series of physical, economic, cultural and environmental interventions, identified through the Spatial Framework.
East Croydon Link Bridge	£25,000	Ongoing maintenance and cleaning of the public side of East Croydon Link Bridge as contractual obligation to Network Rail. Existing funding: £100,000 approved by Cabinet in the	Ongoing maintenance and cleaning of the public side of East Croydon Link Bridge as contractual obligation to Network Rail.

		Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	
Urban Greening	£1,600,000	Development of a resilient implementation strategy (including early delivery at Wellesey Road and George Street reserves and greening outside East Croydon station) of multi-staged green infrastructure and environmental improvements, including wind mitigation, biodiversity improvements, nature-based SuDS, air quality improvements and health & wellbeing enhancements.	Development of a resilient implementation strategy and delivery of multiple staged green infrastructure and environmental improvements (incl. early delivery at Wellesley Road and George Street reserves and greening outside East Croydon Station). To include wind mitigation, biodiversity improvements, nature-based SuDS, air quality improvements and health & wellbeing improvements and enhance the environment within Croydon town centre. The Strategy will draw from the variety of Town Centre visions, strategies and policies currently in development, such as the Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, Town Centre Masterplans, the North End Quarter Transformation Area Local Plan chapter and the GLA Civic Partnership Programme strategy currently being developed up until March 24. The specifics outputs include: Compiling and collaboration of numerous town centre strategies, ensuring synergy between separate strands Development of Implementation Strategy (RIBA Stages 1 – 3) Public engagement and ongoing communications through the Urban Room project

			Collation of initial cost plans. Completion of site analysis and surveying Early delivery of Wellesley Road and George Street reserves outside East Croydon Station. Long term sustainable maintenance strategy.
Fairfield Gardens Public Realm	£300,000	Review of current design proposals (RIBA 3), to reflect cost inflation, changes in requirements and priorities (incl. planning approvals). Progression to detailed design (RIBA 4).	Fairfield Garden Public Realm scheme is intended to deliver a high-quality public realm in the heart of Croydon. The design will include a variety of flexible spaces and versatility, multi-purposes gathering space and associated works, including structural slab strengthening. An updated design brief will be prepared and the existing design will be reviewed to ensure the most appropriate scheme for delivery. The specific outputs include: - Procurement of design and project team. - Design review and commencement of technical design (RIBA 3 – 4). - Review of cost plan, phasing and deliverability (incl. updated slab assessment and risk). - Planning review to ensure compliance and associated requirements. - Public engagement and ongoing comms through the Urban Room project.
High Street Data Service	£20,000	Membership fee for GLA High Street Data Service for Croydon Town Centre. To	The High Streets Data Service (HSDS) is a collaborative data sharing partnership between the

		support Growth Zone programme projects.	Mayor of London, London boroughs, and Business Improvement Districts. The HSDS is collection of private and public data, for example: high street footfall, spending, air quality, land ownership. This data will be used: • To explore variation of high street activity in Croydon • To understand untapped opportunities in high streets, such as green spaces, essential services like childcare and healthcare, extended opening hours of businesses, or a better culture and nightlife offer. • To compare how Croydon's local high streets compare to adjacent or similar local authorities. This data will be used to assist the following projects: • Inward Investment's Economic Analysis • Croydon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy
Park Hill	£200,000	Review of implementation plan and cost plan, strategy, surveys, engagement, design evolution, planning submission, further cost plans and cohesive delivery plan.	In 2020, kick-started by Growth Zone funding, the Council developed a costed implementation plan that identified much needed improvements for the historic park, Park Hill. The plan addressed access and legibility challenges, heritage and restoration, biodiversity enhancement and protection, nature based sustainable water

			management (SuDS) and improved and updated recreation offer for the public. These plans were stalled until now. The specific outputs for 24/25 include: • Review of the existing implementation plan and cost plan. • Investigative site analysis and surveying. • Completion of public and statutory engagement via Urban Room. • Submitting planning submission and completing delivery of initial smaller schemes, for example SuDS Corridors. • Commencement of RIBA stage 4 for first major improvement phase. • Preparation of a further detailed, fully costed and cohesive delivery plan heading into 25/26 year.
Maintenance	£1,000,000	Ongoing maintenance of completed projects in the Growth Zone.	
Growth Zone Salaries	£577,000	This is the cost of Growth Zone establishment for 2022/23 carried forward, subject to change. Professional fees for projects are included within project budgets. However, should overall Growth Zone / Town Centre regeneration additional and / or bespoke resource be required, for example for communications this would be funded from the annual Growth Zone budget and overseen by the Growth Zone Steering Group.	

		Existing funding: £577,000 approved by Cabinet in the Annual Delivering the Croydon Growth Zone Report 2023-24 - Cabinet Report 22 Feb 23.	
TOTALS	**£ 7,202,000**		

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Two other reasonable alternative options were considered and were rejected for the reasons set out below.

5.2 An option would be to not set a budget and programme for 2024/25 and allow the Growth Zone income to appreciate given the Council's financial and capacity constraints. This option was rejected as it would not support the town centre's growth, regeneration and social and economic recovery at a very critical stage given the impact of the pandemic and the challenging macro-economic conditions. Also, Growth Zone income is ring fenced given the statutory instrument, so is a source of funding for interventions and projects that is not available from other sources given the Council's and partners' financial challenges. Finally, the GLA and TfL would be unlikely to support this option as it creates a clear tension with the original intent and approval of the Growth Zone in 2016.

5.3 A second option would have been to set a budget and programme that is overly ambitious with the very real risk of under delivery. To ignore the Council's current resource and structures as of 2023/24 that reflect the Council's financial challenges would represent poor programme management. In other words, the option of setting a budget and programme that reflects the resources and structures prior to the Council's Section 114s would represent poor programme management.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation has taken place with key partners and partners as established through the Growth Zone governance structures. The budget and programme set out in this report enjoys the support of the core governance partners of Greater London Authority (GLA) and Transport for London (TfL). This joint working is most notable with the Mayor and the GLA Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills – Jules Pipe undertaking their annual meeting under Growth Zone governance in December 2023 to discuss the proposed Growth Zone Budget and Programme for 2024/25.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 The Executive Mayor's priorities are detailed in the Executive Mayor's Business Plan 2022 – 2026. The priorities that this report directly contributes to are outlined below.

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

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 At the start of the 2023/24 the Growth Zone dedicated reserve balance was £28.1m.

8.1.2 Cabinet in February 2023 agreed the 2023/24 budget and programme, which assigned up to £12.3m to Growth Zone projects and programmes.

8.1.3 It is forecast that actual spend in 2023/24 will be circa £2.1m [reported to Growth Zone Steering Group 31/10/23]. The underspend has largely occurred as a consequence of procurement challenges, the financial constraints on the Council in the 2023/24 financial year, the diminished resources within the Growth Zone team (recruitment and retention) and across the Growth Zone Sub Groups. Given the Growth Zone has a period of 16 years this underspend can be assigned across the whole Growth Zone period.

8.1.4 The table below sets out the 2023/24 opening balance, the forecast spend of £2.1m for 2023/24 and applies an estimated income of £6.5m (based on 2022/23 income). This is forecast to lead to a closing balance for 2023/24 of £32.5m.

8.1.5 The effect of this report is to agree a budget of up to £ 7,202,000 m Growth Zone funding for 2024/25. This budget is in addition to the Growth Zone funding approved by Cabinet in February 2023 for 2023/24, which remains to be spent in full.

8.1.6 Growth Zone budget risk is managed as follows.

- The Growth Zone financial model is based on anticipated future business rates income, which would enable the Council to fund Growth Zone programmes and projects. Any significant changes to future income streams will impact on the viability of the Growth Zone.
- Growth Zone income levels depend on the satisfactory progress of developments occurring in the town centre, which will bring about the uplift in business rates. If these developments slip, the income in future years could be affected.

- Any overspends in early programmes will impact on the funding available for later projects and programmes. Expenditure and delivery of projects will be managed by the Growth Zone Steering Group. Any unavoidable overspend will mean a reduction in funding available for projects planned for the future.
- Project and programme delays could impact on the success of the Growth Zone. Governance arrangements are in place with partners to ensure clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Regular cross partner meetings of the Growth Zone Steering Group is a practical method of monitoring project management and the early identification of any delivery issues for attention.
- Staff resourcing requirements, including the recruitment and retention of staff could impact the proposed programme of works under the Growth Zone.

8.1.7 The Growth Zone budget context outlined is separate from the provisionally awarded £18.5 Levelling Up Funding to the Council for the Reconnnected Croydon programme.

8.1.8 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendation

8.1.9 Growth Zone consequences of report recommendation

	Current Year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast		
	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27
Revenue Budget Available				
Expenditure Income				
Effect of decision from report				
Expenditure Income				
Remaining Budget				
Capital Budget available	28,100	32,500 (est)		
Expenditure Income	(2,100)(forecast) 6,500 (est)	 6,500 (est)		
Effect of decision from report				

Expenditure Income		(7,202)		
Remaining Budget	32,500	31,798		

Comments approved by Darrell Jones Acting Head of Finance SCRER, Investment & Risk on behalf of the Director of Finance. Date 20th November 2023.

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 The Head of Commercial and Property Law comments on behalf of the Director of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer that the Non-Domestic Rating (Designated Areas) Regulations establish and enable what is known as a 'Local Growth Zone' by providing for the local retention of non-domestic rates collected in designated areas in England, Croydon being one of those areas.

8.2.2 The Regulations designate areas in England ("designated areas") for the purpose of paragraph 39(1) of Schedule 7B to the Local Government Finance Act 1988 ("the 1988 Act") (local retention of non-domestic rates). They provide rules for calculating in respect of a billing authority in England all or part of whose area falls within a designated area— (a) the billing authority's non-domestic rating income in respect of the designated area for a specified year; and (b) the proportion of that non-domestic rating income that is to be disregarded for the purpose of specified calculations under Schedule 7B to the 1988 Act. The calculations are to be made separately for each designated area within which a billing authority's area falls. Regulation 3(1) and Schedule 1 designate the areas. The designation of the areas is made by reference to maps.

8.2.3 Through the 2018 Regulations, Regulation 3(2) provides that the designation of the Local Growth Zone in Croydon takes effect on 1st April 2018 and is established for 16 years.

8.2.4 The Executive Mayor has the power to exercise executive functions pursuant to s9E of the Local Government Act 2000 and has the power to delegate those functions. This report seeks relevant delegations to exercise executive functions.

8.2.5 The recommendations in this report are in accordance with the Council's Constitution and in implementing the recommendations, any officer decisions will need to adhere to the Decision Making Procedure Rules within Part 4G of the Constitution, the provisions of Part 4B of the Constitution in relation to Access to Information Procedure Rules including the publication, where required, of key decision notices and will need to adhere to the provisions of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules at 4C. The legal implications of each individual project will need to be considered as part of those individual decision papers.

8.2.6 Comments approved by Kiri Bailey the Head of Commercial and Property Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 22/11/2023)

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 A key priority for the Council is to work with our partners to make Croydon a safer, fairer and more inclusive place for all our communities. One of the Council's core priorities detailed in Equality Strategy 2020 -2024 is to focus on tackling ingrained inequalities and the underlying causes of inequality and hardship such as structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice. Successful delivery of the Growth Zone interventions and projects outlined in this report will create more opportunities for Croydon residents and contribute towards greater equality and fairness by focusing on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough reducing tackling the underlying causes, of inequality and hardship, such structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice.

8.3.2 The Equality Analysis dated February 2022 found that the programme will have a positive impact for all protected groups that share protected characteristics. These include improved accessibility within the street environment and access to public transport, a cultural offer that supports routes to employment and training opportunities; and safe and reliable public transport and walking and cycling routes.

8.3.3 Though the Equality Analysis has identified positive impact in many areas, mitigation has been identified to minimise and plan for any negative impacts that may rise across characteristics throughout the life of the projects. The action plan will be reviewed and monitored.

8.3.4 Further Equalities Analyses are being undertaken for each individual Growth Zone projects as these progress through the design stages. However, these further analyses have not been concluded so cannot be considered at this stage. The Growth Zone programme governance sets out that individual work streams within sub-groups will ensure this occurs and where necessary action will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts on groups that share a protected characteristic.

8.3.5 Approved by: Naseer Ahmad for the Equality Programme Manager (Date 16/11/2023)

9. APPENDICES

9.1 None

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 February 2023 Annual Delivering the Growth Zone Report – 2023/24 Cabinet Paper – Item 17/17 - Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 22nd February, 2023, 6.30 pm | Croydon Council

10.2 January 2023 Whitgift Indemnity and Land Transfer Agreement (ILTA) Remedy – Item Item 13/22 - Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 25th January, 2023, 6.30 pm | Croydon Council

10.3 July 2022 - Cabinet to consider a report of Croydon's Levelling Up Fund bid Item 42/22 - https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=183&MId=2984

10.4 February 2022 - Growth Zone Equalities Impact Assessment - Microsoft Word - Equality Analysis Form_GZ_February 2022.docx (croydon.gov.uk) & 2022_02 Cabinet Delivering the GZ (croydon.gov.uk)

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:		**CABINET**
DATE OF DECISION		**31 January 2024**
REPORT TITLE:		**Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation Results**
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:		**Karen Agbabiaka Director of Streets & Environment**
LEAD OFFICER:		**Daisi Osibona Senior Engineer Network Maintenance Email: daisi.osibona@croydon.gov.uk Telephone: 020 8726 6000 x28265 / 07771843015**
LEAD MEMBER:		**Councillor Scott Roche Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment**
KEY DECISION? [9223EM]	**Yes**	**REASON: The Strategy will likely result in the Council incurring expenditure of more than £1,000,000 and is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Borough.**
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**NO**	**Grounds for the exemption: N/A**
WARDS AFFECTED:		**All**

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report is for the Executive Mayor to consider the amendments made to the draft LFRMS and 'Action Plan' as a result of the responses to the public consultation carried out between 22 June 2023 and 24 August 2023, and to seek the Executive Mayor's approval to adopt the revised strategy at appendix 1 and publish it on the Council website.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet, is recommended:

2.1 To note the responses to the public consultation about the draft LFRMS, at appendices 3 & 4 to this report.

2.2 To consider the amendments to the draft LFRMS and Action Plan as a result of those responses, as outlined at appendix 2 to this report.

2.3 To approve adoption of the revised LFRMS and Action Plan, at appendix 1 to this report, as the final version to be published on the Council website.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The reasons for the recommendations in this report is to enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the FWMA 2010, which places a responsibility on the Council as a LLFA to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 Following the extensive flooding in 2007, the government commissioned Sir Michael Pitt to conduct a review into the causes of the flooding and responses to it. The Pitt Review concluded that the majority of the properties which flooded were from local sources, that no one organisation had responsibility for local flood risk management and that there was no obligation on local authorities to co-operate and share information. The Review made ninety two recommendations and these were taken forward in the FWMA 2010.

4.2 The FWMA 2010 set new statutory responsibilities for managing flood risk and gives local authorities the lead role for managing local flood risk through the creation of Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) while the Environment Agency (EA) was given a strategic overview role.

4.3 The FWMA under Section 9 places a responsibility on the Council, as a LLFA to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management. The Act states that the strategy must specify;

a) the risk management authorities in the authority's area
b) the flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that may be exercised by those authorities in relation to the area
c) the objectives for managing local flood risk (including any objectives included in the authority's flood risk management plan prepared in accordance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009)
d) the measures proposed to achieve those objectives
e) how and when the measures are expected to be implemented
f) the costs and benefits of those measures, and how they are to be paid for
g) the assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy
h) how and when the strategy is to be reviewed
i) how the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives,

and requires it to be consistent with the National Strategy which was published by the EA (in July 2020) and provides a framework for guiding operational activities and decision making in flood and coastal risk management.

4.4 The LFRMS will form the basis on which the Council, as LLFA will manage local flood risk in the borough for the next 5 years. The Strategy aligns with the EA's National Strategy while being relevant at local level. Objectives and measures have been drafted in collaboration between Highways, Development Management, Spatial Planning, Corporate Resilience, Parks and Green Spaces, ICT Systems and GIS, Building Control and Environmental, collectively known as the LBC Flood Management Group. These objectives and measures:

- *will identify investment and funding opportunities for local flood risk management in Croydon*
- *ensures new development contribute to improving the resilience of places to flooding using nature based solutions*
- *ensures best practice in managing flood risk management assets*
- *helps residents and business owners with their understanding of flood risk, aids in their preparedness for flooding and helps make properties more resilient to the impacts of flooding*
- *enables sustainable growth while taking account of flood risk opportunities and challenges*
- *helps the Council be at the forefront of understanding current and future flood risk in Croydon improving flood risk management in the borough*
- *facilitate collaboration with other risk management authorities promoting a joined up approach to managing flood risk*

4.5 In July 2022, a draft LFRMS was prepared using the most up-to-date information available to the Council. This included national and local plans and strategies, legislation and policies for example the EA National Strategy, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP), flood investigation reports, Thames Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) and the Local Plan.

4.6 The Executive Mayor of Croydon granted approval to proceed with the publishing of the draft LFRMS for the purpose of a public consultation on 5 June 2023. The consultation was conducted online via the Council's GetInvolved Platform between 22 June 2023 and 24 August 2023, with 21 responses received from a target of 50. This target was based on the number of responses received in 2015 which returned a higher number of responses likely due to the severe flooding that happened in 2013/14. For context, the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond-upon-Thames received 13 and 23 responses to their LFRMS public consultations. The London Borough of Sutton received 20. Appendix 3 includes each of the individual survey responses received and appendix 4 is a summary of the responses received.

4.7 All responses to the consultation survey were reviewed and addressed where appropriate in the revised LFRMS. Some respondents made general comments or raised points about specific locations which were not appropriate to be addressed in the strategy. A response summary document which addresses or clarifies these points

has been drafted and is included in appendix 2. Appendix 2 also includes the survey questions, changes to the draft LFRMS as a result of the survey and actions to be taken to address comments received. This summary document includes a list of the survey questions, detail on changes made to the draft LFRMS and actions to be taken to address the comments received. It also includes is a summary of the consultation including an analysis of the results and actions.

4.8 The revised LFRMS and Action Plan includes actions and measures that will allow the Council meet the objectives of the strategy. These include actions that are both one off and ongoing and involve working with a range of partners including other risk management authorities, developers, infrastructure providers and community groups all of whom have an influence over flood risk and flood risk management.

4.9 Each of the actions have a lead Council service responsible for the action. In some cases, there are multiple services listed as the lead for a particular action. This will help foster a collaborative and consistent approach to flood risk management across the Council.

4.10 The LFRMS is required to be reviewed and updated every 5 years as a minimum. However, the Action Plan will be reviewed and updated quarterly at the LBC Flood Management Group meetings, to provide an update on the current status of the actions. The next review and update of the LFRMS will be 2028. However, the LFRMS and Action Plan may be updated before this date if:

- there are legislative changes that amend the roles and responsibilities of risk management authorities
- there are significant flood events or developments in funding availability or flood risk understanding that challenge the prioritisation process
- the continuous review of the Action Plan identifies that the objectives are not being met

4.11 The LFRMS was drafted in the period May to September 2022. The public consultation survey and communications plan was drafted in the period February 2023 to April 2023 with a presentation to the Cabinet Member taking place in May 2023. The public consultation ran for the period 22 June to 24 August 2023. Results from the consultation were analysed in September 2023 with the Cabinet Report drafted in October and November 2023. An update was provided to the Cabinet Member in November 2023 with the Report and appendices finalised and uploaded for CMT in November 2023.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 There were no other options considered.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 Section 9, item (6) of the FWMA states that “A lead local flood authority must consult the following about its local flood risk management strategy –

a) risk management authorities that may be affected by the strategy (including risk management authorities in Wales), and
b) the public

6.2 The risk management authorities (EA, Thames Water, Transport for London and neighbouring boroughs) were consulted via email on 1 March 2023 and 14 April 2023 and no comments were received.

6.3 A public consultation took place between 22 June 2023 and 24 August 2023 in which residents and business owners were invited to respond to a questionnaire on the ‘GetInvolved’ platform and provide additional comments on the draft LFRMS and appendices. The consultation was publicised via an update with a link to the survey on the Council website and regular Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts. It was shared into key Facebook groups and was retweeted by Councillors. It was also included in the YourCroydon weekly newsletters four times. Appendix 3 includes each of the individual survey responses received and appendix 4 is a summary of the responses received. Appendix 2 lists the survey questions, changes to the draft LFRMS as a result of the survey, actions to be taken to address comments received and an analysis of the survey responses.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 The LFRMS will contribute to Outcome 1 (Priority 3) by helping to facilitate partnership working and a collaborative approach to flood risk management in the borough. and 4 (Priority 4).

7.2 By managing the risk of flooding and better protecting businesses across the borough the LFRMS will help in the recovery of town and district centres and therefore contribute to Outcome 2 (Priority 1).

7.3 The objectives of the LFRMS will help the Council achieve Outcome 4 (Priority 4) by ensuring new development are resilient to flooding through the use of sustainable drainage systems in line with policy and guidance.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendation

The draft and revised LFRMS were developed using funding provided by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) This funding is not ringfenced for flood risk management in particular. Funding for flood risk management

can also be secured from various sources including EA Grant-in-Aid, Local Levy or Council capital funding.

8.1.2 The effect of the decision

There are no direct financial consequences to the Council by approving the adoption of the revised strategy. If approved fully costed programmes will be implemented, which will require funding through either council funding or external grants. This funding would be to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duties under the FWMA 2010. The scope of such programmes will be determined by the level of funding available.

8.1.3 Risks

Failure to approve adoption of the strategy may affect the Council's ability to attract funding for future flood alleviation measures from Central government and reduce its effectiveness in coordinating and commissioning flood alleviation measures in the borough.

There is the risk that the Secretary of State for risk management authorities may direct another risk management authority to carry out the LLFA functions and may order costs against the Council.

Failure to approve adoption of the strategy would also result in the Council not meeting its duties under the FWMA 2010 as LLFA.

8.1.4 Options

There is no option in the Act to delegate this function to another risk management authority.

There are opportunities to bid for government or external fundings. However, given the strict conditions that are usually attached to these fundings, they are not always guaranteed.

8.1.5 Future savings/efficiencies

Approving adoption of the final strategy would strengthen the Council's ability to attract funding for flood alleviation schemes and flood risk management.

Efficiencies will be realised as the Action Plan has been drafted with current resource in mind. Some actions are a one off while others are ongoing allowing Council officers to manage their workload.

When implemented, the actions will help with preparedness to a flood event and will mitigate the impacts of flooding. This will in turn mitigate against additional costs that will be incurred in response to a flood event.

8.1.6 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendation

This table below is a requirement unless the Head of Finance for your directorate confirms it is not needed.

	Current Year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast		
	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
Revenue Budget Available	377	377	377	377
Expenditure Income	0	0	0	0
Effect of decision from report	377	377	377	377
Expenditure Income	0	0	0	0
Remaining Budget	0	0	0	0
Capital Budget available	1,239	748	748	748
Expenditure Income	0	0	0	0
Effect of decision from report	1,239	748	748	748
Expenditure Income	0	0	0	0
Remaining Budget	0	0	0	0

8.1.7 Comments approved by Darrell Jones [Acting Head of Finance SCRER, Investment & Risk] on behalf of the Director of Finance and S151 Officer. (20/11/2023).

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 Section 9 the FWMA places a duty on the Council, as LLFA to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management. Another duty under the FWMA is that the LLFA must consult risk management authorities that may be affected by the strategy and the public. Failure to approve the strategy would mean that the Council are not meeting its duties as LLFA under the FWMA. As stated

under Section 5 above this could result in the Secretary of State directing another risk management authority to carry out the function and such a direction could include provision about the recovery of costs of compliance from the Council.

8.2.2 Comments approved by Sandra Herbert Head of Litigation & Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer. (09/01/2024).

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 The revised LFRMS has been developed to manage flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses across the borough which when it occurs would affect all protected groups. However, people with disability and/or of certain age group would be more affected by the impact of any flooding and the potential to recover. These impacts are always considered when completing flood risk assessments and applications to bid for funding to implement flood alleviation measures. Deprived communities tend to score higher in the cost/benefit calculations when government funding is being allocated for flood alleviation measures. An Equalities Analysis Form has been included at appendix 2.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.4 Human Resources Implications

8.4.1 There are no immediate human resources implications arising from this report. If any should arise these will be managed under the Council's Corporate Policies and Procedures.

8.4.2 Approved by: Jennifer Sankar, Head of HR Housing & SCRER Directorates, for and on behalf of Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer.

8.5 Environmental Implications

8.5.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process which identifies and evaluates social, environmental and economic objectives for the area in order to fulfil the requirements of the SEA (2001/42/EC) (SEA Directive). The SEA was used during the preparation of the 2015 LFRMS to evaluate options for achieving the flood risk objectives against wider sustainability objectives and remains applicable for this strategy. More information is included with objective 5 in the LFRMS. The full SEA and Habitats Regulation Assessment Reports are available on the Council website.

9. APPENDICES

9.1 1 (A, B & C) Revised LFRMS with Appendices

2 Summary and Analysis of LFRMS Consultation

3 Individual Survey Responses

4 Summary of Survey Responses

5 Equality Analysis Form

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 N/A

11. URGENCY

11.1 N/A

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Appendix 1A – Revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy:2023-2028

London Borough of Croydon

Draft Version 3

September 2023

CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk

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1 – Understanding Flood Risk

1.1 Introduction

There are an estimated 5.2 million homes and businesses in England which are at risk of flooding, this directly effects communities, businesses, and infrastructure situated within the borough of Croydon. With the effects of climate change due to exacerbate flood risk within the UK, Croydon LLFA is committed to meeting the challenge posed by increased flood risk and is taking actions to make its community more resilient to future flood risk.

In 2020, during the UK's wettest winter on record, Environment Agency flood schemes managed to protect 129,600 properties despite water levels being higher than the summer floods of 2007 where 55,000 properties flooded. The Environment Agency's 2020 National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (FCERM) for England has three core ambitions regarding future risk and investment needs. These focus on climate resilience, sustainable investment decisions and developing local peoples understanding of flood risk to create a nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding change (Environment Agency, 2020). This Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) will provide a key tool to managing flood risk in Croydon whilst aligning with the new national strategy.

1.2 Flood Risk Management Requirements

As a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Croydon Council have a legal duty under The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to develop, maintain, act, apply and monitor a LFRMS. The Act aims to reduce flood risk associated with increasingly extreme weather and climate change via local authority action. Furthermore, The Act requires flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development when exercising their flood risk management functions.

Table 1 below outlines these requirements and indicates where these are addressed in this Strategy.

The strategy must specify from The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 section 9 (4)	**Covered in this strategy**
(a)the RMAs in the authority's area,	Appendix B
(b)the flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that may be exercised by those authorities in relation to the area,	Appendix B
(c)the objectives for managing local flood risk (including any objectives included in the authority's flood risk management plan prepared in accordance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009),	Section 2 - Objectives
(d)the measures proposed to achieve those objectives,	Section 2 - Objectives
(e)how and when the measures are expected to be implemented,	Section 2 and Appendix C
(f)the costs and benefits of those measures, and how they are to be paid for	Objective 1
(g)the assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy,	Section 1.4
(h)how and when the strategy is to be reviewed, and	Section 3

The strategy must specify from The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 section 9 (4)	Covered in this strategy
(i)how the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.	Objective 5

Table 1 Requirements of the strategy

1.3 Roles and responsibilities for flood risk management

The Act recognises the following authorities as RMAs:

- LLFA i.e. Croydon Council
- The Environment Agency
- Water Companies i.e. Thames Water Utilities & Sutton and East Surrey Water (SES Water)
- Highways Authority i.e. Transport for London (TfL)

These RMAs have a duty to co-operate with each other when carrying out their flood risk management responsibilities.

The main RMAs within Croydon are Croydon Council as the LLFA, the Environment Agency which has a national and regional responsibility in coordinating flood risk management, SES Water and Thames Water as the water company and sewerage undertaker, and TfL as the Highways Authority. Through various forums such as the South West London Strategic Flood Group and the Croydon Resilience Forum, Croydon Council works with authorities such as TfL, neighbouring LLFAs, Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

Developers and riparian owners also have a role to play in flood risk management. Riparian owners are responsible for the management and maintenance of main rivers and ordinary watercourses as they own the adjacent land and are therefore deemed to own the land up to the centre of the watercourse. Private land and asset owners also have an important role to play in that they are responsible for managing risk on their property. The Council works with such parties, Housing Associations, City of London and Network Rail for example when required. The same applies to local flood groups or other organisations such as Thames 21, for example.

Appendix B shows the duties and powers upon specific RMAs and other authorities which are relevant to local flood risk management.

1.4 Assessment of flood risk

Signpost to Section 9 (4) requirements of The Act, this section deals with:

(g) the assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of strategy

This section sets out the assessment of local flood risk from main rivers, ordinary watercourses, surface water, groundwater and sewers and reservoirs as well as assessing risks associated with climate change.

Within the London borough of Croydon, there is no risk from tidal flooding, therefore this strategy will only focus on the sources of flooding listed above. Croydon's 2021 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) used modelling and analysis to predict the area's flood risk. The 2021 SFRA has been used to

identify high risk areas, incorporating climate change and urbanisation. It also provides information on flood depths and velocities to assess the likely impact. SFRA's and LFRMS of neighbouring boroughs of Merton, Bromley, Sutton, Lambeth, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge provide additional evidence of nearby risks which may affect Croydon. This information can be found on their respective council websites. The most up to date flood risk maps for Croydon can be found on the council website here, these are also shown in Appendix E. The Environment Agency's long term flood risk mapping is available here and provides information about the long term flood risk in a particular area.

Section 19 reports, developed under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, are the summary of investigations based on a specific flood event which outlines the details of the event, source(s) of the flooding and RMA responsibilities for its future management. Evidence gathered from Section 19 reports has been used throughout this section to highlight specific examples of historic flood events throughout Croydon.

Fluvial flood risk

Fluvial flooding occurs when river levels rise due to high quantities of or intense rainfall, resulting in rivers overflowing and bursting their banks. The Environment Agency define Main Rivers on their Main River Map and Croydon contains four of these main rivers; Wandle, Norbury Brook, Caterham Bourne and Chaffinch Brook. The Environment Agency is the risk management authority for main rivers. The Caterham Bourne main river led to significant flood events from January to March 2014 and throughout the winter of 2000-2001. During these events, high groundwater levels resulted in floodwaters receding exceptionally slowly. There are also records of several similar flood events throughout the 20th century when the Bourne was in flow. There are numerous incidents associated with the Norbury Brook from flood records dating back to the 1960s. These events were caused by overtopping in open sections and the surcharging of manholes and culverts in its culverted sections.

In 2021, the Environment Agency updated an existing dataset called the Risk of Flooding from Rivers and the Sea, which bands the risks into Low, Medium, and High categories. This dataset is readily available to the public to enable them to understand their own flood risk. This strategy uses the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) to determine future flood risk from rivers. This is used by Croydon Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), to make planning decisions in line with national legislation. The Environment Agency's most up to date Flood Map for Planning can be found on the Environment Agency website here.

The 2021 Croydon SFRA shows that 97.8% of its area is identified as Flood Zone 1 (Low probability of flooding from rivers) with 1.7% defined as Flood Zone 2 (Medium probability), and less than 0.5% of the area defined as Flood Zone 3a (High probability) and 3b (Functional Floodplain) (Croydon, 2021). According to the Environment Agency around 3% of all properties in Croydon are at risk of fluvial flooding, although 96% of these properties are in Flood Zone 1 where likelihood of flooding is low. In some cases, properties are protected by nearby flood defences as well as geological and topographic features (NEF, 2021) (Croydon Resilience Team, 2020). These flood defences within Croydon can be seen in Figure 8 Appendix E.

Flood Event Case Study

In August 2015, heavy rainfall in the south of the Borough overwhelmed and exceeded the capacity of the highway drainage network at the Purley Cross roundabout, causing the drainage system to surcharge, lifting manhole covers and leading to the rapid onset of surface water flooding across the roundabout.

Figure 1: Purley Cross underpass (Croydon,2015)

The deepest flooding was experienced in the pedestrian underpass beneath the roundabout (Figure 1), where it was reported to be approximately 1 foot (0.3m) below the underside of the bridge (2.7m clearance), an approximate depth of 2.4m. This flooding was reportedly exacerbated by failure of the pumping system in the underpass. Flooding was also reported on the surrounding road network, including the northern and western sections of the roundabout, causing travel disruption.

Ordinary Watercourses flood risk

Ordinary watercourses are watercourses managed by the LLFA, these include all rivers, streams, ditches, drains, cuts, dykes, sewer (other than public sewer) and passages through which water flows, above ground or below ground or culverted. Whilst the Environment Agency are responsible for the management of main rivers, Croydon Council, as the LLFA, are responsible for the management of ordinary watercourses. Figure 8 Appendix E shows the location of main rivers and ordinary watercourses within Croydon. Environment Agency records indicate that the mapped ordinary watercourses within Croydon, include the upstream section of Norbury Brook and the tip of the Beck, which flows into the neighbouring borough of Bromley. There are also several other ordinary watercourses which only flow when groundwater is high (Croydon, 2021).

Throughout Croydon, significant lengths of ordinary watercourse are culverted. These culverts have the potential to become blocked by debris and trash during periods of intense rainfall. This can restrict the flow of water through these watercourses, increasing the likelihood of localised flooding (Croydon, 2021). To reduce the likelihood of blockages, some culverts have trash screens at the inlet.

Flood Event Case Study

The Merstham Bourne, an ordinary watercourse near Coulsdon South Station, caused flooding to nearby residents' gardens in the winter of 2014. In January and February 2014, there was an increase of around 300% and 270% of the normal average rainfall for those months respectively. This event also caused disruptions to the nearby railway and nearby residents reported that lack of ditch and culvert maintenance led to the wider flooding of the area (Croydon, 2015). Specific details are outlined in the Merstham Bourne Flood Investigation Section 19 report.

Figure 2: Flooded gardens during 2014 event (Croydon, 2015)

Further asset information gathering and actions to address flooding from ordinary watercourses have been included in the action plan for this strategy to aid future management. These include actions focussed on clarifying riparian responsibility and mapping ordinary watercourses to better manage the associated risks.

Surface water and sewer flood risk

Surface water flooding is caused when intense rainfall creates surface runoff which flows over the ground and pools in low areas. This flooding occurs when the runoff exceeds the capacity of the existing drainage system. There are several areas which are particularly susceptible to surface water flooding. These include, Brighton Road up to Central Croydon via Purley and the A22 Godstone Road. Figure 11 Appendix E, shows these risks defined by the following risk levels:

- High Risk – Higher than 3.3% AEP
- Medium Risk – Between 1% and 3.3% AEP
- Low Risk – Between 0.1% and 1% AEP

Exceptionally high rainfall in August 2015 caused significant surface water flooding throughout Croydon. Short and intense periods of rain led to surface water runoff accumulating in low lying areas. The high intensity rainfall exceeded drainage capacity of road gullies and drain gratings. The rain gauge at Purley Cross recorded 56mm on the 24th August which almost exceeds the August monthly average rainfall for the area of 58.6mm (Croydon,2016). This event was determined to have a 2.63% AEP.

Surface water flooding can be managed by the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and landscaping to absorb and retain surface water, therefore minimising strain on the drainage system and sewers.

Sewer flooding is caused by the combined sewer and drainage network capacity being exceeded resulting in overflow from manholes. This may occur if the rainfall event overloads the capacity of the sewer and drainage system or if the network becomes obstructed by debris and sediment. Sewer flooding often results in localised short-term flooding. Historic sewer flood events can be seen in Figure 14 Appendix E.

Flood Event Case Study

In June 2016, rainfall caused significant surface water flooding in concentrated locations mainly in the south of the Borough and beyond in the catchment of the River Wandle (Croydon, 2017).

Figure 3: Surface water flowing onto Sites Hill Road

Figure 4: Surcharging manhole on Caterham Drive

The sewer network in Caterham Drive is a separated sewer for foul water only. Surface water drains via a separate network of gullies and soakaways within the highway. A survey conducted by Thames Water following this event found that there was spare capacity within the foul network in this area, however, surface water entered the foul system resulting in overcapacity. The surface water may have entered the sewer network for a variety of reasons including direct surface water ingress into the foul water network and/or accumulated permitted and non-permitted connections over the years (Croydon, 2017).

The surface water drainage network also reached capacity during this event causing surcharged highways drains and manholes. This suggests a network capacity issue, likely exacerbated by increasing demand and development throughout Croydon. For the last 65 years there has been a separated sewer system, however, the effectiveness of this system has been compromised due to misconnections. This makes it increasingly difficult for authorities to determine the capacity of the network. Furthermore, impermeable surfaces in the area have increased in recent years. This increases the surface water runoff to low-lying areas like Caterham Drive and therefore increases pressure on the drainage network.

As the sewerage undertaker, Thames Water are responsible for the management of sewer flooding although it is usually difficult to distinguish from surface water flooding. Croydon LLFA is working with Thames Water to identify flooding hotspots and system capacity issues. The risk from sewer flooding

in Croydon remains relatively low as Croydon is mainly served by separate foul and surface water sewers instead of a combined system. However, due to an increase in rainfall intensity and development, we may see a rise in sewer flood events in the future. The new Thames Water Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan sets out how wastewater systems and drainage networks will be improved and extended to ensure resilience against future pressures for the next 25 years.

Groundwater flood risk

Groundwater flooding often occurs after long periods of sustained high rainfall as a result of water rising up from underlying aquifers or springs. Groundwater flood events have been reported in Croydon, with regular hotspots primarily appearing on the land along the Caterham Bourne, Brighton Road and up to Norbury Brook (Croydon,2021). These events are often highly localised, usually affecting basements and gardens. In the south of the borough, the chalk geology increases groundwater flooding vulnerability on a larger scale through valley routes through Kenley, Purley and Coulsdon. Susceptibility to groundwater flooding throughout Croydon can be seen in Figure 12 Appendix E.

Groundwater flooding is difficult to predict as it may occur several days or weeks after heavy rainfall events and when river levels have receded. Existing groundwater monitoring takes place in boreholes which are placed in areas known to be at risk. This system can give notice days or weeks in advance of flood events. This early warning can be used to alert authorities, therefore allowing them to plan their response to potential groundwater flooding. There are measures that can be implemented to stop or minimise groundwater flooding but have varying degrees of effectiveness.

The Croydon Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) used a dataset derived from British Geological Survey, Environment Agency, and Defra groundwater datasets to create Figure 12 Appendix E. This map identifies areas where there is increased potential for groundwater to rise within 2m of ground level after periods of above average recharge.

Other sources of flood risk

Artificial flood risk sources and water bodies are not covered within the above categories, this typically includes reservoirs, canals and lakes. Croydon contains South Norwood Lake, an open reservoir located next to Bromley, and Russel Hill, which is a covered reservoir managed by Thames Water in the West of the borough. To date, there has been no recorded incidents of reservoir flooding within Croydon and the last recorded fatality linked to reservoir flooding in the whole of the UK was in 1925.

In 2021, the Environment Agency updated their reservoir flood maps which can be found here. This tool can be used to show where water is likely to go in the event of a dam or reservoir failure. An extract from this tool has been included in Figure 13 Appendix E to show the flood risk from South Norwood Lake and Russel Hill Reservoir. Figure 13**Error! Reference source not found.** Appendix E, s hows that if the Russel Hill Reservoir were to fail it would impact areas of West Croydon and Waddon veering west to follow the course of the River Wandle. The failure of South Norwood Lake would lead to flooding primarily in the London borough of Bromley, affecting areas of Penge, Elmers End and Beckenham.

Under the Reservoirs Act 1975, all large reservoirs must be inspected annually, supervised by a reservoir panel engineer. Croydon LLFA own and manage South Norwood Lake and are therefore

responsible for ensuring that inspections are carried out by a qualified panel engineer and that necessary safety work is completed to reduce the likelihood of a failure.

2 - Objectives

Signpost to Section 9 (4) requirements of The Act, this section deals with:

(c) the objectives for managing local flood risk (including any objectives included in the authority's flood risk management plan prepared in accordance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009)

(d) the measures proposed to achieve the objectives

The sources of flooding that carry the most significant risk within Croydon are considered to be surface water and groundwater flooding. High profile instances of groundwater flooding have been associated with the Caterham Bourne in the south of the borough. The area's most susceptible to surface water flooding are Brighton Road and Purley. These events threaten a significant number of homes, businesses and transport infrastructure as well as exacerbating other sources of flooding. The following objectives for managing flood risk aim to reduce the risk and impact of flooding within Croydon (Croydon,2021).

These objectives have been developed in line with the National FCERM Strategy for England. Each objective in this section will be achieved via its accompanying measures and actions which have been developed in line with the recent 2021 SFRA findings outlined in section one of this strategy.

The National Strategy is centred around 3 long-term ambitions which are based on future risk and investment needs to ensure resilience to the year 2100. These 3 core principles are:

- Climate resilient places: working with partners to bolster resilience to flooding and coastal change across the nation, both now and in the face of climate change.

- Today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate: making the right investment and planning decisions to secure sustainable growth and environmental improvements, as well as infrastructure resilient to flooding and coastal change.

- A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change: ensuring local people understand their risk to flooding and coastal change, and know their responsibilities and how to take action.

These core principles have been carried through each of the following 7 objectives within this strategy.

Objective 1

Identify investment and funding opportunities to develop and deliver a programme of flood alleviation schemes which will take forward innovative actions that help to bolster resilience to flooding and climate change.

Local flood risk management requires funding and resources from many different sources. To date, the primary funding sources have been provided through the central government. With pressures building on government funding in today's economic climate, there is a greater need for LLFAs to

finance local flood risk management activities and schemes from their own funding or to find alternative sources. Effective flood risk management requires new ways of working and funding based on collaboration across partner organisations to maximise investment return.

There are many ways in which central government funding can contribute towards local flood risk management, these are summarised in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Summary of LLFA Funding streams

Details of the allocation of Government funding to Croydon LLFA can be seen in Table 2.

Financial Year	Approximate Grant Allocation
2016/17	£217.5K
2017/18	£230K
2018/19	£235K
2019/20	£249K
2020/21	£267.5K
2021/22	£565K*
2022/23	£435K*

*Table 2 Defra funding allocation for LLFA duties to Croydon Council (*partially funded by Defra: combination of grant and LBC capital funding)*

It may be possible to fund some schemes using government funding alone, however, most projects will require multiple sources of funding to reach the required sum. Flood risk management projects are primarily funded by the following funding sources:

- National Government Funding – FCERM Grant in Aid (GiA)
- Regional funding – Local levy
- Local, Partnership and other funding (Organisations, Businesses, Borough & Parish Councils, residents)

FCERM GiA funding is the central government funding which is specifically for flood defence projects throughout England and it is administered by the Environment Agency on behalf of Defra. If the FCERM GiA funding doesn't cover the entire cost of the project, extra money can be raised through Partnership Funding. Partners can be anyone who benefit from an FCERM project such as; local businesses, residents and developers. The Environment Agency released the updated Partnership Funding Calculator tool in 2021 to help to estimate how much FCERM GiA funding a project is eligible for.

As the LLFA, Croydon Council are responsible for coordinating with other RMAs to address local flood risk. For example, Croydon LLFA engage with Thames Water who are responsible for upgrading the sewerage network to account for the effects of climate change and to prevent sewer flooding whilst also helping manage surface water flooding. Coordination with utility companies and property owners is also essential for local flood risk alleviation and resilience. If property owners and businesses benefit from a flood risk management project, they will be encouraged to provide a contribution. Furthermore, developers are responsible for managing flood risks in their building and landscaping design.

Croydon LLFA will capitalise on what has been achieved so far and will continue to learn lessons as highlighted in the case studies below. They will continue to improve the borough-wide understanding of current and future flood risk and use this to inform and prioritise a programme of flood alleviation schemes.

Croydon LLFA will look at innovative solutions that help to bolster resilience to flooding and climate change, identifying opportunities to achieve environmental net gain through de-culverting, natural catchment management and other measures. This will be done whilst exploring options to reduce the carbon footprint and environmental impact during the design, build and maintenance of flood alleviation schemes.

Croydon LLFA will explore opportunities to support the Infrastructure Delivery Plan by providing progress on various schemes that involve S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

This objective pays particular attention to the National Strategy target of 'making the right investment to secure sustainable growth and environmental improvements, as well as infrastructure resilient to flooding' (Environment Agency, 2020).

Funding Case Studies

GIA and Local Levy - Kenley Flood Alleviation Scheme – In April 2013, the Thames RFCC approved the first stage of a funding application (through FCRM GiA) to address long-standing localised surface water flooding problems in the Welcomes Road / Kenley Lane area of Kenley. A consultant was procured to carry out the first stage of refined modelling of the area alongside stakeholder engagement with local residents to develop an evidence base for detailed design of flood alleviation options in the area. Small scale drainage interventions which had the potential to reduce the frequency and impact of flooding at Kenley Lane without increasing risk to properties in Station Road were identified and these are programmed to be implemented by March 2023.

DEFRA Funding - Surface Water Modelling & Mapping – In November 2019, Croydon LLFA secured DEFRA funding to undertake detailed and up-to-date surface water modelling for two Critical Drainage

Areas (i.e. Caterham Drive and Purley Cross to River Wandle), for the purpose of updating the Environment Agency Risk of flooding from Surface Water (RoFSW) Mapping as part of the Boosting Action for Surface Water Programme. A consultant was procured to deliver the project and developed a detailed and integrated 1D-2D hydraulic model of the catchment to provide the necessary resolution and confidence in the prediction of flood depths and extent, commensurate with the requirements for the Environment Agency RoFSW. The project was completed and the outputs delivered to the Environment Agency in July 2020.

Council Funding - Flood Hotspot Alleviation Schemes – This is an ongoing programme which involves investigating the flooding mechanism in known flood hotspots within the borough and identifying viable small-scale interventions that could be implemented to alleviate the flooding or better manage the risks of flooding. These are flooding incidents that would not normally comply with the requirements of the FCERM GiA or Local Levy funding and are therefore funded from the capital budget provided by the Council for flood and water management activities. In 2022, flood alleviation works were completed in Lower Barn Road, Palace Green, Upper Shirley Road, Calley Down Crescent, Wolsey Crescent, with works programmed to be completed in Kenley Lane/Welcomes Road, King Henrys Drive, Norbury Crescent, Asmar Close and many more sites.

Measures

Measure 1: Continue to improve the borough-wide understanding of current and future flood risk, including the likelihood and consequences, and inform the prioritisation of flood alleviation schemes.

We will review and update the Surface Water Management Plan and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment using the newest available data. Furthermore, we will continue to undertake flood alleviation studies and prioritise alleviation schemes based on these and our understanding of current and future flood risk.

Measure 2: Develop a funding strategy which identifies investment and funding opportunities to develop and deliver a programme of flood alleviation schemes.

Croydon will monitor and update funding streams for flood alleviation measures to prioritise opportunities. We will also submit a business case for capital funding to implement small interventions and support the Infrastructure Delivery Plan by providing progress on schemes which involve S106 and CIL money.

Measure 3: Identify opportunities to achieve environmental net gain through de-culverting, natural catchment management and other measures.

Croydon will generate a list of potential locations for de-culverting as well as assessing and identifying the multiple benefits of de-culverting in these locations.

Measure 4: Explore options to reduce carbon footprint and environmental impact in the design, building and maintenance of flood alleviation schemes.

Council teams will be encouraged to attend the Environment Agency carbon calculator and reporting training to gain an understanding of our current footprint. Using this, we will be able to consider the

carbon footprint and environmental impact during all stages of a scheme and be able to realise the council's aspirations with regards to carbon reduction.

Measure 5: Identify innovative solutions that help to bolster resilience to flooding and climate change.

To achieve this, we will investigate and form a list of innovative solutions which will help to increase resilience to flooding and climate change within Croydon.

Measure 6: Investigate benefits and costs of different resilience actions and property level protections that could be effective in Croydon.

Croydon will collate a list of resilience actions and property level protection that could be effective in Croydon and perform cost benefit analysis on these actions. Following this, we will raise awareness of the different resilience actions and the outcome of our analysis.

Objective 2

New developments and regulated activities will contribute to making places more resilient to flooding using Nature Based Solutions where possible and achieving environmental net gain, today and in the future.

As well as managing existing flood risks, Croydon LLFA has a responsibility to ensure that new developments do not contribute to further flood risk. Since the Croydon 2015 LFRMS, work has been done both locally and nationally to tackle flood risk through planning. For example Policy DM25: Sustainable Drainage Systems and Reducing Food Risk, has been introduced as part of the Croydon Local Plan adopted in February 2018. The Local Plan states that developments should not increase the risk of flooding and that sustainable drainage systems should be prioritised (Croydon, 2021).

The London Plan also aligns with the idea of using Nature Based Solutions and achieving Environmental Net Gain within new developments. London Plan Policy 13 on Sustainable Infrastructure, states that development proposals should prioritise sustainable drainage and that this drainage should be designed to promote multiple benefits such as enhancing biodiversity and urban greening (Greater London Authority, 2021).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), provides Government guidance on Planning. The primary focus of this framework is to take full account of flood risk and to avoid developments increasing flood risk elsewhere and in the future. Importantly, this guidance highlights making use of natural flood management as an approach to flood risk management, safeguarding land that is or may be required for flood risk management and encouraging policies which consider cumulative flooding impacts in a more holistic approach (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021).

The NPPF also encourages Planning Authorities to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to ensure future resilience. The Local Plan is now under review and changes to the NPPF will be reflected in the revised policies. This offers an opportunity to maintain focus on using Nature Based Solution, such as SuDS, to make Croydon more resilient to flooding now and in the future, and to implement the national guidance and the objectives stated in this LFRMS.

This objective will contribute to the National Strategy long term ambition to ensure that 'today's growth and infrastructure is resilient to tomorrow's climate' (Environment Agency, 2020). As the local effects of climate change are uncertain, localised research is needed to greater understand the impacts of climate change (See section on **Climate Change)**. Sustainable development and drainage must be prioritised throughout the planning process in order to adapt to the effects of climate change and manage the increasing future flood risks.

Since the 2015 LFRMS, Croydon LLFA have identified additional resources to process SuDS applications as part of planning applications, reviewed workforce to meet SuDS obligations and created stronger ties between neighbouring boroughs by sharing their processes with the Southwest London Flood Group.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) provide a more natural approach to water management. They increase the resilience of drainage systems by controlling the rate and quantity of surface water runoff, therefore decreasing the impact of storm events on existing infrastructure. SuDS also have additional benefits such as improving water quality, providing green spaces and increased biodiversity. The higher levels of surface water runoff which are generated by new development and the associated increase of impermeable areas can be reduced by providing SuDS. This ensures that new development does not increase the flood risk of the surrounding area. Some examples of SuDs include soakaways, swales, green roofs, permeable paving, rainwater harvesting and detention basins.

Strategic Policy 6.4 in the Local Plan requires all developments, including refurbishments and conversions, to utilise SuDs to reduce surface run-off and to provide water treatment on site (Croydon, 2021). Croydon LLFA will work with partners and developers through the development management process to work towards provision of SuDS to fulfil the requirements of the Act.

Guidance for designing SuDS can be found within the CIRIA SuDS Manual and Defra's non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems. Croydon LLFA promotes its own SuDS guidance via its 2018 Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation Guide. This guide is intended for developers and SuDS designers.

As an LPA, Croydon LLFA is expected to ensure that planning policies and decisions include SuDS for the management of run off, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. As the LPA and LLFA, Croydon LLFA must also ensure that SuDS are operated to appropriate standards and that they are maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.

Developers who implement SuDS must provide evidence that their drainage systems do not increase groundwater levels and subsequent flood risk on or off site. This is particularly important for developments working within areas prone to groundwater flooding, as shown in Figure 12 Appendix E.

Measures

Measure 1: Ensure appropriate guidance for developers is available to make places more resilient, use Nature Based Solutions, achieve environmental net gain and promoting retrofitting SuDS.

We will review and update planning advice for major and minor developments to incorporate a list of appropriate nature-based solutions that will be effective to use in Croydon. In addition, we will develop specific SuDS related cost guidance and increase the awareness of these sustainable practice's borough wide.

Measure 2: Continue to monitor the risk of individual and cumulative flood risk to and from developments and review ways to facilitate more sustainable design and post-construction changes.

We will identify ways to increase awareness of flood risk to owners of developments and improve our understanding of flood risk to and from developments, in order to inform required changes to planning policy and guidance documents.

Measure 3: Ensure the technical review of SuDS applications including the use of Nature Based Solutions as part of the LLFA Statutory Consultee Role for planning applications.

We will quantify the resources needed to assess drainage strategies and flood risk assessments submitted as part of planning applications and provide the training needed to do so.

Measure 4: Monitor and record planning application against SuDS Hierarchy to ensure that nature-based solutions are prioritised.

We will develop a tracking system to monitor the number of applications for major and minor developments.

Measure 5: Continuous working with the Environment Agency, other partners, and other bodies (such as Association of Directors of Environment Economy Planning & Transport, Town and Country Planning Association and the Royal Town Planning Institute) to develop the planning skills and capabilities.

We will collaborate with our partners to develop and share good practice and knowledge including utilising national sources of information and guidance.

Measure 6: Identify and promote development-related funding mechanisms to support the delivery of flood alleviation schemes.

We will collate a list of potential developments to seek funding and explore how S106 agreement funding can be utilised to deliver flood alleviation schemes. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be updated annually with the progress on various schemes that involve S106 and CIL money.

Objective 3

Develop and implement best practice for recording, inspecting, and managing flood assets, considering the changing environment.

This objective focusses on the National Strategy Objective A to have the flood data and information available and accessible so assets can be managed effectively and efficiently and to help inform decisions made by RMAs (Environment Agency, 2020).

Data collection and the effective sharing of information is essential to the management of flood risk. Data should be collected and input to a common data environment which is stored and maintained properly. This data can then be easily analysed and manipulated within the corporate GIS system. Within Croydon, data is gathered in many ways for example, inspections, studies, and Section 19 reports when investigating flood incidents. Using robust data management, Croydon will be able to better manage assets and share knowledge both within Croydon and with its neighbouring boroughs.

In addition to the better management of existing assets, data management supports flood risk management by informing guidance such as the installation and maintenance of innovative flood management techniques. In 2019, Croydon collated all asset information into one system and with a target to use more sustainable drainage methods going forwards, a list of suitable SuDS systems will also be included. Highways drainage assets are also due to be added to the system.

Managing Highways Drainage assets

Highways drainage assets within Croydon are maintained via three methods; cleansing, repairing and pumping.

CLEANSING

- There is a cyclical gully cleansing programme in place where all road gullies are inspected/cleaned once a year (or 4 times a year in areas susceptible to flooding). Recently, we have included all linear drainage systems and footpath gullies to the programme. Gullies and linear drainage systems are also inspected/cleaned on an ad-hoc basis should they become blocked before they are due to be inspected/cleaned on the cyclical programme.
- There is a soakaway cleansing programme in place where all soakaways are cleaned/jetted once every 5 years (or more frequently in areas susceptible to flooding). Soakaways are also cleaned/jetted on an ad-hoc basis if there is a need to do so (i.e. after a flooding event).
- All other drainage assets (i.e. trash screen, ditch, culvert etc) are inspected/cleaned on an ad-hoc basis, mainly when a severe weather warning is issued by the Met Office.

REPAIRING

- Drainage assets that are identified as defective during the cleansing programmes are placed onto a repair programme where the defect is investigated, and repair works carried out as necessary.

PUMPING

- There is an inspection programme in place where general mechanical/electrical inspections and testing of all pumping stations owned by the Council are undertaken 4 times a year.

As a LLFA, Croydon Council have a duty to respond to and investigate significant flood events. For flood resilience to be maximised, local residents and communities must be informed and engaged in flood awareness and riparian owner responsibility. During a severe flood event, Croydon LLFA works with RMAs, the EA, emergency services and local flood action groups to coordinate a response. Appendix E – Croydon Flood Risk Maps contains maps which indicate flood risk in Croydon from the latest SFRA.

As an Open Data organisation, the Environment Agency makes its data readily available and free of charge. Environment Agency open data resources such as the Flood Map for Planning are incredibly valuable tools for Croydon to use and we aim to create similar open data sources for our neighbouring boroughs to use. Surface water and groundwater flood maps of Croydon are also published on the Council website and can be found here. Since the 2015 LFRMS, Croydon LLFA has improved its external collaboration by attending quarterly South West London Flood Group meetings and reporting progress to the RFCC representatives.

Flood investigation

Signpost to Section 19 of The Act: As a Lead Local Flood Authority Croydon Council have a responsibility to investigate certain flood incidents.

Local authorities: investigations

(1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate—

(a) which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and

(b) whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.

(2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must—

(a)publish the results of its investigation, and

(b)notify any relevant risk management authorities.

As outlined in the London Borough of Croydon Flood Investigation Protocol, investigations of flood events under Section 19 of the Act will be considered by Croydon LLFA for events which meet the criteria below (those which meet the criteria are published here):

Formal investigation:

- Fatality or serious injury as a direct result of flooding
- 3 or more residential properties flooded

Formal investigation likely:

- Depth greater than 0.10m over ground floor
- Critical infrastructure affected for more than 2 hours

- Internal flooding at a facility supporting vulnerable communities
- 3 or more commercial properties flooded
- Lasting effect on local environment and/or biodiversity
- Recurring incident (occurred at least 3 times in last 6 months)
- Requests for formal investigation from the public

Case study

In January 2014, high levels of rainfall caused groundwater levels in the Merstham Bourne area to rise rapidly. Whilst there were other contributing flood types such as surface and sewer flooding, groundwater was the predominant source of flooding during this event.

The groundwater in the underlying chalk geology rose to exceptionally high levels as a direct result of prolonged rainfall throughout the month. This led to the emergence of springs in the area, causing bournes to flow in Croydon. Furthermore, high groundwater levels led to the exacerbation of other flood types. For instance, surface water flooding was made worse by the lack of infiltration due to saturated soil from high groundwater levels. Fluvial flooding was also worsened as Mersham Bourne only flows at times of high groundwater level. The Section 19 report documented this flood event in detail and Croydon are able to use this to better manage flood risks in the future. The report investigated the effectiveness of the relevant RMAs and provided future recommendations as well as lessons learnt. In 2019, Croydon LLFA collated all asset information into one system to develop a comprehensive picture of their assets and associated flood risk.

Figure 6: Flooded Gardens from Merstham Bourne (Croydon 2015)

The early 2014 flood events and the consequent emergency response led to successful internal collaboration between Croydon LLFA and various authorities as reported in the Caterham Bourne Flood Investigation (Croydon Council, 2014). The flood event saw the formation of the Caterham Bourne Project Board which consisted of officers from Corydon, Surrey, Tandridge, Environment Agency, Thames Water and SES Water, who collectively were responsible for overseeing delivery of the Caterham Bourne Flood Alleviation Study. The Croydon Resilience Forum (CRF) are a group of multi-agency responders who provide a forum for an integrated and coordinated approach to

emergencies and potential risks throughout the borough. In 2020, the CRF created the Multi-Agency Flood Response Guidance which highlights the importance of data collection for example when a property or business is flooded to assist with flood warning work and defence operation.

Measures

Measure 1: Invest in developing and improving in-house information management to enable knowledge sharing between the different teams and externally

To achieve this, Croydon will collate all assets onto a single system and map all flood assets including ordinary watercourses on the corporate GIS system. We will also ensure that up to date flood maps and data are available and accessible to all users. In addition to this, we will improve inter-team collaboration for communicating flood issues in the borough with residents.

Measure 2: Raise profile and understanding of groundwater as a flood risk.

Croydon will develop a strategy for groundwater management within the borough and improve groundwater information on the council website in addition to developing an information leaflet for residents and businesses to raise awareness. This proactive response will be furthered by exploring the possibility of installing and monitoring boreholes in areas which are susceptible to groundwater flooding.

Measure 3: Collate and develop guidance on costs of installing and maintaining different SuDS types.

Croydon will raise awareness of the existing SuDS Design and Evaluation Guide as well as compiling a list of suitable SuDS systems and promoting their use on council schemes.

Measure 4: Develop a programme to assess the effectiveness and working conditions of all the Council's existing drainage infrastructure and put in place a robust maintenance/renewal programme that will ensure that the risk of flooding is reduced.

Croydon will review and improve existing gully cleansing programme to target the most silted areas. Croydon will also develop a maintenance programme for the footpath gullies and linear drainage assets within the borough as well as exploring the possibility of installing silt/water level monitoring sensors in hotspot areas.

Measure 5: Investigate flood events to understand their source and impacts and apply the learning to inform the Council's and other RMAs' flood management procedures.

Through carrying out many successful Section 19 reports, Croydon have been able to generate a better understanding of flood risk within the area. Croydon will continue carrying out Section 19 reports where appropriate and updating the flood incident register with new information. Croydon will also review and update the existing flood investigation protocol.

Objective 4

We will communicate effectively with infrastructure owners, businesses, and the community to ensure they understand the potential impact of flooding on their lives and livelihoods. They will therefore be better prepared to respond to flooding and will take action to make their properties more resilient to flooding and climate change.

This objective aligns with the National Strategy ambition to create a nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding through effective communication so that the Council, its partners, and the community can be better prepared and can increase resilience. Strategic objective 3.1 in the National Strategy focusses on effectively communicating the risks and consequences of flooding to communities and businesses (Environment Agency, 2020). In recent years, Croydon has been building strong relationships both internally between council departments, externally with its partners (Environment Agency, LLFA, Thames Water, TfL) and with the wider community.

Case study

In June 2022, the Mayor of London launched a flood awareness leaflet which was produced with inputs from local authorities. The leaflet was designed to help London residents with basement properties prepare for flash floods. The leaflet can be viewed by visiting London.gov.uk/flash-flooding.

Other documents such as the LBC Riparian Owner Leaflet provide the local community with information surrounding riparian responsibility to act as a flood risk management guide. This document summarises the roles and responsibilities for riparian owners in a way which is easily understandable (Croydon,2017). Furthermore, since 2015, Croydon has continued to encourage residents to sign up to the flood alert service through the flood responsibility webpage to ensure residents safety and encourage flood risk initiative within the community.

Croydon will ensure that all infrastructure and properties are more resilient to flooding and climate change, through fostering collaboration, effective communication and knowledge sharing.

To do so, Croydon will work with the other RMAs to:

- Identify areas within the borough which are at significant risk of flooding from combined sources.
- Understand how the assets are managed and maintained and identify common actions which could reduce the risk of flooding.
- Review asset records and agree ownership.

Croydon LLFA will work with Emergency planning to:

- Review existing emergency procedures and identify actions to take forward.
- Support the Emergency Resilience Team in developing flood plans.
- Undertake regular reviews of the flood plans to ensure they are fit for purpose, including undertaking regular drills to test them and update as necessary.

As part of the wider community engagement Croydon will:

- Support flood action groups and residents' association meetings.
- Expand the information available on the council website and available advice and guidance.
- Encourage residents and businesses to sign up to the Environment Agency flood warning service.
- Compile a list of flood alleviation initiatives that residents/businesses could implement privately or with wider support.

- Undertake regular surveys of watercourses to identify riparian owners, providing them adequate information about riparian owner responsibilities on the website and during flood action group/residents association meeting, and ensuring they understand their maintenance responsibilities.

Flood Response

Croydon LLFA will implement appropriate measures to mitigate any devastation caused by the event and to manage risk. These may include but are not limited to:

- Establishing temporary shelters and housing for evacuated persons
- Flood barrier construction and sandbagging
- Establish transport diversion plan to keep motorists away from flood waters
- Establish effective communication networks (website, Facebook, Twitter)
- Regular rainfall, river, groundwater and soil moisture monitoring
- Enabling over pumping to maintain water and sewer services
- Work with utility companies to prioritise protection of key infrastructure

After the flood event, Croydon LLFA will work with its partners to ensure normality is restored and that people, services and businesses that were affected by the event are able to recover as soon as possible. Croydon LLFA will investigate the causes of the flooding, lessons learned and form a proposal for potential changes such as:

- Altering flood plans
- Improving riparian owners' awareness of responsibility
- Improving communication with public surrounding property level resilience
- Identifying ways to reduce future flood risk
- Increasing maintenance operations
- Communicating risks with other RMAs

Measures

Measure 1: Review effectiveness of emergency procedures and ensure our capabilities are known throughout the council and our commissioned services.

To achieve this, Croydon will review existing emergency procedures and identify actions to take forward as well as circulating the emergency procedures with relevant teams.

Measure 2: Regularly liaise with Network Rail, Thames Water and other infrastructure owners to discuss areas where their infrastructure falls in Croydon's flood hotspots.

Croydon will engage with Network Rail, TfL and Thames Water to find solutions to the problems identified in the action plan. Furthermore, Croydon will identify and collate other problem areas within the borough relating to Network Rail and Thames Water assets and invite their representatives to the internal flood group meetings for further discussions.

Measure 3: Engaging with the public and improving digital communication to encourage resident led initiatives and provide an efficient warning system.

Croydon will expand the information available on the council website and make it more accessible and user friendly. Residents and businesses will be encouraged to sign up to the Environment Agency warning service and advice will be provided on how they could implement flood alleviation initiatives privately or community wide.

Measure 4: Identify riparian owners and raise awareness of their responsibilities.

Croydon will engage with owners of properties near watercourses to ensure they understand their maintenance responsibilities. Riparian owner responsibilities will also be promoted at flood action group and resident association meetings. Regular inspections will be undertaken to ensure adequate maintenance of channels and trash screens has been carried out.

Measure 5: Develop flood plans that better coordinate preparing and responding to incidents.

Croydon LLFA will liaise with the Emergency Resilience Team to develop flood plans and undertake regular reviews to ensure they are fit for purpose. Regular drills will also be undertaken to test the effectiveness of the plans and necessary adjustments will be made.

Objective 5

Enable sustainable growth by taking account of social, economic, environmental and flood risk opportunities and challenges.

Signpost to Section 9 (4) requirements of The Act, this section deals with:

(i) how the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.

Sustainable growth is essential for the longevity and prosperity of the borough. This includes many elements such as new homes, jobs, infrastructure, education, and health. With an increasing population, there is a current need for over 41,580 new homes alone in Croydon by 2039 (Croydon, 2021). The 2021 Local Plan Strategic Policy1.0D states that Croydon Council will support developments which can achieve sustainable growth while protecting and enhancing the borough's natural environment and built heritage. This strongly aligns with the National Strategy objectives of enabling sustainable growth in the right places, contributing to job creation, attract funding and providing resilient and sustainable infrastructure.

Since the previous strategy, Croydon LLFA adopted the Drainage Hierarchy as defined in the 2021 London Plan. This has also been incorporated into the Croydon SFRA and new developers guidance. A submission criteria document for developers submitting planning applications was finalised and published in 2019. This Advice to Planning Applicants document contains the requirements of the Drainage Strategy which should be submitted to support all major planning applications . Sustainable drainage systems are now required in all development and should meet the following requirements (Croydon, 2021):

- Ensure surface run-off is managed as close to the source as possible;
- Accord with the London Plan Sustainable Drainage Hierarchy;
- Achieve better than greenfield runoff rates;

- Be designed to be multifunctional and incorporate sustainable drainage into landscaping and public realm to provide opportunities to improve amenity and biodiversity;
- Achieve improvements in water quality through a sustainable drainage system management train; and
- Be designed with consideration of future maintenance.

The Level 2 SFRA provides an assessment of specific development sites and recommends measures involving SuDS to mitigate any identified flood risk in these sites.

Sustainability Assessment (SA)

The SA evaluates the impact that the Local Plan will have on wider sustainability objectives. SA is the process which identifies and evaluates social, environmental, and economic objectives for the area in order to fulfil the requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations which transpose EU Strategic Environmental Assessment into national law. The SA was used during the preparation of this strategy to evaluate options for achieving the flood risk objectives against wider sustainability objectives.

The following topics included in the 2022 SA have influenced this strategy:

-Air Quality	-Health	-Water
-Biodiversity	-Heritage	-Transport
-Climate Adaptation and Mitigation	-Housing	-Land and Soils
-Economy and employment	-Population and communities	- Landscape

The SA shows that Croydon Council's Plan is expected to have a positive impact on the environment in both the short and long term as it actively reduces and manages flood risk within Croydon. The Strategy objectives support the objectives outlined in the SA both directly and indirectly as they aim to improve knowledge and understanding surrounding sustainable growth as well as focussing on the high-level management on local flood risk (Croydon, 2022).

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The SEA is the process which identifies and evaluates social, environmental and economic objectives for the area in order to fulfil the requirements of the SEA (2001/42/EC) (SEA Directive). The SEA was used during the preparation of the Croydon 2015 strategy to evaluate options for achieving the flood risk objectives against wider sustainability objectives, and remains applicable for this strategy.

The sustainability objectives relevant to this strategy and determined by the SEA are listed below:

1. Protect and enhance human health and wellbeing
2. Raise awareness and understanding of local flooding and its dangers
3. Conserve and enhance biodiversity, wildlife corridors and habitats
4. Protect and enhance the water quality and hydromorphology of watercourses, WFD (Water Framework Directive) waterbodies and groundwater
5. Minimise the risk of flooding on existing and future key assets, infrastructure, homes and businesses

6. Manage and mitigate the future effects of climate change in new and existing development

7. Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings

8. Protect, conserve and enhance the quality, character and availability of open spaces and natural resources

The key findings of the SEA process are set out in the Environmental report for the previous Strategy. This outlines how the sustainability objectives and the identified measures are predicted to affect different environmental receptors. The SEA shows that Croydon Council's Strategy is expected to have a positive impact on the environment in both the short and long term as it actively reduces and manages flood risk within Croydon. The Strategy objectives successfully support the objectives outlined in the SEA both directly and indirectly as they aim to improve knowledge and understanding as well as focussing on the high-level management on local flood risk.

Measures

Measure 1: Establish the impact of planned growth on flooding hotspots/Critical Drainage Areas (CDA)

Croydon will update the existing or develop a new Surface Water Management Plan and review planning policies to establish the impact on planned growth. The LLFA will provide inputs to the planning application process to ensure that developments are steered away from areas identified as at high risk of flooding.

Measure 2: Identify how investments in flood resilience can minimise the local economic impacts of flooding, improve investor confidence and enable sustainable growth

A list of effective measures will be developed to identify alleviation methods in flooding hotspots and CDAs. This list will undergo a cost benefit analysis to produce a final list of alleviation methods which minimise the local economic impacts of flooding. A business case will be produced in order to raise the necessary funding.

Measure 3: Integrate long-term adaptive approaches into the spatial plans and growth strategies

To achieve this, Croydon will develop a list of long-term adaptive approaches whilst regularly reviewing spatial plans and growth strategies to ensure these approaches are included.

Measure 4: Delivering wider environmental objectives

Croydon will coordinate and monitor the actions included in objectives 1, 2 and 3 such as using Nature Based Solutions, identifying opportunities to achieve environmental net gain, and exploring options to reduce carbon footprint and environmental impact. This will ensure consistency and maximise the positive impact on the wider environment.

Objective 6

***Be at the forefront of understanding current and future flood risk in Croydon, contributing to and applying UK research and innovation on better understanding and managing flood risk*.**

To remain resilient to the increasing flood risk exacerbated by the effects of climate change, we must push forward our research and innovation to create a better understanding of flood risk management. As an outcome of the previous strategy, resources have been used to improve SuDS awareness across the council and to roll out technical guidance based on this research. Ongoing training sessions also took place between 2016 and 2018 which was provided to council officers who also attended internal SuDS workshops.

This strategy aims to further develop our understanding of flood risk for the benefit of our residents, neighbouring boroughs and to help create a nation which are ready to respond and adapt to flooding change. With a developed understanding, Croydon can better support communities and businesses to be resilient and if affected by flood events, to get back on their feet swiftly. In line with the new National Strategy, we want to take wider innovative actions that improve resilience to flooding such as those adopted by other local authorities throughout the UK.

Case study

In 2018, the London borough of Enfield funded a research project on evaluating the strategic long term financial benefit of retrofitting SuDS in London. The method used large-scale hydraulic modelling to provide evidence on the value of flood risk mitigation, therefore demonstrating the return-on investment across multiple beneficiaries such as residents and businesses. This project ultimately resulted in £750k of SuDS retrofit funding being secured, as well as demonstrating the feasibility of sustainable growth and innovation across London and the UK (Simon Ainley, 2018).

In 2017, Croydon LLFA conducted the Caterham Bourn Flood Alleviation Study which used computer modelling to develop flood alleviation options. They explored innovative ideas to integrate the groundwater model into the base model to maximise the accuracy of the results and a newsletter was produced to inform residents and businesses on the study's findings (Croydon, 2017). Initiatives such as these play a vital role in the effort to provide our residents and businesses with protection from flood risk whilst also protecting the environment.

Climate Change

Each year, climate change increases the likelihood of all types of flood risk. Our changing climate causes more intense and unpredictable weather patterns which put us at greater risk of flooding. The UK Climate Projections 2018 predicts that by 2080, winter rainfall could increase by as much as 20%. This greater intensity of rainfall events increases the risks of all forms of flooding mentioned throughout this report as well as flash flooding (Met Office, 2018). This means there is a great need to discover and implement new sustainable solutions through research and innovation.

According to recent figures from the Environment Agency's Climate Change Allowances Tool, Croydon LLFA should plan for an increase in peak rainfall amounts of 20% or greater and peak river flow increases of a minimum of 7% (Environment Agency, 2022).

Changes in climate can affect flood risk in many ways depending on the local conditions, topography and vulnerability. Increased rainfall will cause more surface runoff, therefore increasing localised flooding and erosion. As a result, there will be greater pressure on drainage and combined sewer systems.

Rising sea and river levels will increase flood risk due to the consequential increase in the water level of drains, sewers, and other connected watercourses. There is also an increased risk of groundwater flooding from limestone and chalk aquifers due to increased recharge during wetter winters.

Current emission rates means that climate change is inevitable to some degree. It is therefore essential that we plan ahead with the effects of climate change in mind. To adapt we must understand our current and future levels of vulnerability to flooding to ensure that resources are appropriately distributed. Regular updates, improvements and adherence to these plans is crucial to achieving long term sustainable flood resilience.

The SFRA Good Practice Guide provides information on how to ensure that developments are resilient to climate change whilst minimising the impact on its surroundings. To minimise flood risk, developments should be located in areas of low flood risk from all sources. Furthermore, the value of land which helps to manage flood risk should be respected, meaning, land, natural assets and infrastructure which contributes to flood risk management should be protected from development (Environment Agency, 2021). As outlined in Local Plan Policy DM25, developments that cannot be steered away from areas of high flood risk, developers must demonstrate the measures taken to mitigate the flood risk. The accompanying table in the Local Plan shows the various requirements to be completed for developments proposed in flood-risk areas (Croydon, 2021).

The National Planning Policy Framework states that developments should also support the transition to a low carbon future by reusing resources, converting existing buildings and encouraging renewables. Importantly, this guidance highlights the benefits of mixed-use developments, creating land for multiple uses such as recreation, habitat creation and carbon storage as well as flood risk mitigation. Section 10 of the NPPF states 'Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand' (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021).

Measures

Measure 1: Upskilling and training for staff on new innovations surrounding flood risk management.

Croydon will identify training opportunities which promote innovation and ensure teams across the council are made aware. Teams will also be encouraged to share knowledge. Regular online research will be undertaken to identify new innovative ideas surrounding flood risk management.

Measure 2: Monitor future updates and guidance on flood risk about UK Climate Change projections, planning and development design and flood risk management good practice, communicate these across the Council's teams and ensure policies and practices take account of them.

Policies and practices will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and any updates will be discussed at the internal flood group meetings with a focus on innovation and sustainable growth. `

Objective 7

Collaborate with Risk Management Authorities in and around Croydon to jointly manage flood risk.

Signpost to Section 9 (4) requirements of The Act, this section deals with:

a)) The risk management authorities in the authority's area and

b) The flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that may be exercised by those authorities in relation to the area,

As mentioned in section 1.3, RMAs are responsible for cooperating and providing a coordinated operation to jointly manage flood risk. Appendix B shows the different RMAs operating within Croydon, their function, and their responsibilities.

RMAs are responsible for carrying the common themes featured throughout this report such as biodiversity gain and sustainable growth. National Strategy objective 1.4 states that RMAs will use nature-based solutions and improve the environment through their investments in flood resilience. Through collaboration, RMAs will work with catchment partnerships in adjacent boroughs to coordinate a catchment wide approach.

Working collaboratively helps to deliver practical and innovative solutions as well as improving resilience to floods and droughts. In addition, catchments can span over more councils and a catchment-based approach can promote a healthy blue green environment which benefits residents and wildlife.

Case study

Partnership Approach - Caterham Bourne Flood Alleviation Scheme – In April 2014, the Thames RFCC approved funding for a catchment wide investigation and flood alleviation scheme for the Caterham Bourne. The application was led by Croydon LLFA in partnership with Surrey County Council and Tandridge District Council. In September 2014, a consultant was procured to carry out the first stage catchment modelling and feasibility which will investigate surface water and groundwater mechanisms in the catchment. The catchment study informed the most appropriate forms of flood management in both Tandridge and Croydon for maximum benefit to local residents. Due to the complex nature of the Caterham Bourne and a requirement of the consultant to be innovative in its approach, the study had taken longer than anticipated but in March 2020, Stages 1 & 2 of the study were completed and options that could be taken forward to the Outline Business Case (OBC) are being considered in Stage 3. The study is programmed for completion in March 2023.

Croydon will further this collaborative approach by pursuing work with the London Drainage Engineers Group (LoDEG). LoDEG promote best practice across flood risk matters whilst nurturing effective working relationships between RMAs within the 33 London Councils.

Measures

Measure 1: Work with multi-agency partners to enhance local arrangements for flood planning and response.

Croydon LLFA will identify the RMAs in and around the borough and determine the roles and responsibilities of these RMAs. Collaborations will be pursued through LoDEG to develop ways of anticipating and managing flooding.

Measure 2: Continue to meet regularly and work with the other five South West London Boroughs.

To achieve this, Croydon will ensure any issues are resolved within the South-West London Partnership meetings. Opportunities for jointly addressing cross border flood management, technical knowledge sharing and jointly procuring services will be identified.

3 – Strategy Monitoring and Review

Signpost to Section 9 (4) requirements of The Act, this section deals with:

(h) how and when the strategy is to be reviewed,

The Act requires Croydon Council as the LLFA to specify how and when the Strategy will be reviewed. Croydon LLFA will monitor their progress against the action plan quarterly at the internal flood group meetings. The action plan is provided in Appendix C – Action Plan . This will include the Council team responsible for each action, funding allocation, priority, status and comments.

This Strategy provides a key tool to managing flood risk in Croydon over the next 5 years. The strategy is therefore due to be reviewed in 2028 as a minimum requirement under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.

References

Caterham Bourne Flood Alleviation Study Update (Croydon, 2017)

Caterham Bourne Flood Investigation (Croydon Council, 2014)

Caterham Drive Flood Investigation Report – 7th June 2016 (Croydon, 2017)

Croydon Climate Crisis Commission Report (NEF, 2021)

Croydon Flood Investigation Report – 24th August 2015 (Croydon,2016)

Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances (Environment Agency, 2022)

Flood Risk Information V1.0 October 2020 (Croydon Resilience Team, 2020)

Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Croydon,2021)

Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Croydon, 2021)

London Borough of Croydon Riparian Owner Leaflet (Croydon, 2017)

London Borough of Croydon Flood Investigation Protocol (Croydon, 2013)

Local Plan (Croydon, 2021)

London Plan (Greater London Authority, 2021)

London Strategic SuDS Pilot Project (Simon Ainley,2018)

Merstham Bourne Flood Investigation S19 (Croydon, 2015)

National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021)

National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (Environment Agency, 2020)

Sustainability Appraisal (Croydon, 2022)

Strategic Environmental Appraisal (Croydon, 2014)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments Good Practice Guide (Environment Agency, 2021)

UK Climate Projections (UKCP) - Met Office (Met Office, 2018)

Appendix A – Legislative Context

Flood and Water Management Act 2010 – received Royal Assent on 8th April 2010. It gives local authorities responsibilities as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA):

Part 1 of the act requires all Lead Local Flood Authorities in England to:

•Develop, maintain, apply, and monitor the application of, a strategy for local flood risk from surface run off, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, in their area. The strategy must at least set out who the risk management authorities are in the area and their relevant functions, the authority's objectives for managing flood risk, as well as proposed measures to deliver the objectives, and timescales for implementation of the measures; how those measures are to be paid for as well as their costs and benefits, how and when the strategy will be reviewed, and how the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives. The Lead Local Flood Authority must consult affected risk management authorities and the public about its strategy and provide guidance on the application of the strategy.

•Investigate flooding incidents in its area and report on its findings.

•Establish and maintain a register of structures or features which may significantly affect flood risk in their area including information regarding ownership and state of repair.

•Contribute to sustainable development in the discharge of its flood risk duties.

•Assume the power to designate features with respect to flood risk and subsequently to act as responsible authority for such features.

Part 2 of the act gives local authorities new duties as "approving bodies" with regard to drainage including:

•Approving rainwater drainage systems before commencement of any construction works which have drainage implications •Adopting and maintaining approved systems which affect more than one property

•Approval of surface water drainage systems prior to connection to public sewers. (Automatic right of connection to public sewers is removed by this Act).

Part 3 of the act provides legislative powers for:

•Consolidation of legislation relating to flood risk including Water Industry Act 1991, the Water Resources Act 1991, the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Reservoirs Act 1975, the Highways Act 1980 (so far as relevant to water), the Environment Act 1995 (so far as relevant to water), the Public Health Act 1936 (so far as relevant to water) and the Coast Protection Act 1949.

•Provision of funding by Parliament to pay for expenditure under the Act

As Lead Local Flood Authority, the City Corporation is responsible for preparing and implementing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for the City. The Requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act with respect to this Local Flood Risk Management Strategy are set out in Table 1.

Local flood risk management strategies: England

(1) A lead local flood authority for an area in England must develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area (a "local flood risk management strategy").

(2) In subsection (1) "local flood risk" means flood risk from—

- (a) surface runoff,
- (b) groundwater, and
- (c) ordinary watercourses.

(3) In subsection (2)(c) the reference to an ordinary watercourse includes a reference to a lake, pond or other area of water which flows into an ordinary watercourse.

(4) The strategy must specify—

- (a) the risk management authorities in the authority's area,
- (b) the flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that may be exercised by those authorities in relation to the area,
- (c) the objectives for managing local flood risk (including any objectives included in the authority's flood risk management plan prepared in accordance with the Flood Risk Regulations 2009),
- (d) the measures proposed to achieve those objectives,
- (e) how and when the measures are expected to be implemented,
- (f) the costs and benefits of those measures, and how they are to be paid for,
- (g) the assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy,
- (h) how and when the strategy is to be reviewed, and
- (i) how the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.

(5) The strategy must be consistent with the national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England under section 7.

(6) A lead local flood authority must consult the following about its local flood risk management strategy—

- (a) risk management authorities that may be affected by the strategy (including risk management authorities in Wales), and
- (b) the public.

(7) A lead local flood authority must publish a summary of its local flood risk management strategy (including guidance about the availability of relevant information).

(8) A lead local flood authority may issue guidance about the application of the local flood risk management strategy in its area.

(9) A lead local flood authority must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State about—

- (a) the local flood risk management strategy, and
- (b) guidance under subsection (8).

Figure 7: Requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Section 9 Local flood risk management strategies: England

Appendix B – Responsibilities of RMAs and other organisations under The Act

Authority	Function	Responsibilities
Croydon Council	LLFA	• Strategic role in managing local flood risk sources (Surface water runoff, groundwater flooding and ordinary watercourses). • Maintain a register of flood defence structures and features which are likely to have significant effect on flood risk. • Investigate incidents of flooding and publish flood incident reports. • Since 2015, through the planning system, LLFAs have been a statutory consultee on all major development.
Croydon Council	Category 1 Responder	• Croydon Council is a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. • Responsible for ensuring that systems and processes are in place to provide emergency response to flooding. • The complex nature of flooding emergencies requires a widespread and prolonged response from multiple organisations; therefore, Croydon Council has created a Multi-Agency Flood Response Guidance document to allow all responding parties to collaborate on an effective coordinated response to severe flooding.
Croydon Council	Local Planning Authority	• Croydon Council has a responsibility to consider flood risk within strategic land use planning and the development of the Local Plan. • As the decision maker for flood risk for planning applications for development, Croydon Council must consider technical advice from other RMA's as consultees.
Croydon Council	Regulator of Ordinary Watercourses	• Under the Land Drainage Act 1991, any works (temporary or permanent) which may change or impact water within an ordinary watercourse will require consent from Croydon Council prior to any works being carried out. • Croydon Council have the power to notify riparian landowners along ordinary watercourses which require maintenance to reduce flooding and serve notice. • Croydon Council can serve notice on a person to rectify a nuisance related to an ordinary watercourse which is erected or altered without prior consent as required under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.
Environment Agency	Strategic and operational role	• Provide strategic overview for managing all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. • Responsible for managing flood risk from main rivers and the sea.

Thames Water	Sewerage Undertaker	• Responsible for provision and maintenance of the sewer network to reduce the risk and impact of flooding and pollution. • Responsible for the upgrade of sewer network to facilitate increased drainage capacity requirements. • Responsible for surface water drainage from development via adopted sewers. Since October 2011, water and sewerage companies are responsible for private sewers. These are sewers which were previously owned by the property owners. Despite this, not all private sewers were included. Further information regarding these exemptions may be found on the Thames Water website.
Transport for London	Transport infrastructure provider	• Duty to maintain its highways under the Highways Act 1980. This includes responsibility for drains, kerbs, road gullies, ditches and the pipe network which connects to the sewers.

Neighbouring council's such as Surrey County Council, Sutton, Merton, Lambeth and Bromley have similar responsibilities to Croydon Council as those listed above. In addition to RMAs, the local community and businesses have an important role in managing the local flood risk.

Authority	Function	Responsibilities
Residents	Property and riparian owners	• Responsible for flood resistance and resilience associated with properties. • Responsible for emergency and contingency planning associated with properties. • Responsible for protecting their property from flooding. • Riparian owners are responsible for maintaining flood defences on their property. • Riparian owners are responsible for maintaining the flow of water in watercourses on their property. Practical guidance for individuals to ensure their home is protected from flooding can be found on the Environment Agency website here.
Businesses	Property owners	• Responsible for ensuring that their activities do not lead to the obstruction of drains or watercourses. • Responsible for ensuring waste is correctly stored and disposed of.
Infrastructure Providers	Developers	• Responsible for considering how their assets and land may impact surrounding flood risk. • Must work with Croydon Council to identify multiple benefits of works and maximise added value. • Must prioritise sustainable drainage techniques and water conscious urban design.

Appendix C – Action Plan

Signpost to Section 9 (4) requirements of The Act, this section deals with:

(e) how and when the measures are expected to be implemented

Appendix D – List of Acronyms

AEP – Annual Exceedance Probability

CDA – Critical Drainage Areas

CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy

CRF – Community Resilience Forum

FCERM – Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

GiA – Grant in Aid

LLFA – Lead Local Flood Authority

LFRMS – Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

LPA – Local Planning Authority

LoDEG – London Drainage Engineers Group

RoFSW – Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

RMA – Risk Management Authority

SA – Sustainability Assessment

SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment

SES – Sutton and East Surrey

SuDS – Sustainable Urban Drainage System

SWMP – Surface Water Management Plan

TfL – Transport for London

WFD – Water Framework Directive

Appendix E – Croydon Flood Risk Maps

Appendix F – Summary and Analysis of LFRMS Consultation

Appendix 1B - LFRMS Appendix C - Action Plan						
OBJECTIVE		**MEASURE**		**ACTIONS**		**LEAD**
1	**Identify investment and funding opportunities to develop and deliver a programme of flood alleviation schemes which will take forward innovative actions that help to bolster resilience to flooding and climate change.**	1	Continue to improve the borough-wide understanding of current and future flood risk, including the likelihood and consequences, and inform the prioritisation of flood alleviation schemes	1	Review/update the Surface Water Management Plan using new data	Highways
				2	Review/update the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 &	Spatial Planning
				3	Continue to undertake flood alleviation studies where relevant, to better understand the flooding mechanism	Highways
				4	Develop a list of flood alleviation schemes of differing scales using the understanding of current and future flood risk	Highways
		2	Develop a funding strategy which identifies investment and funding opportunities to develop and deliver a programme of flood alleviation schemes	1	Monitor funding streams available for flood alleviation measures	Highways
				2	Develop a list of funding streams, types of applications required and dates for submission of applications	Highways
				3	Prepare/submit a business case to Finance for capital funding to implement small interventions	Highways
				4	Support the Infrastructure Delivery Plan by providing progress on various schemes that involve S106 and CIL money	Highways + Spatial Planning
		3	Identify opportunities to achieve environmental net gain through de-culverting, natural catchment management and other measures	1	Generate list of potential locations for de-culverting	Highways + Parks
				2	Assess the potential for multiple benefits of de-culverting in identified locations	Highways + Parks
		4	Explore options to reduce carbon footprint and environmental impact in the design, building and maintenance of flood alleviation schemes	1	Attend the EA carbon calculator and reporting training	All Croydon Teams
				2	Always consider carbon footprint and environmental impact during all stages of a scheme	All Croydon Teams
				3	Understand the council's aspirations with regards to carbon reduction	All Croydon Teams
		5	Identify innovative solutions that help to bolster resilience to flooding and climate change	1	Investigate innovative solutions that help to bolster resilience to flooding and climate change	Highways
				2	Collate a list of innovative solutions to help with resilience to flooding and climate change	Highways
		6	Investigate benefits and costs of different resilience actions and property level protections that could be effective in Croydon	1	Collate a list of different resilience actions and property level protections that could be effective in Croydon	Highways
				2	Investigate the benefits and costs of the different resilience actions and property level protections	Highways

				3	Raise awareness of the different resilience actions and property level protections	Highways + Development Management
				4	Undertake trial of the different resilience actions and property level protections to demonstrate their benefits, effectiveness, and costs	Highways
2	**New development and regulated activities will contribute to making places more resilient to flooding using Nature Based Solutions where possible and achieving environmental net gain, today and in the future.**	1	Ensure appropriate guidance for developers is available to make places more resilient, use Nature Based Solutions, achieve environmental net gain and promoting retrofitting SuDS.	1	Review/update the Advice to Planning Applicants for proposed major developments	Highways
				2	Review/update the Standing Advice used by the LPA for assessing proposed minor developments	Highways
				3	Investigate and collate a list of nature-based solutions that could be effective in Croydon	Highways
				4	Develop a guidance on the costs of installing and maintaining different types of SuDS	Highways
				5	Identify ways to increase awareness of SuDS and promote retrofitting of SuDS	Highways
				6	Ensure that all the information related to water/wastewater management plan is available online e.g.: -Surface water management plan – final report	Highways + Development Management
				7	Ensure that the borough's flood risk information needed for sequential tests is readily accessible online	Highways + Development Management
		2	Continue to monitor the risk of individual and cumulative flood risk to and from developments and review ways to facilitate more sustainable design and post-construction changes.	1	Continue to monitor the risk of individual and cumulative flood risk to and from developments	Highways + Development Management
				2	Identify ways to increase awareness of the flood risk to owners of developments	Highways + Development Management
				3	Improve understanding of the flood risk to and from developments, to inform necessary changes to policy/guidance documents	Highways + Development Management + Spatial Planning
				4	Explore ways to facilitate more sustainable design and post-construction changes	Highways
		3	Ensure the technical review of SuDS applications including the use of Nature Based Solutions as part of the LLFA Statutory Consultee Role for planning applications.	1	Quantify the resource time needed to assess drainage strategies/FRAs submitted as part of planning applications	Highways
				2	Provide training needed to assess drainage strategies/FRAs submitted as part of planning applications	Highways + Development Management

				3	Review employment or procurement needed to successfully deliver the LLFA Statutory Consultee role	Highways
		4	Monitor and record planning application against SuDS Hierarchy to ensure that nature-based solutions are prioritised.	1	Develop a tracking system to monitor number of applications (major & minor), types, date received, date responded, type of response etc	Highways
		5	Continuous working with the Environment Agency, other partners, and other bodies (such as Association of Directors of Environment Economy Planning & Transport, Town and Country Planning Association and the Royal Town Planning Institute) to develop the planning skills and capabilities.			
		6	Identify and promote development-related funding mechanisms to support the delivery of flood alleviation schemes.	1	Collate a list of potential developments to seek for funding	Highways + Development Management
				2	Explore how S106 agreement funding can be utilised to deliver flood alleviation schemes	Highways + Development Management
3	**Develop and implement best practice for recording, inspecting and managing flood assets, considering the changing environment**	1	Invest in developing and improving in-house information management to enable knowledge sharing between the different teams and externally	1	Create an inventory of the asset information held by the council and the format	Highways
				2	Collate all assets into a single system i.e. Confirm OnDemand	Highways + ICT
				3	Map all flood assets including ordinary watercourses in the corporate GIS system	Highways + ICT
				4	Develop a system for the Contact Centre/Technical Support to better record the different types of flooding	Highways
				5	Ensure that the most up-to-date flood maps/data are available or accessible to all users	Highways
				6	Provide inputs for producing the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that supports the local plan	Spatial Planning
				7	Improve inter-team collaboration for communicating flood issues in the borough with the residents	Highways + Spatial Planning + Emergency Planning
		2	Raise profile and understanding of groundwater as a flood risk	1	Ensure emergency planning procedures consider response to groundwater events	Emergency Planning
				2	Develop a strategy for groundwater management within the borough	Highways
				3	Carry out detailed study of groundwater presence and flood mechanisms in Croydon	Highways
				4	Sign up to receive groundwater information from the Environment Agency especially, in relation to the Caterham Bourne	Highways + Development Management

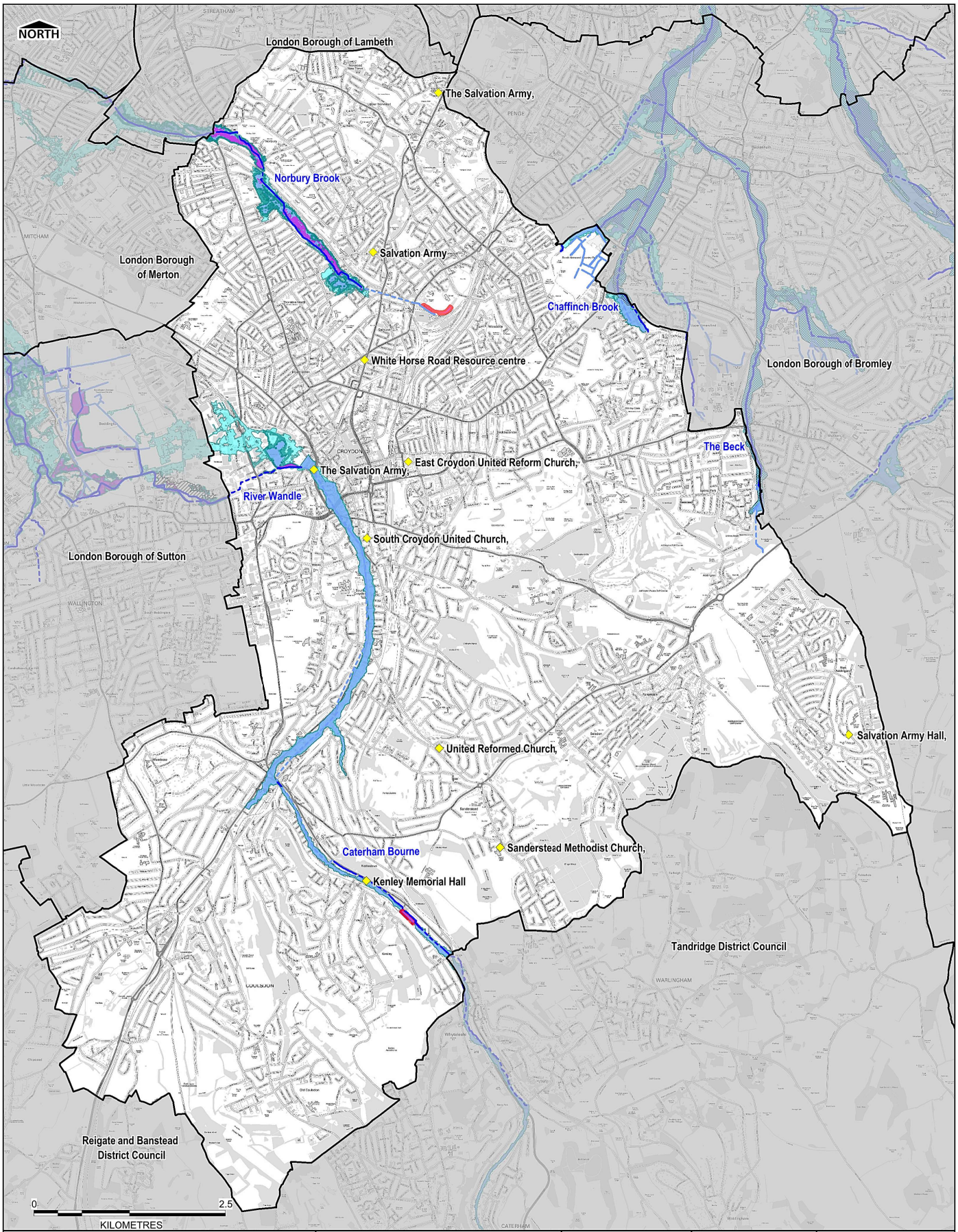
				5	Improve groundwater information on the council website and develop a leaflet/flyer for residents/businesses	Highways
				6	Explore the possibility of installing monitoring boreholes in areas susceptible to severe groundwater flooding within the borough	Highways
				7	Engage with SES Water to provide borehole data from Kenley Water Treatment Works	Highways
		3	Collate and develop guidance on costs of installing and maintaining different SuDS types	1	Raise aware of the SuDS Design and Evaluation Guide on the council website	Highways + Development Management
				2	Identify and compile a list of SuDS systems that are suitable for implementation in Croydon	Highways
				3	Develop guidance on the costs of installing and maintaining different types of SuDS	Highways
				4	Provide regular training about SuDS systems and its benefits -	Highways
				5	Promote the use SuDS systems within schemes implemented by the council i.e. highways, parks, public realm, housing etc	All Croydon Teams
		4	Develop a programme to assess the effectiveness and working conditions of all the Council's existing drainage infrastructure, and put in place a robust maintenance/renewal programme that will ensure that the risk of flooding is reduced	1	Review/improve existing cyclical gully cleansing programme, targeting most silted and hotspot areas	Highways
				2	Develop a Confined Space Programme to target drainage assets in flood hotspot	Highways
				3	Develop a maintenance programme for the linear drainage assets in the borough	Highways
				4	Develop a maintenance programme for the footpath gullies in the borough	Highways
				5	Continue to review/improve the gully repairs programme	Highways
				6	Explore the possibilities of installing silt/water level monitoring sensors in hotspots	Highways
				7	Review and work with the supplier of the gully management system to make improvements where necessary	Highways
				8	Develop a programme to replace damaged linear drainage systems with a robust product	Highways
		5	Investigate flood events to understand their source and impacts and apply the learning to inform the Council's and other RMAs' flood management procedures	1	Review/update the existing flood investigation protocol	Highways
				2	Continue to prepare Section 19 flood investigation reports where appropriate	Highways
				3	Continue to update the flood incident register with new information	Highways

				4	Share lessons learnt with relevant teams in the council and other RMAs	Highways + Emergency Planning
4	**We will communicate effectively with infrastructure owners, businesses, and the community to ensure they understand the potential impact of flooding on their lives and livelihoods. They will therefore be better prepared to respond to flooding and will take action to make their properties more resilient to flooding and climate change.**	1	Review effectiveness of emergency procedures and ensure our capabilities are known throughout the council and our commissioned services	1	Review existing emergency procedures and identify actions to take forward	Emergency Planning
				2	Circulate copy of the emergency procedures to relevant teams within the council	Emergency Planning
				3	Review and update emergency procedures on the council	Emergency Planning
		2	Regularly liaise with Network Rail,Thames Water and other infrastructure owners to discuss areas where their infrastructure falls in Croydon's flood hotspots	1	Engage with Network Rail regarding planned maintenance to their assets within the Caterham Bourne and Merstham Bourne catchments	Highways
				2	Engage with Network Rail and Thames Water with regards to finding a solution to the surface water flooding at Station Approach, Purley Oaks Road	Highways
				3	Engage with Thames Water and TfL to determine whether the sewer condition or affiliated assets are influencing flood risk in Purley Cross	Highways
				4	Engage with Thames Water with regards to agreeing ownership of the soakaway assets in the New Addington area	Highways
				5	Engage with Thames Water with regards to finding a solution for the foul sewer flooding on Kent Gate Way	Highways
				6	Engage with Thames Water regarding planned maintenance/upgrade to their surface water sewer network in hotspots/CDAs	Highways
				7	Engage with Thames Water regarding their DWMP Programme	Highways
				8	Identify/collate other problem areas within the borough relating to the assets of Network Rail and Thames Water	Highways
				9	Invite representatives of Network Rail and Thames Water to the internal flood group meetings	Highways
		3	Engaging with the public and improving digital communication to encourage resident led initiatives and provide an efficient warning system	1	Continue to attend flood action group/residents' association meetings	Highways

				2	Expand the information available on the council website	Highways + Development Management + Emergency Planning
				3	Encourage residents/businesses to sign up to the EA flood warning service	Highways + Emergency Planning
				4	Explore opportunities to make outputs from Datasphere & Hydromaster available to residents/businesses	Highways
				5	Promote available advice and guidance documents e.g. Thames Water, Environment Agency, Water UK etc	Highways
				6	Compile a list of flood alleviation initiatives that residents/businesses could implement privately or community wide	Highways
		4	Identify riparian owners and raise awareness of their responsibilities	1	Undertake regular surveys of watercourses to identify riparian owners	Highways
				2	Engage with owners of properties near watercourses to ensure they understand their maintenance responsibilities	Highways
				3	Undertake regular inspections to ensure that maintenance of the channels, trash screens and other related assets are being carried out	Highways
				4	Ensure adequate information about riparian owner responsibilities are available on the council website	Highways
				5	Promote riparian owner responsibilities at flood action group/residents' association meetings	Highways
		5	Develop flood plans that better coordinate preparing and responding to incidents	1	Liaise with the Emergency Resilience Team to develop flood plans	Highways + Emergency Planning
				2	Undertake regular reviews of the flood plans to ensure they are fit for purpose	Emergency Planning
				3	Undertake regular drills to test the flood plans and update as necessary	Emergency Planning
5	**Enable sustainable growth by taking account of social, economic, environmental and flood risk opportunities and challenges**	1	Establish the impact of planned growth on flooding hotspots/CDAs	1	Update the existing or develop a new Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP)	Highways
				2	Review planning policies to understand where growths are planned within the borough	Highways + Development Management
				3	Work with the LPA to ensure that new developments are steered away from areas identified as high risk of flooding	Highways + Development Management
		2	Identify how investments in flood resilience can minimise the local economic impacts of flooding, improve investor confidence and enable sustainable growth	1	Develop a list of potential measures that could be implemented to alleviate flooding in hotspots/CDAs	Highways

				2	Undertake cost benefit analysis of the measures	Highways
				3	Develop a list of flood alleviation measures that have been identified could minimise the local economic impacts of flooding	Highways
				4	Develop a business case for funding (both internal & external)	Highways
		3	Integrate long-term adaptive approaches into the spatial plans and growth strategies	1	Identify and develop a list of long-term adaptive approaches	Highways + Spatial Planning
				2	Regularly review spatial plans and growth strategies to ensure long-term adaptive approaches are included	Spatial Planning
		4	Delivering wider environmental objectives			
6	**Be at the forefront of understanding current and future flood risk in Croydon, contributing to and applying UK research and innovation on better understanding and managing flood risk**	1	Upskilling and training for staff on new innovations surrounding flood risk management	1	Identify training opportunities available (internal & external) and ensure teams across the council are made aware	All Croydon Teams
				2	Encourage knowledge sharing in teams across the council	All Croydon Teams
				3	Undertake regular online research to identify new innovative ideas surrounding flood risk management	Highways
		2	Monitor future updates and guidance on flood risk about UK Climate Change projections, planning and development design and flood risk management good practice, communicate these across the Council's teams and ensure policies and practices take account of them	1	Discuss any updates and guidance at the internal flood group meetings	All Croydon Teams
				2	Regularly review policies and practices to ensure these contain the most up-to-date information available	All Croydon Teams
				3	Develop a list of the policies and practices that should be regularly reviewed and identify the appropriate period for review	All Croydon Teams
7	**Collaborate with Risk Management Authorities in and around Croydon to jointly manage flood risk.**	1	Work with multi-agency partners to enhance local arrangements for flood planning and response	1	Identify the Risk Management Authorities with interest in and around Croydon	Highways
				2	Identify the roles and responsibilities of the Risk Management Authorities	Highways
				3	Pursue collaborations through LoDEG to develop ways of anticipating and managing flooding in London	Highways
				4	Organise a catchment wide working group for planning and research purposes	Development Management
				5	Continue to meet with groups (RFCC)	Highways
		2	Continue to meet regularly and work with the other five South West London Boroughs	1	Ensure Croydon's issues are resolved within the South-West London Partnership meetings	Highways
				2	Identify opportunities to jointly address cross border flood management	Highways
				3	Identify technical knowledge sharing opportunities	Highways

				4	Identify opportunities where services can be jointly procured	Highways



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- Main River (culverted)
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- Historic Flood Map
- Emergency Rest Centres

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- Flood Defences
- Areas Benefitting from Flood Defences

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The Flood Map displays the location of linear raised flood defences such as embankments and walls. Flood storage areas, land designated and operated to store flood water are displayed in a separate polygon layer.
Land that may benefit from the presence of major defences during a 1% fluvial or 0.5% tidal flood event. These are areas that would flood if the defence were not present, but may not flood because the defence is present. Areas benefiting from flood storage areas may be remote from the flood defence structure.
This map is intended to provide a strategic overview of local flood risk and should not be used to assess flood risk for individual properties.

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Version	FINAL	Scale at A3:	1:45,000
Drawn	CB	Checked	SL
Approved	EG	Date	23/10/2015

Project Title
LONDON BOROUGHS OF CROYDON, MERTON, SUTTON AND WANDSWORTH
LEVEL 1 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Drawing Title
FLUVIAL FLOOD RISK CROYDON

Client
CROYDON www.croydon.gov.uk
merton
Sutton
Wandsworth

Figure 8

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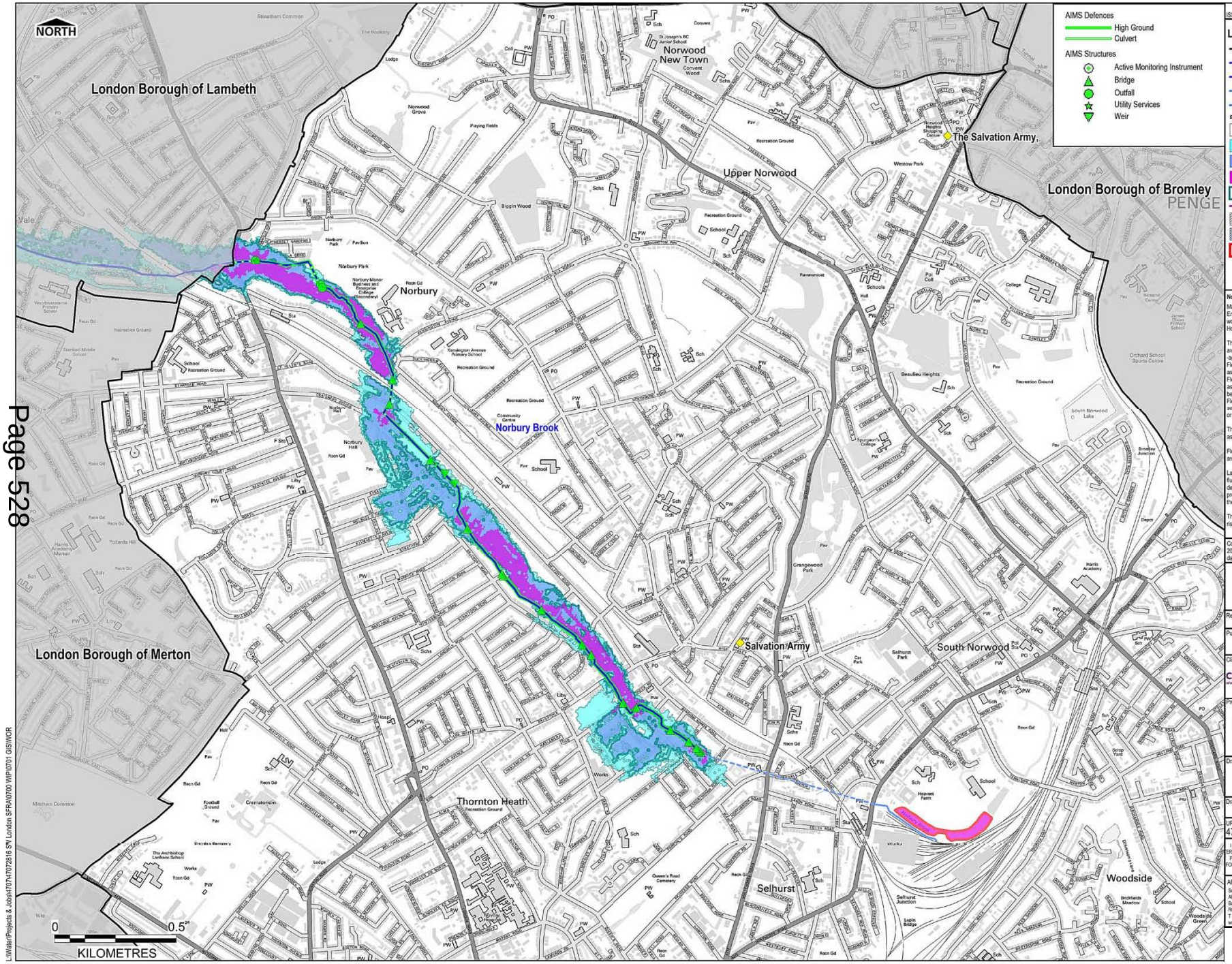

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This map is intended to provide a strategic overview of fluvial flood risk and should not be used to assess flood risk for individual properties.

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Revision Details	By	Check	Date	Suffix

Purpose of Issue: FINAL

Client: CROYDON www.croydon.gov.uk, merton, Sutton, Wandsworth

Project Title: LONDON BOROUGHS OF CROYDON, SUTTON, MERTON AND WANDSWORTH LEVEL 1 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Drawing Title: FLUVIAL FLOOD RISK AND AIMS FLOOD DEFENCES CROYDON

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Date
CB	SL	EG	23/10/2015

URS Internal Project No.: 47072816 | Scale at A3: 1:14,000

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Figure 9 | Rev 2

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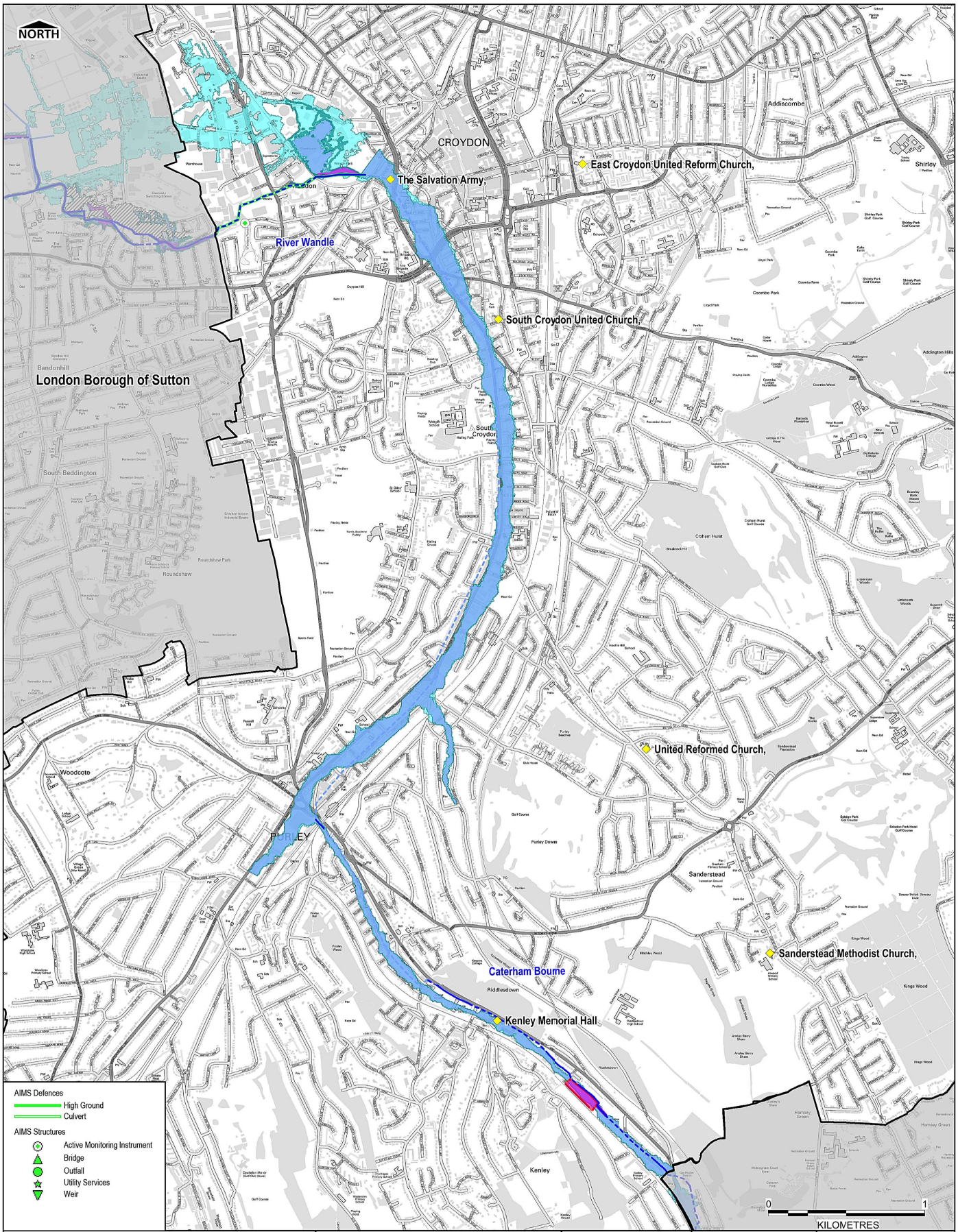

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Drawn	CB	Checked	SL
Approved	EG	Date	23/10/2015

Project Title
LONDON BOROUGHS OF CROYDON, MERTON, SUTTON AND WANDSWORTH LEVEL 1 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Drawing Title
FLUVIAL FLOOD RISK AND AIMS FLOOD DEFENCES CROYDON

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Sutton
Wandsworth

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Figure 10

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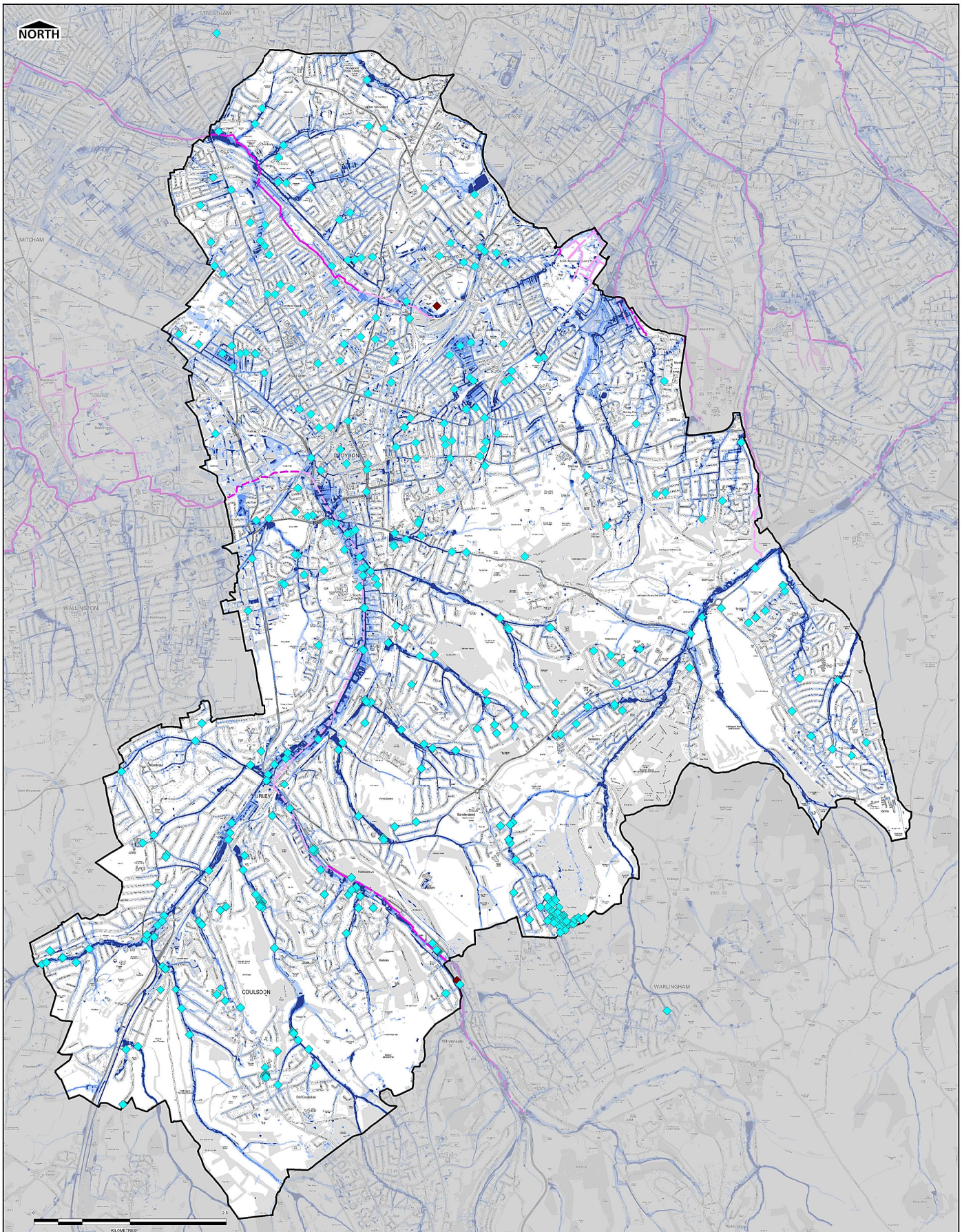

LEGEND

- Borough Boundary
- Main River (open)
- Main River (culverted)
- Ordinary Watercourse (open)
- Ordinary Watercourse (culverted)

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

- High Risk (3.3% AEP)
- Medium Risk (1% AEP)
- Low Risk (0.1% AEP)
- Very Low Risk (<0.1% AEP)
- Surface Water Flooding Records (Council)
- Multiple Source Flooding Records (Council)

NOTES This map shows the predicted likelihood of surface water flooding based on the Environment Agency's updated Flood Map for Surface Water (uFMfSW) data, which may be subject to further analysis in the future. Further information is provided on the Environment Agency website (www.gov.uk/environment-agency).

The Risk from Surface Water Flooding is divided into categories:
High: each year, the chance of flooding is greater than 1 in 30 (3.3%).
Medium: each year, the chance of flooding is between 1 in 100 (1%) and 1 in 30 (3.3%).
Low: each year, the chance of flooding is between 1 in 1000 (0.1%) and 1 in 100 (1%).
Very Low: each year, the chance of flooding is less than 1 in 1000 (0.1%).

The potential impact of surface water flooding can vary according to the depth of the water, and its velocity (speed and direction that it is flowing in).

Surface water flooding happens when rainwater does not drain away through the normal drainage systems or soak into the ground, but lies on or flows over the ground instead. This type of flooding can be difficult to predict as it is hard to forecast exactly where or how much rain will fall in any storm.

This map is intended to provide a strategic overview of surface water flood risk. It should not be used to assess flood risk for individual properties.

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Drawn	SL	Checked	EG
Approved	EG	Date	23/10/2015

Project Title
LONDON BOROUGHS OF CROYDON, MERTON, SUTTON AND WANDSWORTH
LEVEL 1 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Drawing Title
SURFACE WATER FLOOD RISK [CROYDON]

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Figure 11

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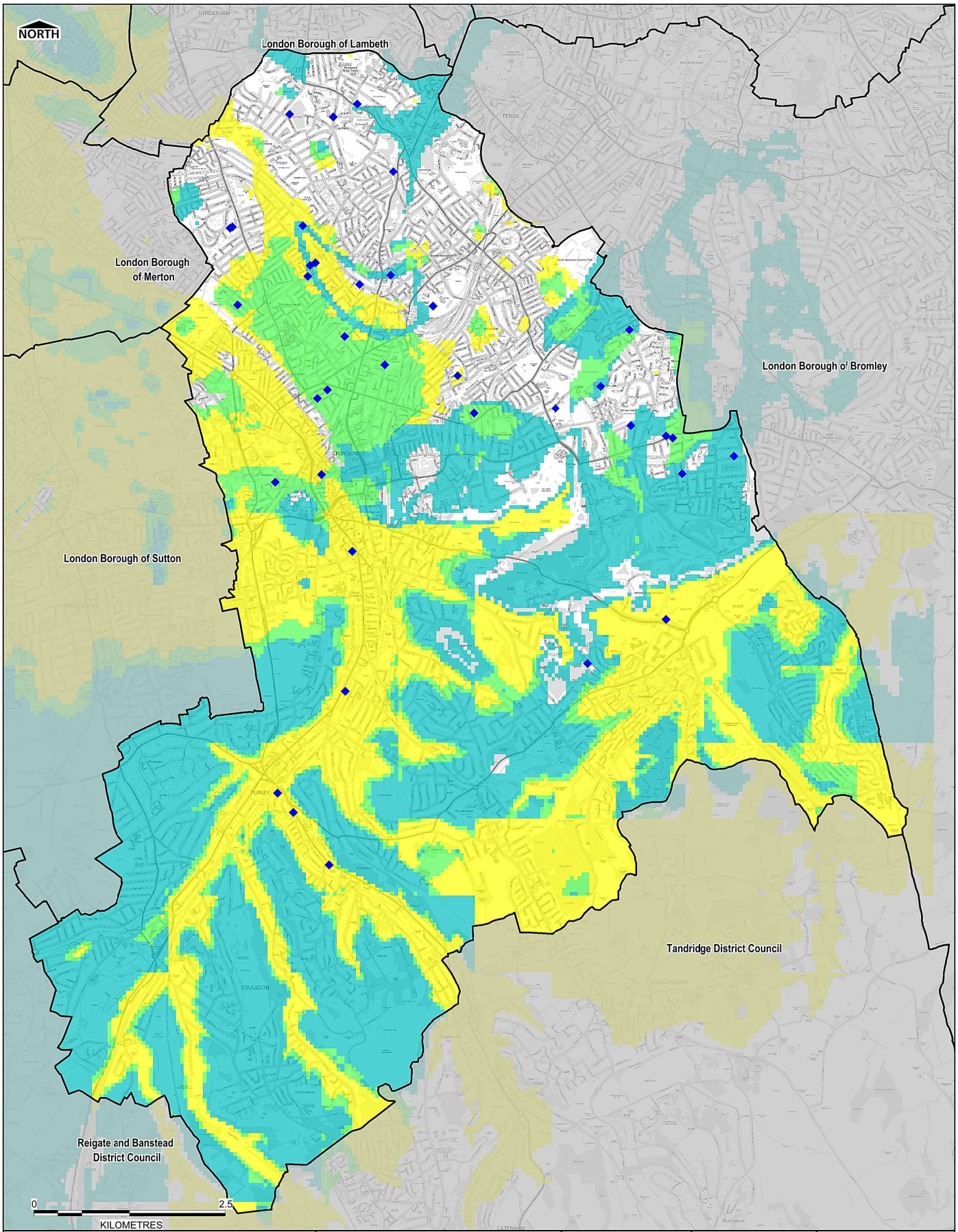

LEGEND

- Borough Boundary
- Groundwater Flooding Record (Council)

BGS Susceptibility to Groundwater Flooding

- Limited potential for groundwater flooding to occur
- Potential for groundwater flooding of property situated below ground level
- Potential for groundwater flooding to occur at surface

NOTES

Groundwater flooding (defined as the emergence of groundwater at the ground surface or the rising of groundwater into man-made ground under conditions where the normal range of groundwater levels is exceeded) is increasingly being recognised as a hazard. However, until the wet winter of 2000/2001 it had received little attention from the research community in the UK. Local knowledge of historic groundwater flooding events had generally been the only guide to an area's susceptibility to flooding. Unfortunately, local knowledge is patchy and can be unreliable and often groundwater flooding is not recognised as a distinct event, being masked by surface water floods. In response to the need for more information on groundwater flooding, BGS has produced the first national dataset on the susceptibility of groundwater flooding, covering England, Wales and Scotland.

The susceptibility data is suitable for use for regional or national planning purposes where the groundwater flooding information will be used along with a range of other relevant information to inform land-use planning decisions. It might also be used in conjunction with a large number of other factors, e.g. records of previous incidence of groundwater flooding, rainfall, property type, and land drainage information, to establish relative but not absolute, risk of groundwater flooding at a resolution of greater than a few hundred metres. The confidence dataset will help in this assessment. The susceptibility data should not be used on its own to make planning decisions at any scale, and, in particular, should not be used to inform planning decisions at the site scale. The susceptibility data cannot be used [illegible] to indicate risk of groundwater flooding.

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Drawn	CB	Checked	EG
Approved	EG	Date	23/10/2015

Project Title

LONDON BOROUGHS OF CROYDON, MERTON, SUTTON AND WANDSWORTH LEVEL 1 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Drawing Title

BGS SUSCEPTIBILITY TO GROUNDWATER FLOODING CROYDON

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Figure 12

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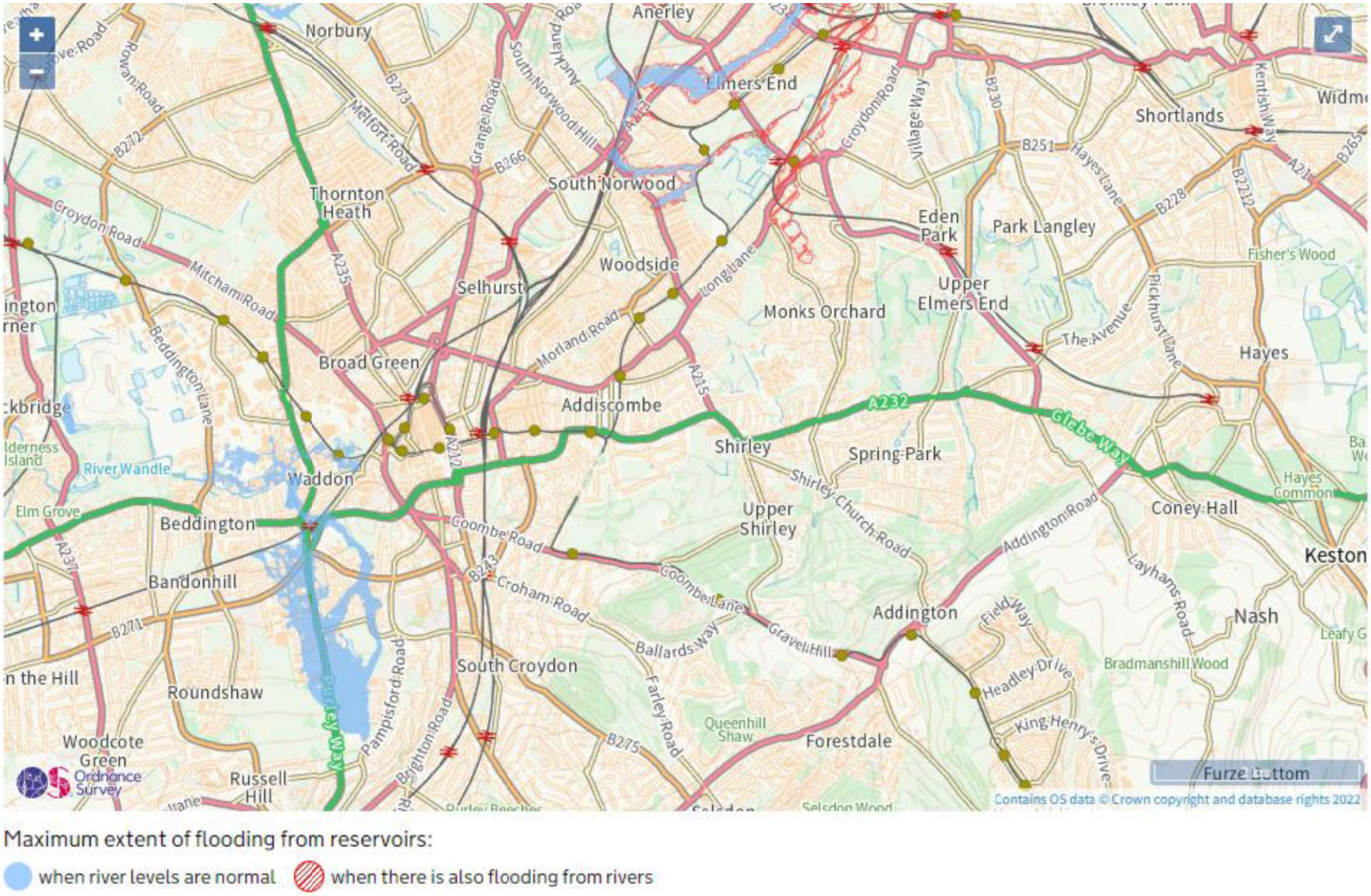
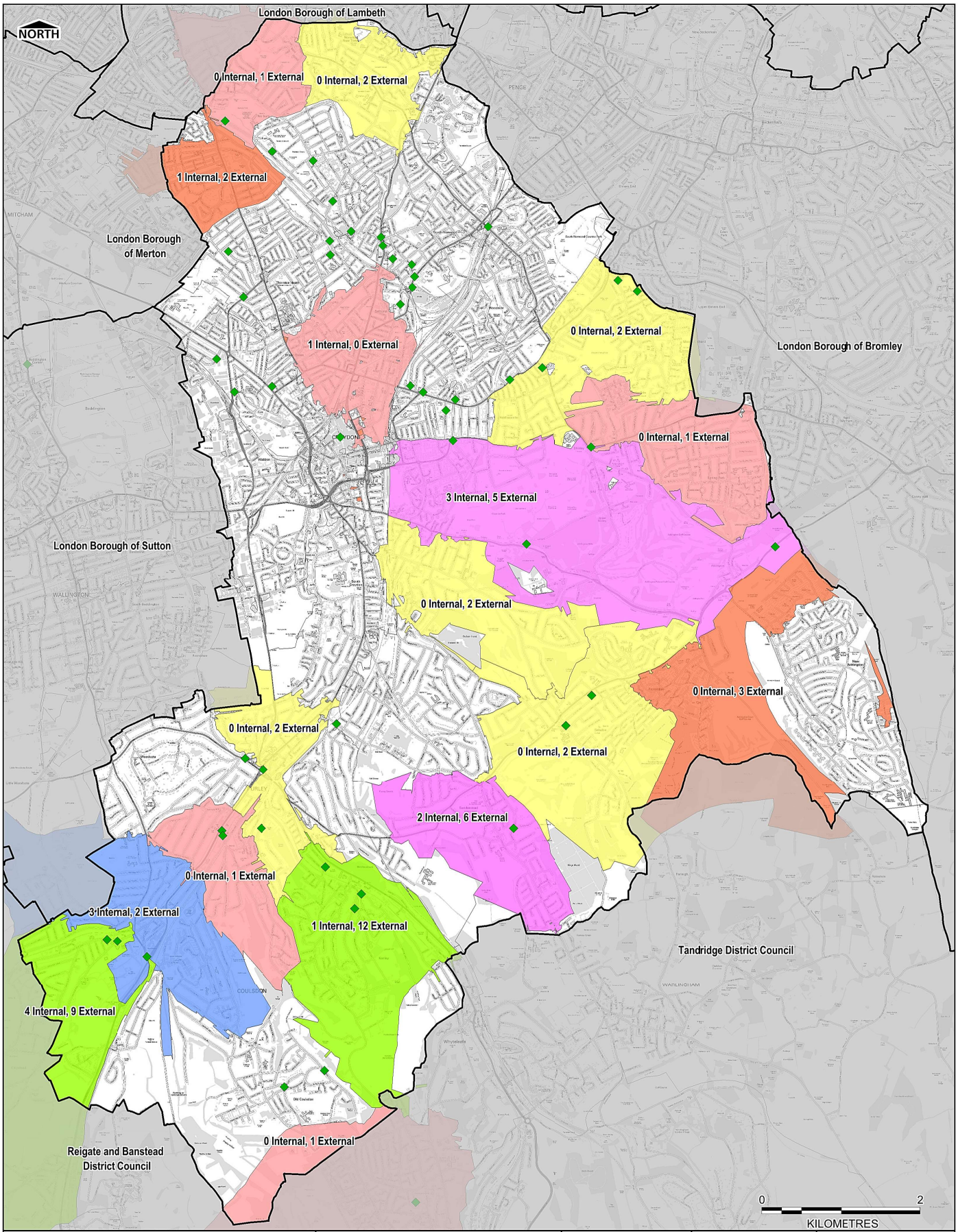


Figure 13 Croydon Reservoir Flood Map (Environment Agency, 2021)



LEGEND

- Borough Boundary
- Council Sewer Flooding Records

Thames Water Sewer Flooding Records

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 5
- 8
- 13

NOTES

Thames Water Utilities Ltd has provided an extract from their DG5 Register for the study area. Due to data protection requirements the data has not been provided at individual property level; rather the register comprises the number of properties within 4 digit postcode areas that have experienced flooding either internally or externally within the last 10 - 20 years. For the purpose of this study, records for the last 10 years have been used.

It should be noted that records only appear on the DG5 Register where they have been reported to TWU., and as such they may not include all instances of sewer flooding.

Furthermore given that TWUL target these areas for maintenance and improvements, areas that have experienced flooding in the past may no longer be at greatest risk of flooding in the future.

This map is intended to provide a strategic overview of areas at risk of sewer flooding and should not be used to assess flood risk for individual properties.

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Version	FINAL	Scale at A3:	1:43,500
Drawn	CB	Checked	EG
Approved	EG	Date	23/10/2015

Project Title

LONDON BOROUGHS OF CROYDON, MERTON, SUTTON AND WANDSWORTH LEVEL 1 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Client

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SEWER FLOODING RECORDS CROYDON

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Figure 14

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Appendix 2 – Summary and Analysis of LFRMS Consultation

1. Introduction

As Lead local Flood Authority (LLFA) the London Borough of Croydon (LBC) have a duty to prepare a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA). A LFRMS for the period 2023-2028 has been prepared. The LFRMS includes the following:

- flood risk management requirements
- relevant risk management authorities and roles and responsibilities
- an assessment of flood risk from multiple sources
- objectives for managing flood risk
- measures to achieve those objectives
- an action plan Summary of responses to consultation and proposed actions as a result

Another duty under the FWMA is that LBC must consult the public and other risk management authorities on the LFRMS. As such, LBC sought the views of its residents and business owners, and relevant risk management authorities, on the draft LFRMS. This consultation helped LBC improve its understanding of flood risk within the borough. The feedback received has been analysed and the draft LFRMS updated as a result. The results, analysis and actions as a result of the consultation are detailed in this document.

2. Methodology

Risk management authorities that may be affected by the strategy were consulted via email once the Strategy was drafted. This included neighbouring local authorities as LLFAs the London Boroughs of Merton, Sutton, Lambeth, Bromley and Surrey County Council. Transport for London, the Environment Agency and Thames Water were also consulted. To consult the public a survey was drafted on the GetInvolved platform. The survey went live on 22nd June and closed on 24th August. The survey was shared with Croydon residents and business owners via regular posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It was included in the weekly YourCroydon newsletter four times and a link to the survey was added to the Council website.

3. Findings

In total, 21 responses were received. Each response has been analysed including the comments received. Some have resulted in updates to the Strategy while others will be addressed through various actions. The results and analysis of the consultation, including actions identified, are detailed in this document. A summary of the questions and amendments to the LFRMS as a result of the responses received is included in Table 1. Section 4 includes more detail on the responses including comments received in the free text questions. Responses from the Council to each comment received are also included with actions identified to address each comment. To help with the analysis and determination of actions, the comments have been categorised into themes. The themes are as follows:

- cross team collaboration
- information sharing
- development
- third party
- localised flood risk
- educating
- resources

The next step for the LFRMS is that the consultation results will be presented to Cabinet. Once approved by Cabinet the LFRMS will be adopted and published on the Council website. Progress on the Strategy and action plan will be reported on at the quarterly LBC Flood Management Group meetings.

Question		Question type	Amendment to LFRMS
1	Are you completing this survey as a: (resident / business owner etc.)	Checkbox	No change.

2	Please select the Croydon ward you live in	Dropdown	No change.
3	Which Croydon ward is your business based in?	Dropdown	No change.
4	Which Croydon ward do you work in?	Dropdown	No change.
5	How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (main rivers / groundwater etc.)	Multiple Choice	No change.
6	If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why: (damage to private property / flooding of local facilities etc.)	Checkbox	No change.
7	Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:	Free text	No change.
8	How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?	Single Choice	No change.
9	Please explain why you disagree	Free text	No change.
10	How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?	Single Choice	No change.
11	Please explain why you disagree	Free text	Text added to stating that private land and asset owners are responsible for managing risk on their property. The text states that the Council works with such parties (e.g. Housing Associations and Network Rail) when required. Hyperlink to Appendix B added to text in Section 1.3.
12	How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?	Single Choice	A hyperlink to the Environment Agency's long term flood risk mapping has been added to Section 1.4.
13	Please explain why you disagree	Free text	As per question 12 above.
14	Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?	Free text	Text added to Section 1.3 stating that the Council works with other authorities through forums such as the South West London Strategic Flood Group and Croydon Resilience Forum. A line has been added to state that the Council works with local flood groups and other organisations when required. Some additions made to Appendix B to capture some of the suggestions.
15	How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?	Single Choice	No change.
16	If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?	Free text	No change.
17	How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?	Single Choice	No change.
18	If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?	Free text	Line added under Objective 3 with link to where flood investigations, which meet the criteria, are published on the Council website.
19	How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c	Single Choice	No change.
20	Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it	Free text	No change.

21	Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?	Free text	No change.

Table 1: Consultation Summary

4. Survey Results and Analysis

4.1 Informative Questions

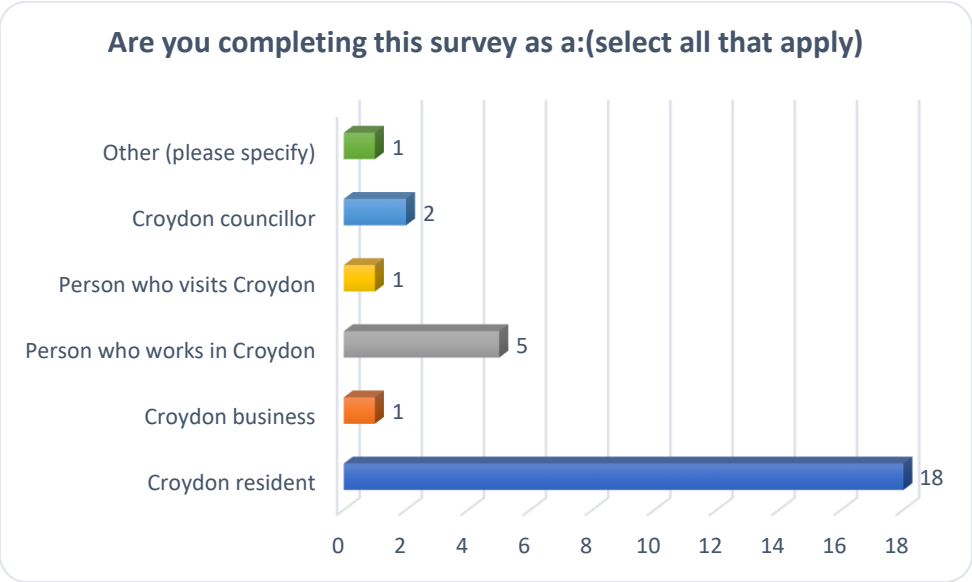

Figure 1: Question 1

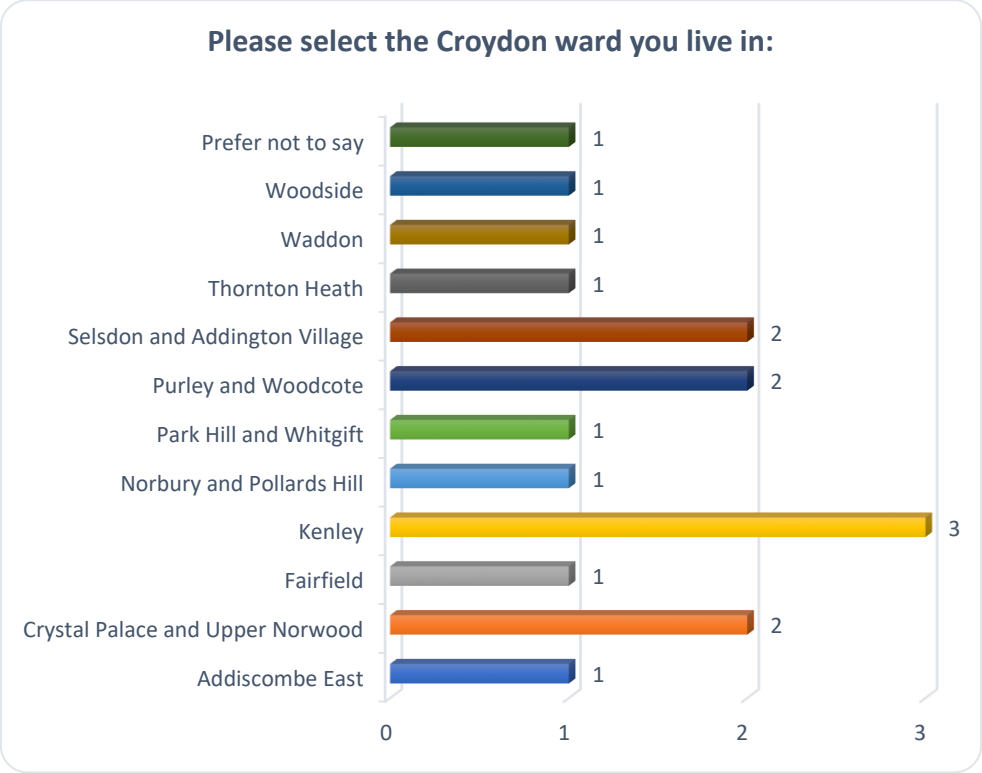

Figure 2: Question 2

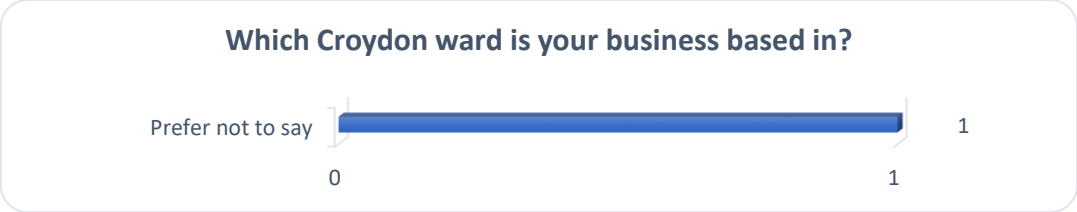

Figure 3: Question 3

Figure 4: Question 4

Results

The vast majority of respondents to the survey are residents of the borough with 18 responses. The next highest with five responses being those who work in the borough. The responded who selected 'other' was specified as a private road association. Respondents could choose multiple answers for question one, so it is likely there is some crossover in these results.

Of the respondents who live in the borough, 11 of the 28 wards are represented with one respondent who preferred not to say. The geographical spread covers the south west, west, central, south east, east and northern parts of the borough. One respondent did not wish to say in which ward their business is based in while three respondents work in Fairfield.

Actions

These questions are for information purposes only so no action is required.

4.2 LFRMS Section 1

Question 5 How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon (select all that apply)?

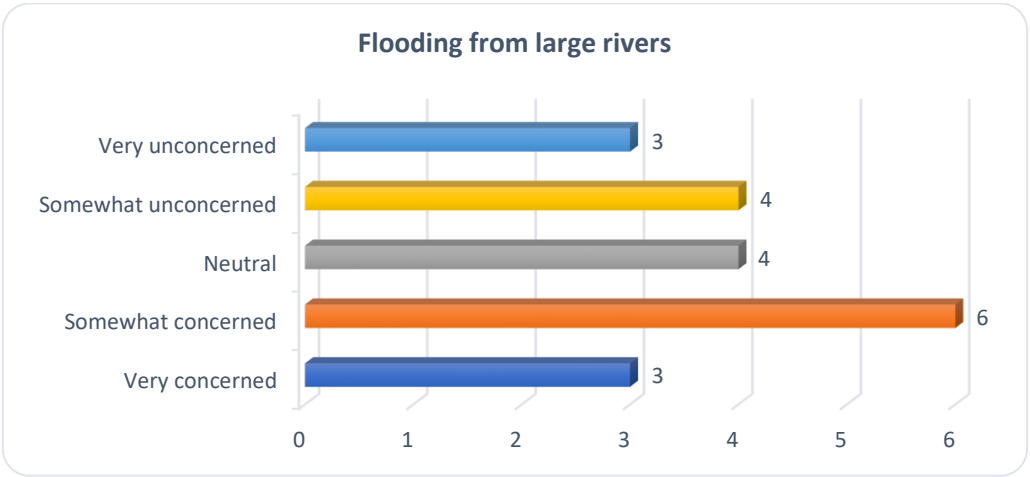

Figure 5: Question 5a

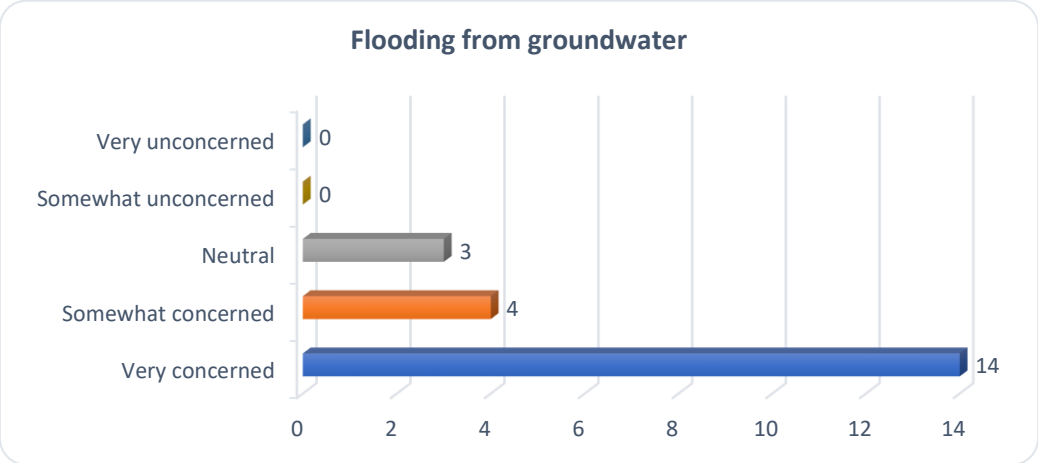

Figure 6: Question 5b

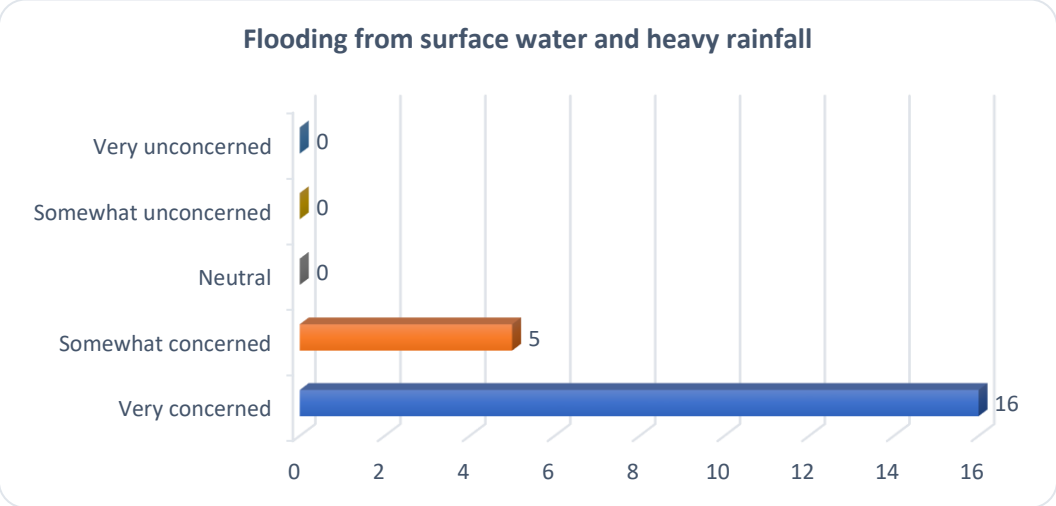

Figure 7: Question 5c

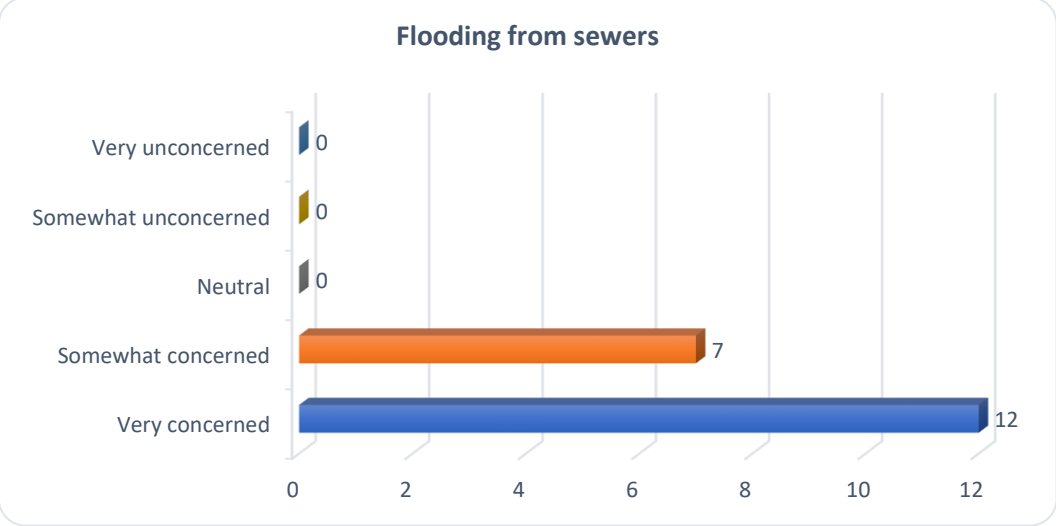

Figure 8: Question 5d

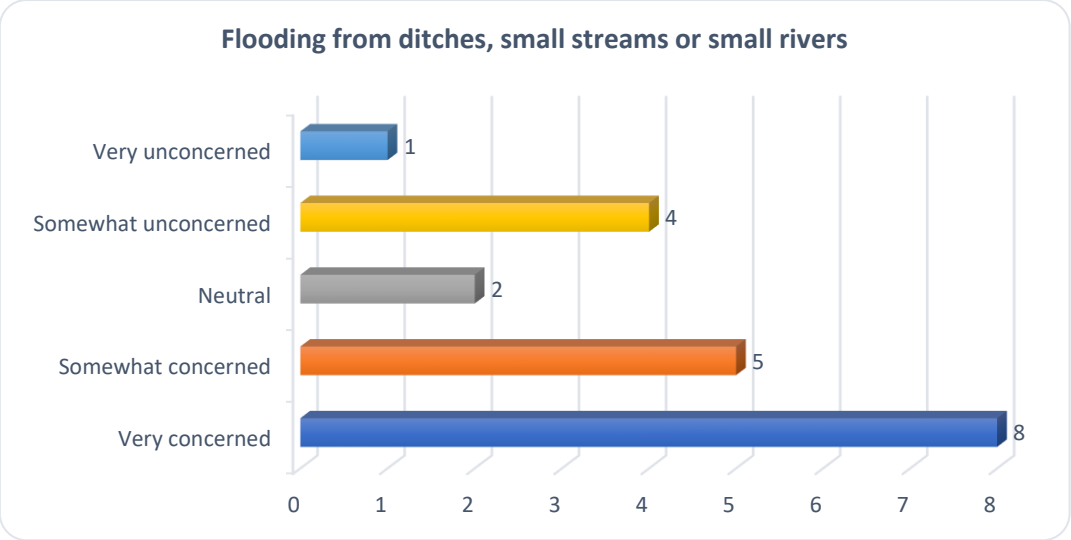

Figure 9: Question 5e

Results

Respondents are mostly concerned about flooding from surface water, sewers and groundwater. There is less concern about flooding from large rivers and smaller watercourses. All those who responded are either somewhat or very concerned about flooding from sewers and surface water. Three respondents were neutral on groundwater flooding with the remaining either somewhat or very concerned. While responses on watercourses are more spread out, the majority are still concerned about flooding from smaller watercourses. The distribution on flooding from large rivers is more even with 11 respondents either unconcerned or neutral with six respondents somewhat or very concerned.

Action

This question helps the Council better understand the types of flood risk respondents are most concerned about.

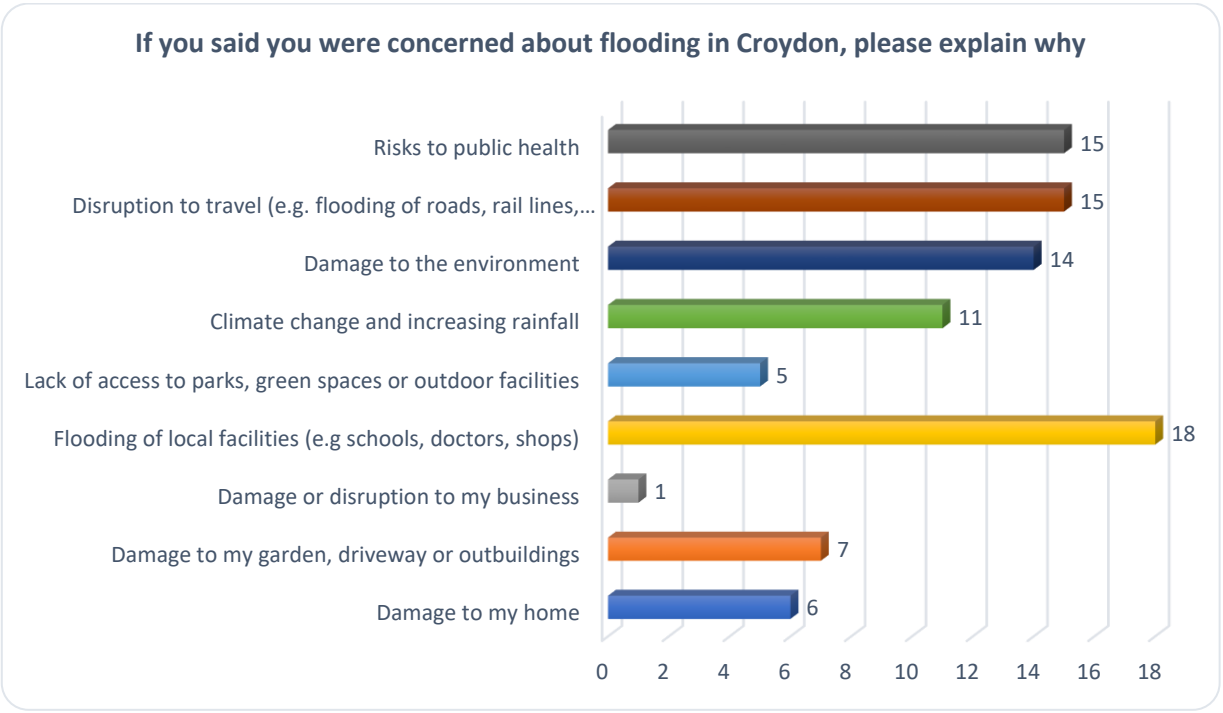

Figure 10: Question 6

Results

Almost all of those who submitted survey responses (18 out of 21) stated that flooding of local facilities was a reason for concern. This was followed by a large number of respondents concerned about risks to public health, disruption to travel and damage to the environment. More than half of respondents are concerned about climate change and increasing rainfall. A relatively low number of respondents are concerned about damage to private property and lack of access to green space and outdoor facilities. One person is concerned about damage to their business. In summary,

the vast majority of respondents are concerned about the impact of flooding to public places, infrastructure and the environment than damage to private property. Understandably the one person who responded as a Croydon business is concerned about damage to that business.

Action

No actions proposed. This question helps the Council better understand what impacts of flooding respondents are most concerned about.

Question 7 Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:

Comment	Theme	Action
If you swept the roads and cleared the drains ore frequently it would help stop flooding	Cross team collaboration	Comment to be shared internally with Street Cleansing team.
Croydon no longer clean the leaves and all rubbish from the drains on the roads so when it rains heavily this causes flooding as there is no where for the water to go. Residents properties are flooded	Cross team collaboration	Council teams will work together to clean locations that are more prone to flooding more frequently. Gullies can be cleaned on a reactive basis following reports of blockages. Gully and drainage issues can be reported here - Love Clean Streets app | Croydon Council. This will ensure the report reaches the correct team. For example, reports of debris blocking gully grates will go to Street Cleansing while reports of gullies not functioning will go to Highways.
Blocked gullies need to be addressed	Information sharing	Gullies are cleansed once per year as standard although some are cleaned quarterly. Parked cars can prevent gullies from being cleansed. The Council are looking at ways to improve this, for example by suspending parking in advance of the gullies being cleansed. By working with other Council teams this may improve efficiencies with planned works. Blocked gullies can be cleansed on a reactive basis by reporting here - Love Clean Streets app | Croydon Council. Council LLFA webpages to be updated to help inform residents on gully cleansing. This will include information on what areas are planned on being cleansed each month.
have soakaways in all future planning applications for roof / rainwater and driveways / roads made compulsory	Development	Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), including soakaways, are a requirement with all planning applications as per Local Plan Policy DM25. Croydon Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, are a statutory consultee on all major development. With minor development, depending on the risk, Officers will seek conditions on approvals to provide water butts as a minimum to manage surface water on site. Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include information on SuDS requirements with development.
Make sure all new building have soakaways to divert rainwater from roofs and gardens/drives /paved area instead of sewer	Development	
Water leaks from burst water pipes could do with being more quickly.	Third party	Comment to be shared with Thames Water. Thames Water provide clean water to the majority of the borough and wastewater services to the entire borough while SES Water provide clean water to the southern part of the borough. Leaks can be reported to Thaes Water here - Thames Water - Report a problem - View and report problems and to SES Water here - Leaks | SES Water.
Flooding risk is increased because of blocked gullies on streets such as South Norwood Hill or Church Road	Localised flood risk	Highways officer to look at this location to determine what action can be taken.

which never seem to get cleared over the 26 years I've lived here despite numerous reporting of the issue.		
By the traffic Lights at the bottom of Denning Ave, Waddon when there is heavy rain it floods there, making it impossible to cross the road safely	Localised flood risk	Highways officer to look at this location to determine what action can be taken.
text alerts could be helpful	Cross team collaboration / Educating	Comment to be shared with Corporate Resilience to identify what alerts are currently sent. The Council website includes information on how to sign up to flood warnings from the Environment Agency and severe weather alerts from the Met Office here - Households | Croydon Council. This will be communicated to residents.

Table 2: Question 7

Results

Comments have been categorised into themes including cross team collaboration, information sharing, development, third party and localised flood risk. These reflect some common threads that have come through in the comments received with respondents feeling that current road sweeping and gully cleansing programmes are insufficient. Two comments have been made with regards to managing surface water through development, in particular this relates to infiltrating to the ground rather than connecting to sewers. A comment has been made referring to burst water pipes which will be passed on to the relevant authorities. Two specific locations have been highlighted as a concern by respondents. The final comment states that text alerts warning of flood risk could be helpful.

Actions

Cross team collaboration – these comments will be shared with the Street Cleansing team. Highways and Street Cleansing will work together to identify areas that need cleansing more frequently.

Information sharing – the Council are looking to improve the gully cleansing programme to overcome issues such as parked cars preventing gullies from being cleaned. This can be helped by sharing information with residents and business owners on which areas will be cleansed each month. This can be done at ward level. Residents can also report issues with gully and drainage issues through the link in the table above. This will ensure the report reaches the relevant team with appropriate action being taken to resolve the issue.

Development – SuDS, including soakaways, are a requirement with all planning applications as per Local Plan Policy DM25. The Council LLFA webpages will be updated to clarify the SuDS requirements with development.

Third party – burst water pipes are the responsibility of Thames Water and SES Water. The comment received will be shared with each organisation.

Localised flood risk – a Highways officer will investigate the two areas highlighted and determine what action can be taken.

Cross team collaboration / Educating – this comment will be shared with the Emergency Planning team to identify what alerts are currently sent. Information on how to sign up to EA and Met Office alerts is available on the Council website. This will be communicated to residents and business owners.

Figure 11: Question 8

Question 9 Please explain why you disagree

Comment	Theme	Action
When the drains are not cleaned and we have heavy rains, the council must realise the potential for the streets and residents properties to be flooded. The drains are now only cleaned when there is an incident of flooding. That's why I think Croydon does not know what it's role is or they are just not taking their responsibility seriously.	Information sharing	Gullies are cleansed once per year as standard although some are cleaned quarterly. Parked cars can prevent gullies from being cleansed. The Council are looking at ways to improve this, for example by suspending parking in advance of the gullies being cleansed. By working with other Council teams this may improve efficiencies with planned works. Gully and drainage issues can be reported here - Love Clean Streets app | Croydon Council. This will ensure the report reaches the correct team. For example, reports of debris blocking gully grates will go to Street Cleansing while reports of gullies not functioning will go to Highways. Council LLFA webpages to be updated to help inform residents on gully cleansing. This will include information on what areas are planned on being cleansed each month.
Because in more than 20 years, I have seen no evidence of Croydon Council acting to prevent flooding. The council, or its contractors, do not even clear debris from drain covers	Information sharing	
Flood risk management by the borough isn't communicated to the general population	Information sharing	Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include detail of the flood risk management work completed and ongoing by the Council. These pages will be kept up to date as work progresses to keep residents and business owners informed. The Council Highways team will work with the Communications team on how best to share information with residents.
Nothing has ever been done. The council makes excuses that they don't have the finances	Information sharing	
It is not clear what Croydon Councils role is	Educating	Council LLFA webpages to be updated to clarify the flood risk management roles and responsibilities of Croydon Council and other risk management authorities. This will include information on the responsibilities of each Council team (e.g. Street Cleansing for clearing leaves and debris from gully grates and Highways for water not draining away through gullies).

Table 3: Question 9

Results

The majority of respondents agreed that it is clear what role the Council has in flood risk management. Despite this there were also three respondents who disagreed and another three who were neutral on the question. Information sharing and educating are the two themes that have come through in the comments relating to question 9 with some

similarities coming through in the responses. Some of these comments are similar to those received with question 7 relating to concerns about street and gully cleansing. It is apparent from these comments that the respondents feel that the Council does not communicate the work that has and is being done around flood risk management by the Council nor is it entirely clear what role Croydon Council has in flood risk management.

Actions

Information sharing – in addition to the actions stated in question 7 the Council LLFA will be updated to include information on the flood risk management work completed and ongoing. This information will be kept up to date with Highways team working with the Communications team to identify how to best share information with Croydon's residents and business owners.

Educating – the Council LLFA webpages will be updated to clarify what role Croydon Council has in flood risk management.

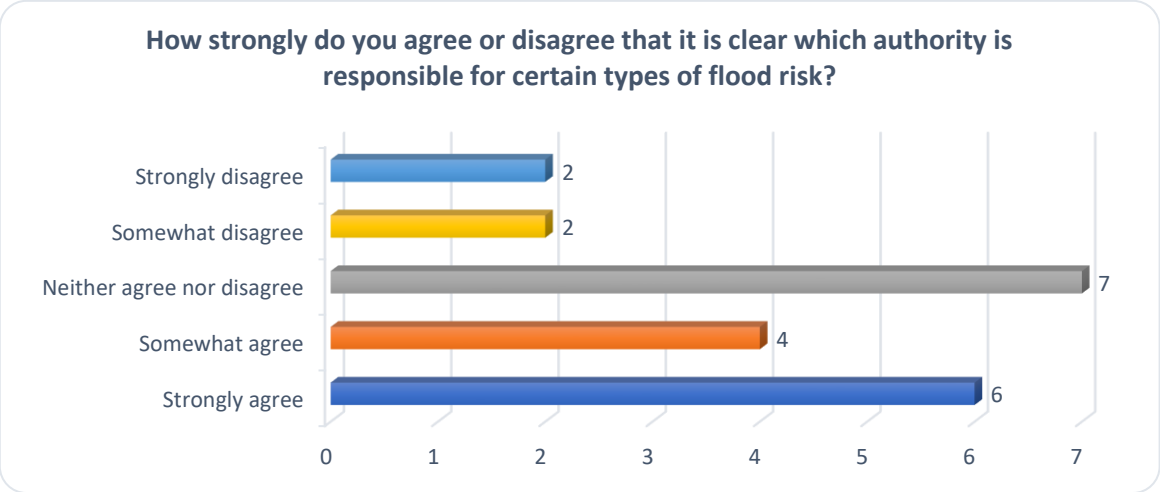

Figure 12: Question 10

Question 11 Please explain why you disagree

Comment	Theme	Action
I do not know who is responsible. What I know is I pay my council tax to Croydon and if cleaning and maintenance of drains and whatever is subcontracted, at the end of the day it is Croydon's responsibility to ensure the roads and residents properties are not flooded due to lack of clean drains	Educating	Council LLFA webpages to be updated to clarify the flood risk management roles and responsibilities of Croydon Council and other risk management authorities. This will include information on the responsibilities of each Council team (e.g. Street Cleansing for clearing leaves and debris from gully grates and Highways for water not draining away through gullies).
Flood risk management by the borough isn't communicated to the general population	Information sharing	Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include detail of the flood risk management work completed and ongoing by the Council. These pages will be kept up to date as work progresses to keep residents and business owners informed. The Council Highways team will work with the Communications team on how best to share information with residents.
It is not clear whose responsibility it is to deal with floods on non-council land, or how the council can and will work with owners/managers of such properties	Educating	Council LLFA webpages to be updated clarifying that private land and property owners are responsible for flood risk management on their property. Croydon Council does work with private land and asset owners when required. The Council is limited in terms of powers of enforcement while resourcing issues also restrict the actions the Council can take.

It is difficult to know who is responsible to deal with a flood, Croydon Council or Thames Water	Educating	Council LLFA webpages to be updated to clarify the flood risk management roles and responsibilities of Croydon Council and other risk management authorities.
Much clearer from the appendix - include in body of text rather than as an appendix?	Educating	A hyperlink to Appendix B (responsibilities of risk management authorities and other organisations) has been added to Section 1.3.

Table 4: Question 11

Results

While the majority of respondents either strongly or somewhat agree there were seven who neither agreed nor disagreed. Four respondents either somewhat or strongly disagreed. The comments received with question 11 suggest that some residents feel it is unclear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk. One comment stated it is unclear who is responsible for managing flood risk on private property or how the Council works with such private property owners. These comments have been categorised into the themes on educating and information sharing.

Actions

Educating – as well as updating the LLFA webpages on Croydon Council's role and responsibilities, the webpages will also be updated to clarify the roles and responsibilities of other risk management authorities. This will include signposting to where useful and relevant flood risk management information can be found. With regards to private property owners, while Croydon Council does work with private land and asset owners when required, responsibility for managing risk lies with the owner of the property or asset. A line has been added to the Strategy to reflect this. The webpages will be updated to clarify this. One amendment to the document following the comments received is that a hyperlink has been included in Section 1.3 to allow for the reader to quickly navigate to Appendix B where there is more information on flood risk management roles and responsibilities.

Information sharing – as per the actions stated with question 9.

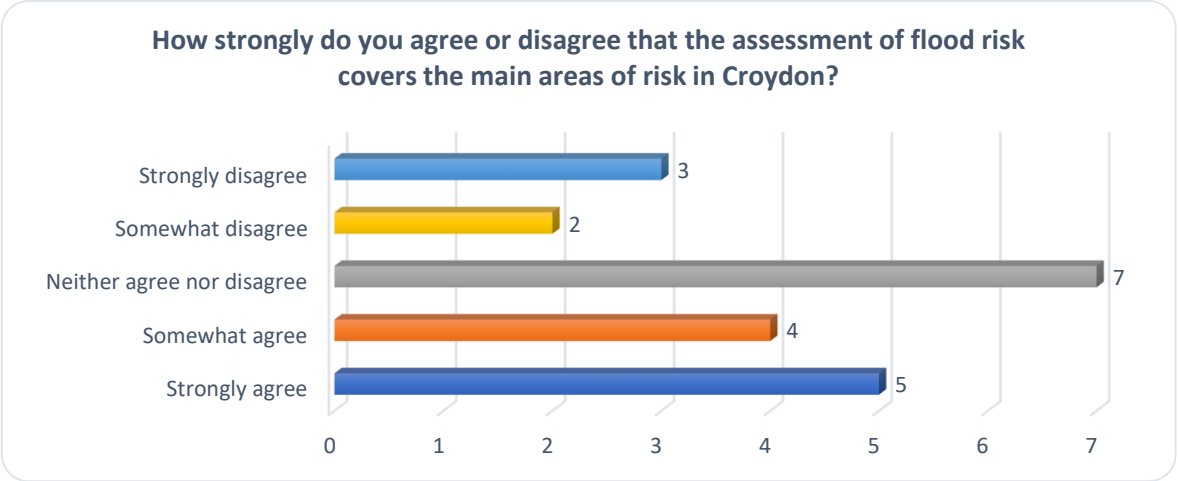

Figure 13: Question 12

Question 13 Please explain why you disagree

Comment	Theme	Action
It should cover all areas	Educating	Some areas are at a lower risk of flooding than others. Areas at greater risk need to be prioritised. A link to the Environment's Agency's Flood Map for Planning was included in the strategy prior to the consultation while a link to the long-term flood risk mapping has been added to the document. Flood risk mapping for Croydon is included in Appendix E. These can be used to determine the risk of flooding in a particular area. The Council LLFA webpages will be updated to explain this in more detail.
Drains on Croydon roads are no longer	Information sharing	Gullies are cleansed once per year as standard although some are cleaned quarterly.

cleaned until there is an incident of flooding.		Parked cars can prevent gullies from being cleansed. The Council are looking at ways to improve this, for example by suspending parking in advance of the gullies being cleansed. By working with other Council teams this may improve efficiencies with planned works. Blocked gullies can be cleansed on a reactive basis by reporting here - Love Clean Streets app | Croydon Council. Council LLFA webpages to be updated to help inform residents on gully cleansing. This will include information on what areas are planned on being cleansed each month.
Only Purley is considered as a flood risk and Norbury.	Educating	The Strategy is a high-level document which takes a strategic look at flood risk management in the borough. The action plan provides measures and actions on how to meet the objectives of the strategy. The Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) looks at areas at risk in more detail, for example Critical Drainage Areas. The current SWMP is available here Managing flood risks | Croydon Council. At the time of writing the SWMP is being updated. The SWMP uses historic flood records, modelling and other information to determine areas at risk.
Main areas of risk are not outlined clearly in this section.	Educating	

Table 5: Question 13

Results

The majority of respondents agree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon with nine responses either strongly or somewhat agreeing. Seven responses neither agree or disagree with five either somewhat or strongly disagreeing. The comments received in the follow up question fall in the education and information sharing themes. Some of the comments suggest that all areas should be considered, or that only certain areas are considered and that main areas of risk are not outline clearly. Another comment has been received in this question which relates to the cleaning of highway gullies.

Actions

Educating – some areas of the borough are at greater risk than others. This is based on both flood risk mapping and the recorded history of flooding. These areas need to be prioritised as the risk is greater. The LLFA webpages will be updated to explain this in more detail including links and signposting to useful information regarding the risk to a particular area. This will include information on the Surface water Management Plan (SWMP) which is being updated at the time of writing. The SWMP looks at areas at risk in more detail, for example Critical Drainage Areas. A hyperlink to the Environment Agency's long term flood risk mapping has been added to Section 1.4 in the Strategy.

Information sharing – as per the actions related to gully cleansing previously (see question 7).

Question 14 Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?

Comment	Theme	Action
The dept in charge of cutting grass should make sure the debris is not left in the road which then due to no road sweepers blocks the drains.	Third party	Comment to be shared internally with Street Cleansing team. Council teams will work together to clean locations that are more prone to flooding more frequently. Gullies can be cleaned on a reactive basis following reports of blockages. Gully and drainage issues can be reported here - Love Clean Streets app | Croydon Council. This will ensure the report reaches the correct team. For example, reports of debris blocking gully grates will go to Street Cleansing while reports of gullies not functioning will go to Highways.
Thames Water, other water boards in the area, Surrey County Council	Third party	Line added regarding neighbouring councils to Appendix B.
Local flood groups	Third party	Line added to Section 1.3.

planning department	Third party	Line added to Appendix B.
planning department	Third party	
The Corporation of the City of London as Trustees for Kenley Common	Third party	Line added to Section 1.3 regarding private land and asset owners.
Network Rail	Third party	Line added to Section 1.3. Network Rail are covered under 'Infrastructure Providers' in Appendix B.
Large landowners and countryside managers such as the Corporation for London, Wildlife Trust, Housing Associations.	Third party	Line added to Section 1.3 regarding private land and asset owners.
Thames Water & East Surrey Water Co., should be involved in the Councils Flood strategy	Third party	Both are mentioned in Section 1.3 and are covered in Appendix B.
Charities like Thames 21	Third party	Line added to Section 1.3.

Table 6: Question 14

Results

Respondents have provided a number of suggestions on which other authorities, agencies or groups should be included. These range from charities to landowners, infrastructure providers and local flood groups. All of the suggestions have been categorised in the third-party theme.

Actions

Third party – the comment received with regards to grass cutting will be shared with the Street Cleansing team. Some text has been added to Section 1.3 stating that Croydon Council works with other authorities through forums such as the South West London Strategic Flood Group and Croydon Resilience Forum. A line has been added to state that Croydon Council works with local flood groups and other organisations when required. Some additions have been made to Appendix B to capture some of the suggestion.

4.3 LFRMS Section 2

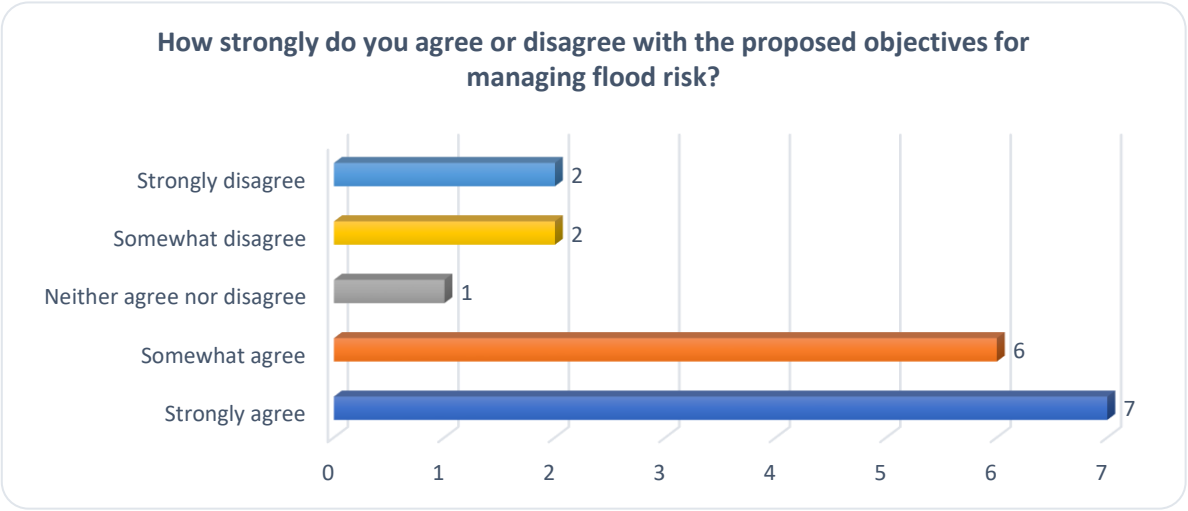

Figure 14: Question 15

Question 16 If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?

Comment	Theme	Action
I can't see what the plan or strategy is to prevent flooding in the first place. I want action , not review, look into, coatings …	Educating	The Council acts to prevent flooding by maintaining the existing infrastructure including flood storage areas. Reactive measures include constructing new assets. Council LLFA webpages to be updated. This will include a section on flood prevention and flood mitigation. Flood prevention is not always possible although some steps can be

		taken to prevent flooding by all those responsible. Mitigation is the approach used to lessen the impacts of flooding.
You can't even manage to provide a simple form, how can we rely on you to manage something serious like flood risks? This survey says: "More information about the proposed objectives and measures is available in the full strategy document [link]." But there is no online link. So it is impossible to read your proposed objectives and measures. Incompetence, or deliberate?	Information sharing	Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include detail of the flood risk management work completed and ongoing by the Council. These pages will be kept up to date as work progresses to keep residents and business owners informed. The Council Highways team will work with the Communications team on how best to share information with residents.
One of the main areas is increase in development around croydon, but properties continue to be built without any regard for potential consequences	Development	SuDS are a requirement with all planning applications as per Local Plan Policy DM25. The policy and London Plan drainage hierarchy require developers to prioritise green infrastructure over traditional drainage methods and to meet certain criteria. Croydon Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, are a statutory consultee on all major development. With minor development, depending on the risk, Officers will seek conditions on approvals to provide water butts as a minimum to manage surface water on site. Depending on the level of risk and type of development, a flood risk assessment and SuDS strategy may be required as part of an application. Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include information on SuDS requirements with development. If a development is connecting to a public sewer (foul, surface water or combined), permission must be sought from Thames Water. Thames Water have published their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). The DWMP is a long-term strategic plan which sets how wastewater (foul) and drainage systems are to be extended, improved and maintained to ensure they are robust and resilient to future pressures, including development. The DWMP can be found here - Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan | Thames Water.
Objective 5 - sustainability is vital for Croydon's prosperity, growth isn't. The current objective starts from the assumption that growth must happen but this isn't correct. Continuous growth is not possible with finite resources and so sustainability should be a limit to growth not an enabler.	Development	One of the themes of the Local Plan is Croydon as 'A Place with a Sustainable Future.' It considers how the borough can become a sustainable, well connected place and an environment prepared for the impacts of a changing climate. More information can be found in Chapter 8 of the Local Plan, Environment and Climate Change. This places sustainability at the core of achieving the Council's vision for Croydon. Policies are written to reflect this and development must demonstrate these polices are being met before development can commence.

		With development comes the need for infrastructure improvements so a collaborative approach with key stakeholders such as Thames Water is required. Thames Water have published their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). The DWMP is a long-term strategic plan which sets how wastewater (foul) and drainage systems are to be extended, improved and maintained to ensure they are robust and resilient to future pressures, including development. The DWMP can be found here - Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan | Thames Water.

Table 7: Question 16

Results

A large majority, with 13 responses in total, agree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk. Four respondents disagree with one respondent neither agreeing nor disagreeing. The comments received relate to the educating, information sharing and development themes. One respondent stated the objectives should be more about flood prevention while another is concerned about development and the potential impact of this. Another comment regarding objective 5 is concerned that growth is bring prioritised over sustainability and that sustainability is a limit to growth rather than an enabler.

Actions

Educating – when it comes to flood prevention the Council works to prevent flooding by maintaining the existing infrastructure including flood storage areas. The Council LLFA webpages will be updated to include a section on flood prevention and flood mitigation. Flood prevention is not always possible although some steps can be taken to prevent flooding by all those responsible. Mitigation is the approach used to lessen the impacts of flooding.

Information sharing – as per the actions relating to question 9.

Development – as per the actions relating to question 7. In addition to this, some additional information relating to Thames Water requirements from development and their DWMP has been included in the table above. The DWMP is a long term 25-year plan on how Thames Water sewer and drainage assets will be improved and maintained and be resilient to future pressures. One of the comments received was related to objective specifically. The table above clarifies that sustainability is at core of achieving the Council's vision for Croydon and as such, policies in the Local Plan are written to reflect this. A collaborative approach is needed with stakeholders such as Thames Water to ensure the provision of infrastructure is sufficient to meet the needs development in the future.

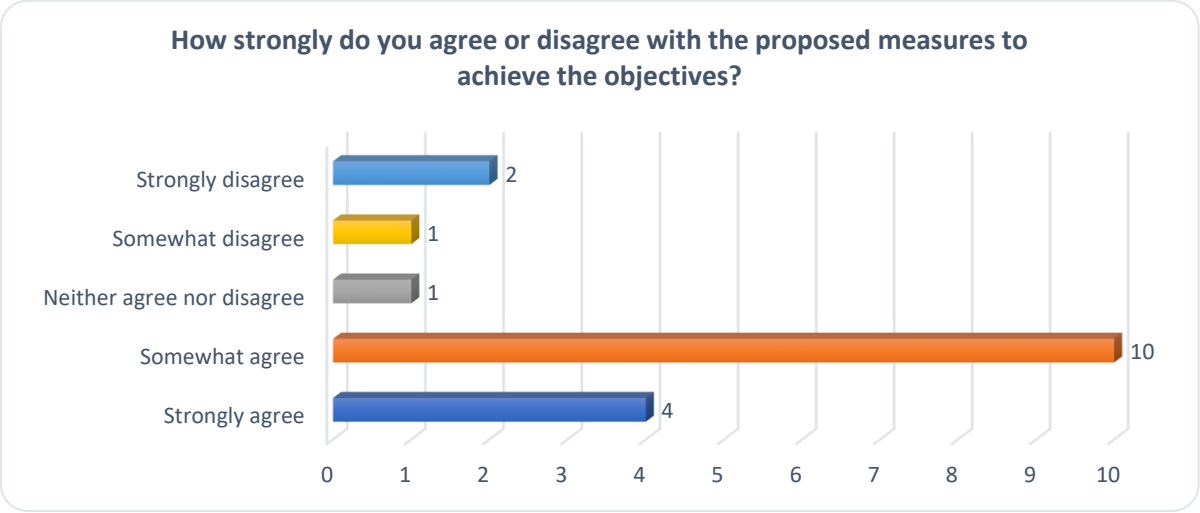

Figure 15: Question 17

Question 18 If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?

Comment	Theme	Action

A lot of the measures are reactionary, it does not cover preventative measures. The key is in avoiding flood. Urban flooding typically correlates highly to the level of fly-tipping and general garbage around the area. Croydon is at risk of turning into a concrete jungle. Even protected areas like Norwood are at risk of over-development with not enough measures to ensure that trees are protected, grassland is protected. We have an environment where grass and soil is replaced with cement, tarmac road or tiled driveways. We need clear drainage, free from garbage. And restrictions and compulsory requirements on what residents can and cannot do; eg every sq inch of grass and soil that is tiled/tarmac/Astro turfed needs to be compensated with replanting twice the sq footage of soil and grass foregone.	Educating / Cross team collaboration / Development	Council LLFA webpages to be updated. This will include a section on flood prevention and flood mitigation. Flood prevention is not always possible although some steps can be taken to prevent flooding by all those responsible, including property owners. Mitigation is the approach used to lessen the impacts of flooding. The Council acts to prevent flooding by maintaining the existing infrastructure including flood storage areas. Reactive measures include constructing new assets. Comment to be shared internally with Street Cleansing team. Council teams will work together to clean locations that are more prone to flooding more frequently. Gullies can be cleaned on a reactive basis following reports of blockages. Gully and drainage issues can be reported here - Love Clean Streets app | Croydon Council. This will ensure the report reaches the correct team. For example, reports of fly tipping will go to Street Cleansing while reports of gullies not functioning will go to Highways. SuDS are a requirement with all planning applications as per Local Plan Policy DM25. The policy and London Plan drainage hierarchy require developers to prioritise green infrastructure over traditional drainage methods and to meet certain criteria. One of the Strategic Objectives of Chapter 9 of the Local Plan, Green Grid, is to 'improve the quality and accessibility of green space and nature whilst protecting and enhancing biodiversity.' Policy DM28 relates to trees specifically and states 'the Council will seek to protect and enhance the borough's woodlands, trees and hedgerows'. Some trees are protected under Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) while trees in Conservation Areas have further protection. With development, if there is no formal tree protection and there is tree loss, replacement planting may be sought through landscaping condition. Some householder works are subject to permitted development rights (e.g. replacement of hard surfacing of less than $5m^2$), but such works are subject to surfaces either being made permeable or that provision is made to direct surface water to SuDS or a permeable area. From a Highways perspective, dropped kerb applications will not be approved unless the driveway is permeable or has a drainage system. This must be demonstrated before the application is processed. Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include information on SuDS requirements with development.

Would like reports on flood investigations to be made publicly available Objective 4: Add timeframe to flood response Objective 7: add frequency to meetings	Information sharing	Line added under Objective 3 with link to published flood investigations. Flood investigations are published on Council website. Council LLFA webpages to be updated clarifying when flood investigations are required. With regards to Objective 4, the emergency response will be immediate following a flood event. After an event, the LLFA will work with stakeholders to identify the cause and impacts of the event as well as determine any action to be taken. Regarding Objective 7, South West London Strategic Flood Group (includes neighbouring authorities, Thames Water and the Environment Agency) meetings are held quarterly. Meetings with risk management authorities take place when needed, for example on cross authority projects. Each group or project meeting will meet at the appropriate frequency.

Table 8: Question 18

Results

A majority of respondents agree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives with 14 either strongly or somewhat agreeing. One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with three either somewhat or strongly disagreeing. The comments received are similar to those received with previous questions and relate to concerns about flood prevention, fly tipping having an influence on flooding and the impact development is having on trees and green space. The comment also stated that there should be restrictions on what property owners can do when paving over green space. A comment has been received stating that flood investigations should be published with some suggestions also received regarding Objectives 4 and 7. The comments received have been categorised in the educating, cross team collaboration, development and information sharing themes.

Actions

Educating / Cross team collaboration / Development – as per the actions with question 16 (educating), question 7 (cross team collaboration) and question 7 (development). In addition to this the response in the table above has clarified that improving the quality and accessibility of green space and nature whilst protecting and enhancing biodiversity in a strategic objective of the Local Plan and also includes information on the protection of trees. Clarification has also been provided regarding householder permitted development and hardstanding while from a Highway's perspective, dropped kerb applications require that the driveway is permeable or has a drainage system otherwise the application will not be processed.

Information sharing – a line has been added to the Strategy under Objective 3 with a link to where flood investigations, which meet the Section 19 criteria, are published on the Council website. Responses to the suggestions regarding Objectives 4 and 7 have been included in the table above clarifying the approach to responding to flooding and also the frequency of meetings.

4.4 LFRMS Action Plan and Final Comments

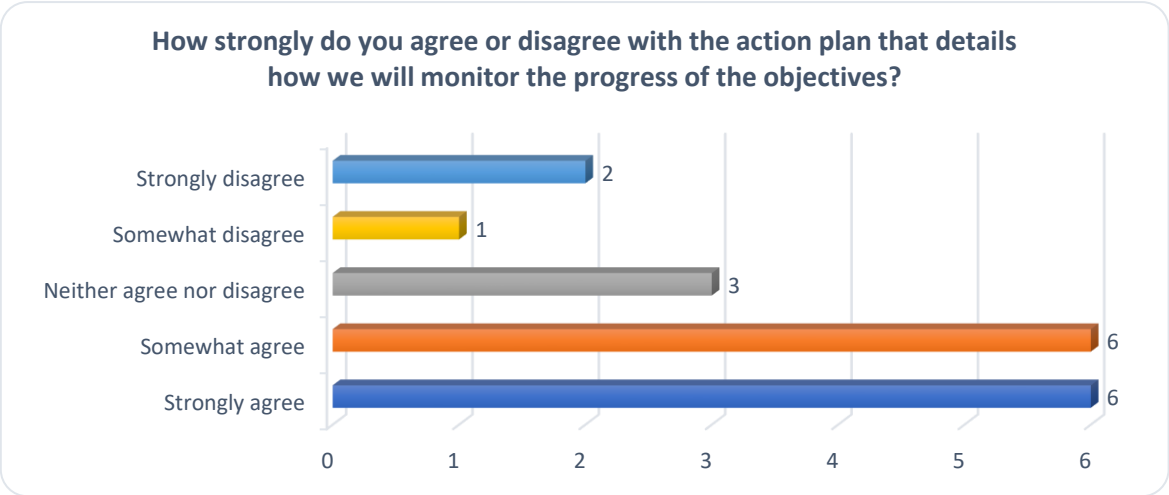

Figure 16: Question 19

Question 20 Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it

Comment	Theme	Action
I don't think the strategy adequately address the root causes of the issues. I feel it is very reactionary	Educating	Council LLFA webpages to be updated. This will include a section on flood prevention and flood mitigation. Flood prevention is not always possible although some steps can be taken to prevent flooding by all those responsible. Mitigation is the approach used to lessen the impacts of flooding. The Council acts to prevent flooding by maintaining the existing infrastructure including flood storage areas. Reactive measures include constructing new assets.
I strongly support this but have concerns on how well it can be delivered within existing resources	Resources	The actions have been drafted based on current resource availability. Some of the actions are designed to be ongoing while others are a once off. A major event may have a knock-on effect impacting progress of the action plan.
There appears to be a very limited role for the Parks Department in delviering this plan but management of our green and blue spaces should be a key element of flood management	Cross team collaboration	Two actions are jointly led by Highways and Parks and Green Spaces. Some others are Highways led but will require close collaboration with Parks and Green Spaces e.g. Objective 2 Measure 1, Objective 3 Measure 3, Objective 4 Measure 4 and Objective 5 Measure 4. The Parks and Green Spaces team are invited to internal flood management group meetings and Council teams collaborate on projects when relevant e.g. Bourne View Allotments flood storage area.

Table 9: Question 20

Results

The majority of those that responded to the survey agreed that the action plan details how progress on the objectives will be monitored. Twelve respondents either strongly or somewhat agree with this. Three respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with a further three either somewhat or strongly disagree. One of the comments received is similar to some received with previous questions, with the respondent stating that the action plan is more reactionary than preventative. Another comment as been made in strong support of the action plan but stating a concern about delivery due to insufficient resource. The final comment relates to the role the Parks and Green Spaces team in delivering the action plan suggesting that there should be a greater role for the Parks and Green Spaces team. These comments have been categorised into the educating, resources and cross team, collaboration themes.

Actions

Educating – as per the action stated with question 16.

Resources – actions have been drafted with current resource in mind and are a combination of ongoing and once off to help manage the deliverability of the actions.

Cross team collaboration – there are a number of actions either jointly led with Parks and Green Spaces or requiring close collaboration with the Parks and Green Spaces team. Parks and Green Spaces are invited to Croydon Council flood management group meetings which is a forum to help Council teams work together more closely and share information.

Question 21 Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?

Comment	Theme	Action
Street cleansing is a necessary part of managing flood risk. Similarly ensuring that development does not harden up too much surface area to allow for rain to soak in.	Cross team collaboration / Educating	Comment to be shared internally with Street Cleansing team. Council teams will work together to clean locations that are more prone to flooding more frequently. SuDS are a requirement with all planning applications as per Local Plan Policy DM25. The policy and London Plan drainage hierarchy require developers to prioritise green infrastructure over traditional drainage methods and to meet certain criteria. Croydon Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, are a statutory consultee on all major development. With minor development, depending on the risk, Officers will seek conditions on approvals to provide water butts as a minimum to manage surface water on site. Depending on the level of risk and type of development, a flood risk assessment and SuDS strategy may be required as part of an application. Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include information on SuDS requirements with development.
I would like to see more of a focus on minimising the amount of surface water entering the foul water network. I would also like to see more on how the strategy addresses where gullies, soakaways and other flood prevention assets are on land not owned by the council, as these poorly maintained assets can add to the flood risk.	Third party	This comment will be shared with Thames Water who are responsible for the public sewers in the borough. Misconnections can be reported to Thames Water for investigation. The Council LLFA webpages will be updated to include information on this (i.e. signposting to Thames Water). Council LLFA webpages to be updated clarifying that private land, asset and property owners are responsible for flood risk management on their property.
Midway review of strategy in 2026	Resources	Progress of the Strategy is tracked via the action plan. This is reviewed through the Croydon Council flood management group which meets quarterly and consists of various teams with flood risk management responsibilities. An up-to-date version of the action plan will be uploaded to the Council LLFA webpages to allow residents and business owners to track progress.

Table 10: Question 21

Results

Some comments have been received regarding street cleansing and development which are similar to comments received with previous questions. One respondent has comment stating that there should be a focus on minimising the amount of surface water entering the foul network. This comment also states that the Strategy should include more on how the Council works with asset owners on non-Council land. A comment stating that a mid-point review of the Strategy should be carried out in 2026. These comments have been categorised into the cross team collaboration, educating, third party and resources themes.

Actions

Cross team collaboration / Educating – as per the actions with question 7.

Third party – the comment regarding surface water entering the foul network will be shared with Thames Water. Council LLFA webpages will be updated to include clarifying that private land, asset and property owners are responsible for flood risk management on their property.

Resources – progress of the Strategy is tracked via the action plan through the Council flood management group which meets quarterly and includes various Council teams with flood risk management responsibilities. An up-to-date version of the action plan will be kept on the Council LLFA webpages.

Additional comments received via email

Comment	Theme	Action
clear street drains from debris and fallen foliage - enforce litter fines	Cross team collaboration	Comment to be shared internally with Street Cleansing team. Council teams will work together to clean locations that are more prone to flooding more frequently.
secure function and capacity for run-off courseways and sewers - reuse water where possible	Development	SuDS are a requirement with all planning applications as per Local Plan Policy DM25. The policy and London Plan drainage hierarchy require developers to prioritise green infrastructure over traditional drainage methods and to meet certain criteria. The first preference on the London Plan drainage hierarchy is to reuse rainwater. Through projects such as the Catherham Bourne and Chaffinch Brook flood alleviation schemes and the Bourne View Allotments flood storage area, the Council aims to attenuate and slow the flow of water before it enters the drainage system.
encourage/incentivise lawns and high-porous surfaces instead of hard standing in gardens. patios and driveways	Development	Some householder works are subject to permitted development rights (e.g. replacement of hard surfacing of less than 5m^2), but such works are subject to surfaces either being made permeable or that provision is made to direct surface water to SuDS or a permeable area.
incentivise / subsidise guttering and roofing repairs	Third party	Property owners are responsible for the upkeep of their property and to ensure there is no risk posed to neighbouring properties.
advise those in low lying areas and those with basements and cellars how best to prepare to defend homes against flooding	Educating	Council LLFA webpages to be updated to include advice for property owners on how to protect basements and cellars from flooding (e.g. London Council's advice leaflet).
have emergency evacuations and recovery plans in place to protect life and restore services asap - evacuation plans, fresh and wastewater, electricity, mains gas, telephone services etc.	Cross team collaboration	Comment to be shared internally with the Corporate Resilience team. As a Category 1 responder the Council has a responsibility to put emergency plans in place. The Council and the Croydon Resilience Forum (CRF) have a number of plans detailing response arrangements for different the different risks including flooding. These are reviewed and exercised on a regular basis, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. More information on Croydon Council and CRF emergency plans can be found here - Emergency plans | Croydon Council.

Table 11: Additional Comments

Results

Some of the additional comments received are similar to comments received through the survey including a comment on keeping gullies clear and another that would like to see the Council encouraging permeable surfaces rather than hard standing. A comment has been received stating that functioning of the drainage network could be improved through water reuse. Another comment states that the Council should incentivise or subsidies roof and guttering

repairs with another stating that advice should be given to those property owners in low lying areas or that have basements and cellars on how to protect their property from flood risk. The final comment states that evacuation and recovery plan should be in place in order to respond to flood events. These comments have been categorised as cross team collaboration, development, third party and educating.

Actions

Cross team collaboration – as per the action noted with question 7.

Development – as per the action noted with question 7.

Third party – property owners are responsible for repairing and maintaining their own property.

Educating – Council LLFA webpages will be updated to include advice for property owners on how to protect basements and cellars from flooding.

Cross team collaboration – this comment will be shared with the Corporate Resilience team. The Council and the Croydon Resilience Forum (CRF) have a number of plans detailing response arrangements for different risks including flooding. A link with more information has been included in the table above.

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APPENDIX 3

Survey Responses

18 June 2023 - 01 September 2023

Have your say on our local flood risk strategy

Get Involved Croydon

Project: Have your say on flood risk management in Croydon

BANG THE TABLE engagementHQ

VISITORS
72

CONTRIBUTORS			RESPONSES		
20			21		
0	0	20	0	0	21
Registered	Unverified	Anonymous	Registered	Unverified	Anonymous

Respondent No: 1
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 23, 2023 16:16:44 pm
Last Seen: Jun 23, 2023 16:16:44 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Norbury and Pollards Hill
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Very unconcerned
Flooding from groundwater	Neutral
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat unconcerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**

Damage to my home
Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Lack of access to parks, green spaces or outdoor facilities

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

not answered

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Somewhat agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Somewhat agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Somewhat agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	25-34
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Back Caribbean
Q28. **What is your religion?**	Christian

Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	sw16

Respondent No: 2
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 23, 2023 19:25:19 pm
Last Seen: Jun 23, 2023 19:25:19 pm

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**
Croydon resident

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**
Purley and Woodcote

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**
not answered

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**
not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat unconcerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat unconcerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**
Damage to the environment
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

If you swept the roads and cleared the drains ore frequently it would help stop flooding

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**
Strongly agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**
Strongly agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**
Somewhat disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

It should cover all areas

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

The dept in charge of cutting grass should make sure the debris is not left in the road which then due to no road sweepers blocks the drains.

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Somewhat agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Somewhat agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Married
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	45-54
Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Christian
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No

Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR8

Respondent No: 3
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 23, 2023 23:52:33 pm
Last Seen: Jun 23, 2023 23:52:33 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident Person who works in Croydon
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Thornton Heath
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	Fairfield

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from sewers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Damage to my home Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Climate change and increasing rainfall Damage to the environment Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths) Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

not answered

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Somewhat disagree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

I can’t see what the plan or strategy is to prevent flooding in the first place. I want action , not review, look into, coatings …

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	not answered

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	not answered

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Prefer not to say
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	55-64

Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	**Other (please specify)** British or English Indian! I was born in this country. Whites are not the only people who are British!
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Prefer not to say
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	not answered

Respondent No: 4
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 25, 2023 11:47:22 am
Last Seen: Jun 25, 2023 11:47:22 am

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Selsdon and Addington Village
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Very concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**

Damage to my home
Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Lack of access to parks, green spaces or outdoor facilities

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

Croydon no longer clean the leaves and all rubbish from the drains on the roads so when it rains heavily this causes flooding as there is no where for the water to go. Residents properties are flooded

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?** Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

When the drains are not cleaned and we have heavy rains, the council must realise the potential for the streets and residents properties to be flooded. The drains are now only cleaned when there is an incident of flooding. That's why I think Croydon does not know what it's role is or they are just not taking their responsibility seriously.

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?** Neither agree nor disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

I do not know who is responsible. What I know is I pay my council tax to Croydon and if cleaning and maintenance of drains and whatever is subcontracted, at the end of the day it is Croydon's responsibility to ensure the roads and residents properties are not flooded due to lack of clean drains

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Somewhat agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

Drains on Croydon roads are no longer cleaned until there is an incident of flooding.

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

Got no idea

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	not answered

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	not answered

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	not answered

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Prefer not to say
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	55-64

Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Prefer not to say
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Prefer not to say
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	Prefer not to say
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR2

Respondent No: 5
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 25, 2023 15:44:42 pm
Last Seen: Jun 25, 2023 15:44:42 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Neutral

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Climate change and increasing rainfall Damage to the environment Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths) Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

not answered

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?** Somewhat agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?** Somewhat disagree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

A lot of the measures are reactionary, it does not cover preventative measures. The key is in avoiding flood. Urban flooding typically correlates highly to the level of fly-tipping and general garbage around the area. Croydon is at risk of turning into a concrete jungle. Even protected areas like Norwood are at risk of over-development with not enough measures to ensure that trees are protected, grassland is protected. We have an environment where grass and soil is replaced with cement, tarmac road or tiled driveways. We need clear drainage, free from garbage. And restrictions and compulsory requirements on what residents can and cannot do; eg every sq inch of grass and soil that is tiled/tarmac/Astro turfed needs to be compensated with replanting twice the sq footage of soil and grass foregone.

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c** Neither agree nor disagree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

I don’t think the strategy adequately address the root causes of the issues. I feel it is very reactionary

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)** Female

Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)** Yes

Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?** Married

Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?** No

Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	35-44
Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Chinese
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Christian
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	SE19

Respondent No: 6
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 27, 2023 16:46:45 pm
Last Seen: Jun 27, 2023 16:46:45 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Addiscombe East
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Neutral
Flooding from groundwater	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat concerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

not answered

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Strongly agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Strongly agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	not answered

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Somewhat agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Married
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	65-74
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28. **What is your religion?**	Christian
Q29. **Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No

Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR0

Respondent No: 7
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 28, 2023 08:19:35 am
Last Seen: Jun 28, 2023 08:19:35 am

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**

Croydon resident
Croydon business
Person who works in Croydon

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**

Prefer not to say

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**

Prefer not to say

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**

not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Very unconcerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**

Damage to my home
Damage or disruption to my business
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Climate change and increasing rainfall
Damage to the environment
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

not answered

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**

Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

Because in more than 20 years, I have seen no evidence of Croydon Council acting to prevent flooding. The council, or its contractors, do not even clear debris from drain covers

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**

Strongly disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

See above.

Q12. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?** — Strongly disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

Thames Water, other water boards in the area, Surrey County Council

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?** — Strongly disagree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

You can't even manage to provide a simple form, how can we rely on you to manage something serious like flood risks? This survey says: "More information about the proposed objectives and measures is available in the full strategy document [link]." But there is no online link. So it is impossible to read your proposed objectives and measures. Incompetence, or deliberate?

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?** — Strongly disagree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

See (16) above.

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c** — Strongly disagree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

See (16) above.

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

Yes: consider the savings made by sacking the head of the Croydon Digital Service.

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)** — Prefer not to say

Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)** — Prefer not to say

Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?** — Prefer not to say

Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?** — Prefer not to say

Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	not answered
Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Prefer not to say
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Prefer not to say
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	Prefer not to say
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR0

Respondent No: 8
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jun 30, 2023 18:24:56 pm
Last Seen: Jun 30, 2023 18:24:56 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Person who works in Croydon Person who visits Croydon
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	not answered
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	Fairfield

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat unconcerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat concerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Lack of access to parks, green spaces or outdoor facilities Climate change and increasing rainfall Damage to the environment Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths) Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

Blocked gullies need to be addressed

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Strongly agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Somewhat agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

Local flood groups

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Strongly agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Strongly agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

No

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Married
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	55-64
Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Black African
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Christian

Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR0

Respondent No: 9
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jul 09, 2023 15:00:57 pm
Last Seen: Jul 09, 2023 15:00:57 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Kenley
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat unconcerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat unconcerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

have soakaways in all future planning applications for roof / rainwater and driveways / roads made compulsory

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Strongly agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

planning department

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Strongly agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Strongly agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	55-64
Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	No religion
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No

Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	cr8

Respondent No: 10
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jul 15, 2023 11:10:33 am
Last Seen: Jul 15, 2023 11:10:33 am

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Kenley
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Climate change and increasing rainfall Damage to the environment Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

Make sure all new building have soakaways to divert rainwater from roofs and gardens/drives /paved area instead of sewer

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Strongly agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

planning department

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Strongly agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Strongly agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	55-64
Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	No religion

Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	cr8

Respondent No: 11
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jul 15, 2023 14:45:18 pm
Last Seen: Jul 15, 2023 14:45:18 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Woodside
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Very unconcerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very unconcerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**

Damage to my home
Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

Water leaks from burst water pipes could do with being more quickly.

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Somewhat disagree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

Flood risk management by the borough isn't communicated to the general population

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Somewhat disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

Flood risk management by the borough isn't communicated to the general population

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	25-34
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28. **What is your religion?**	No religion
Q29. **Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No

Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR0

Respondent No: 12
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jul 18, 2023 07:39:57 am
Last Seen: Jul 18, 2023 07:39:57 am

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	**Other (please specify)** Private Road Association
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	not answered
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from groundwater	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Somewhat concerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Climate change and increasing rainfall Damage to the environment Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths) Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

NA

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Neither agree nor disagree
Q9.	**Please explain why you disagree**	not answered
Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Neither agree nor disagree
Q11.	**Please explain why you disagree**	not answered
Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Neither agree nor disagree
Q13.	**Please explain why you disagree**	not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

The Corporation of the City of London as Trustees for Kenley Common

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Strongly agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Strongly agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	not answered
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Married
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	75-84
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28. **What is your religion?**	Christian
Q29. **Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No

Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR8

Respondent No: 13
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jul 22, 2023 15:53:22 pm
Last Seen: Jul 22, 2023 15:53:22 pm

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**
Croydon resident

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**
Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**
not answered

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**
not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat concerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**
Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings
Climate change and increasing rainfall
Damage to the environment
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

Flooding risk is increased because of blocked gullies on streets such as South Norwood Hill or Church Road which never seem to get cleared over the 26 years I've lived here despite numerous reporting of the issue.

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**
Strongly agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**
Strongly agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**
Neither agree nor disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

Network Rail

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Somewhat agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Somewhat agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

Street cleansing is a necessary part of managing flood risk. Similarly ensuring that development does not harden up too much surface area to allow for rain to soak in.

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	55-64
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Christian
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	SE25

Respondent No: 14
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jul 23, 2023 17:41:18 pm
Last Seen: Jul 23, 2023 17:41:18 pm

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**
Croydon councillor

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**
not answered

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**
not answered

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**
not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Very concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**
not answered

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**
Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**
not answered

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**
Somewhat disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**
It is not clear whose responsibility it is to deal with floods on non-council land, or how the council can and will work with owners/managers of such properties

Q12. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**
Strongly agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

Large landowners and countryside managers such as the Corporation for London, Wildlife Trust, Housing Associations.

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Strongly agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

I strongly support this but have concerns on how well it can be delivered within existing resources

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

I would like to see more of a focus on minimising the amount of surface water entering the foul water network. I would also like to see more on how the strategy addresses where gullies, soakaways and other flood prevention assets are on land not owned by the council, as these poorly maintained assets can add to the flood risk.

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Divorced
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	45-54
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Christian
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR8

Respondent No: 15
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Jul 24, 2023 16:05:10 pm
Last Seen: Jul 24, 2023 16:05:10 pm

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**
Croydon resident

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**
Waddon

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**
not answered

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**
not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Very concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**
Damage to my home
Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Lack of access to parks, green spaces or outdoor facilities
Climate change and increasing rainfall
Damage to the environment
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**
not answered

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**
Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**
not answered

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**
Somewhat agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**
not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Somewhat disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Somewhat disagree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

One of the main areas is increase in development around croydon, but properties continue to be built without any regard for potential consequences

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Somewhat disagree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Prefer not to say
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	35-44

Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Indian
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Hindu
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR0

Respondent No: 16
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Aug 03, 2023 20:07:24 pm
Last Seen: Aug 03, 2023 20:07:24 pm

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**
Croydon resident
Person who works in Croydon

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**
Fairfield

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**
not answered

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**
Fairfield

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Neutral
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**
Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**
not answered

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**
Strongly disagree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**
Nothing has ever been done. The council makes excuses that they don't have the finances

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**
Strongly agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**
not answered

Q12. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**
Strongly disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

Only Purley is considered as a flood risk and Norbury.

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Somewhat agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	45-54
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28. **What is your religion?**	No religion

Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	Yes
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	Mobility disability **Other disability (please specify)** Sarcoidosis
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR0

Respondent No: 17
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Aug 05, 2023 17:01:12 pm
Last Seen: Aug 05, 2023 17:01:12 pm

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**
Croydon resident

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**
not answered

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**
not answered

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**
not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat unconcerned
Flooding from groundwater	Neutral
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from sewers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat unconcerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Damage to the environment
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

By the traffic Lights at the bottom of Denning Ave, Waddon when there is heavy rain it floods there, making it impossible to cross the road safely

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**
Neither agree nor disagree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

It is not clear what Croydon Councils role is

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**
Neither agree nor disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

It is difficult to know who is responsible to deal with a flood, Croydon Council or Thames Water

Q12. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**
Strongly agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

Thames Water & East Surrey Water Co., should be involved in the Councils Flood strategy

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?** not answered

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

Where can I read Section 2 before I answer this part of the survey

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?** not answered

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c** not answered

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

where can I read appendix C

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)** Male

Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)** Yes

Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?** Married

Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?** No

Q26. **What age range are you in?** 85+

Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?** White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Q28. **What is your religion?** Christian

Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR04EF

Respondent No: 18
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Aug 06, 2023 19:57:14 pm
Last Seen: Aug 06, 2023 19:57:14 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Kenley
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Neutral
Flooding from groundwater	Neutral
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Neutral

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Climate change and increasing rainfall Damage to the environment Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths) Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

not answered

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Somewhat disagree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Strongly disagree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Strongly disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly disagree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Strongly disagree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Strongly disagree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22.	**What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23.	**This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24.	**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Married
Q25.	**Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	Yes
Q26.	**What age range are you in?**	35-44
Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Indian
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	Hindu

Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR8

Respondent No: 19
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Aug 15, 2023 17:21:04 pm
Last Seen: Aug 15, 2023 17:21:04 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Purley and Woodcote
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Very concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat concerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Damage to the environment Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

text alerts could be helpful

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Strongly agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Somewhat agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Strongly agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Strongly agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Strongly agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	65-74
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28. **What is your religion?**	No religion
Q29. **Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No

Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR8

Respondent No: 20
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Aug 24, 2023 12:41:25 pm
Last Seen: Aug 24, 2023 12:41:25 pm

Q1.	**Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**	Croydon resident Person who works in Croydon
Q2.	**Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**	Selsdon and Addington Village
Q3.	**Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**	not answered
Q4.	**Which Croydon ward do you work in?**	not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from groundwater	Very concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Very concerned
Flooding from sewers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Very concerned

Q6.	**If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**	Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops) Climate change and increasing rainfall Damage to the environment Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths) Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**

not answered

Q8.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**	Somewhat agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q10.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**	Somewhat agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q12.	**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**	Somewhat agree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

not answered

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

not answered

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Somewhat agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

Objective 5 - sustainability is vital for Croydon's prosperity, growth isn't. The current objective starts from the assumption that growth must happen but this isn't correct. Continuous growth is not possible with finite resources and so sustainability should be a limit to growth not an enabler.

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Neither agree nor disagree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

There appears to be a very limited role for the Parks Department in delviering this plan but management of our green and blue spaces should be a key element of flood management

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

not answered

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Male
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	Yes
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	45-54

Q27.	**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
Q28.	**What is your religion?**	No religion
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	No
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	not answered
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	CR2

Respondent No: 21
Login: Anonymous

Responded At: Aug 24, 2023 23:09:13 pm
Last Seen: Aug 24, 2023 23:09:13 pm

Q1. **Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)**
Croydon resident
Croydon councillor

Q2. **Please select the Croydon ward you live in:**
Park Hill and Whitgift

Q3. **Which Croydon ward is your business based in?**
not answered

Q4. **Which Croydon ward do you work in?**
not answered

Q5. **How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)**

Flooding from large rivers	Neutral
Flooding from groundwater	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from surface water and heavy rainfall	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from sewers	Somewhat concerned
Flooding from ditches, small streams or small rivers	Somewhat concerned

Q6. **If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:**
Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
Lack of access to parks, green spaces or outdoor facilities
Climate change and increasing rainfall
Damage to the environment
Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
Risks to public health

Q7. **Please say if there is anything else you want to comment on about flooding in Croydon:**
not answered

Q8. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?**
Strongly agree

Q9. **Please explain why you disagree**
not answered

Q10. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?**
Somewhat agree

Q11. **Please explain why you disagree**
Much clearer from the appendix - include in body of text rather than as an appendix?

Q12. **How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?**
Neither agree nor disagree

Q13. **Please explain why you disagree**

Main areas of risk are not outlined clearly in this section.

Q14. **Are there any other authorities, agencies, groups or people responsible for flooding in Croydon that you feel should be included in this section? If so, please tell us who and why?**

Charities like Thames 21

Q15. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?**	Somewhat agree

Q16. **If you disagree with any of the proposed objectives, tell us which one(s) and why?**

not answered

Q17. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?**	Somewhat agree

Q18. **If you disagree with any of the proposed measures, tell us which one(s) and why?**

Would like reports on flood investigations to be made publicly available Objective 4: Add timeframe to flood response Objective 7: add frequency to meetings

Q19. **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c**	Somewhat agree

Q20. **Please explain why you disagree and what you think we should do to improve it**

not answered

Q21. **Is there anything else you would like us to consider as part of this strategy review?**

Midway review of strategy in 2026

Q22. **What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)**	Female
Q23. **This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)**	**No - please say what your gender is:** Nonbinary demiwoman
Q24. **Are you married or in a civil partnership?**	Never married and never registered a civil partnership
Q25. **Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?**	No
Q26. **What age range are you in?**	20-24
Q27. **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**	Indian

Q28.	**What is your religion?**	No religion
Q29.	**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**	Yes
Q30.	**Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)**	Hidden disability: autism (ASD) Hidden disability: ADHD
Q31.	**Please tell us the first three digits only of your postcode where you live e.g. CR0:**	Cr0

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APPENDIX 4

Project Report

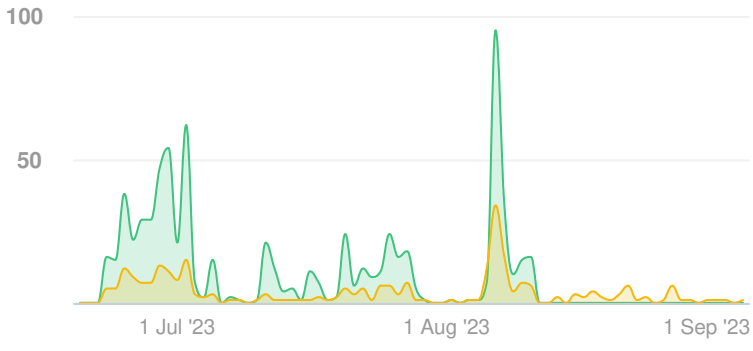
18 June 2023 - 01 September 2023

Get Involved Croydon

Have your say on flood risk management in Croydon

BANG THE TABLE engagementHQ

Visitors Summary



Highlights

TOTAL VISITS	MAX VISITORS PER DAY
320	34

NEW REGISTRATIONS
0

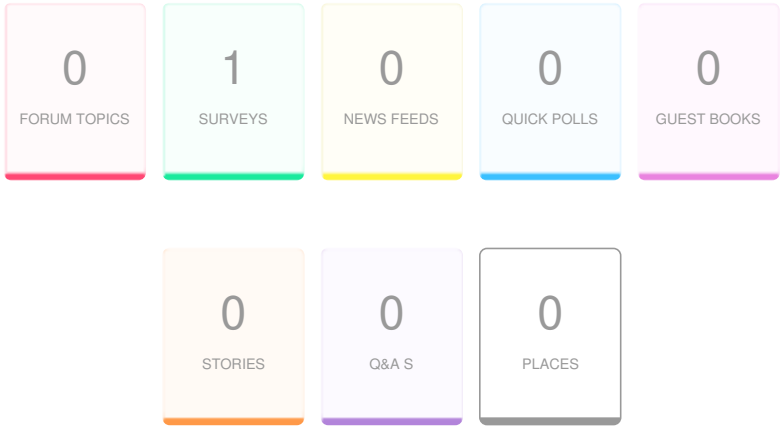
ENGAGED VISITORS	INFORMED VISITORS	AWARE VISITORS
20	107	224

Aware Participants	224
Aware Actions Performed	**Participants**
Visited a Project or Tool Page	224

Informed Participants	107
Informed Actions Performed	**Participants**
Viewed a video	0
Viewed a photo	0
Downloaded a document	62
Visited the Key Dates page	0
Visited an FAQ list Page	0
Visited Instagram Page	0
Visited Multiple Project Pages	89
Contributed to a tool (engaged)	20

Engaged Participants	20		
Engaged Actions Performed	**Registered**	**Unverified**	**Anonymous**
Contributed on Forums	0	0	0
Participated in Surveys	0	0	20
Contributed to Newsfeeds	0	0	0
Participated in Quick Polls	0	0	0
Posted on Guestbooks	0	0	0
Contributed to Stories	0	0	0
Asked Questions	0	0	0
Placed Pins on Places	0	0	0
Contributed to Ideas	0	0	0

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS SUMMARY



Tool Type	Engagement Tool Name	Tool Status	Visitors	Contributors		
				Registered	Unverified	Anonymous
Survey Tool	Have your say on our local flood risk strategy	Archived	72	0	0	20

INFORMATION WIDGET SUMMARY

3	0	0	0	0
DOCUMENTS	PHOTOS	VIDEOS	FAQS	KEY DATES

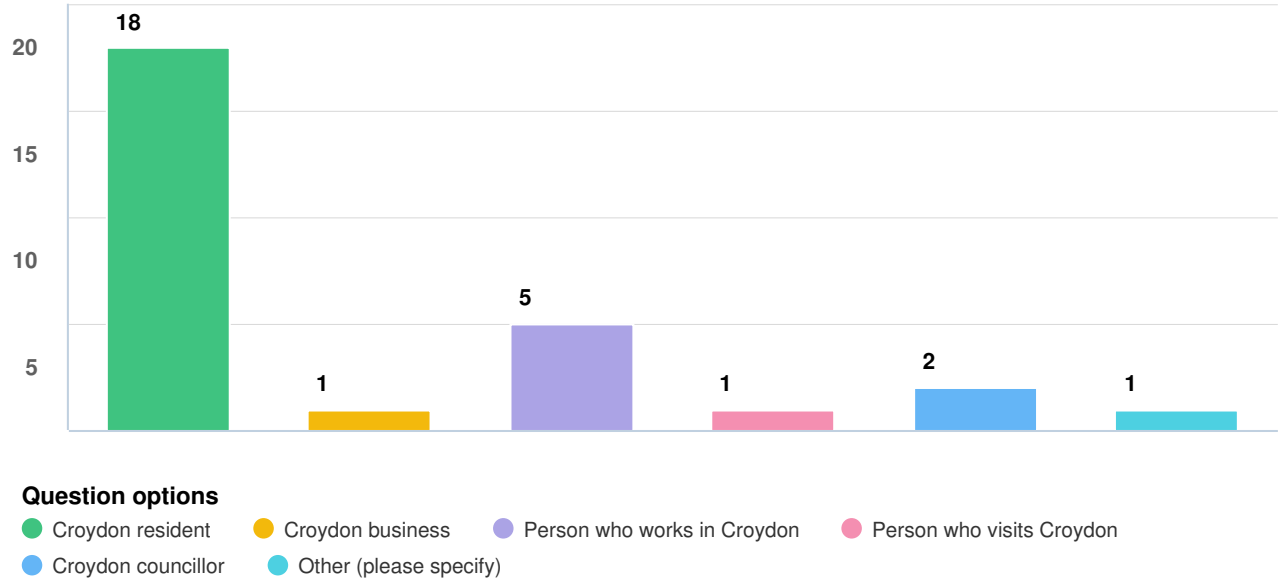
Widget Type	Engagement Tool Name	Visitors	Views/Downloads
Document	Appendix E - Croydon flood risk maps	32	43
Document	Croydon LFRMS 2023	23	27
Document	deleted document from	23	29
Document	Appendix C - Action Plan	21	28

ENGAGEMENT TOOL: SURVEY TOOL

Have your say on our local flood risk strategy

Visitors 72	Contributors 20	CONTRIBUTIONS 21

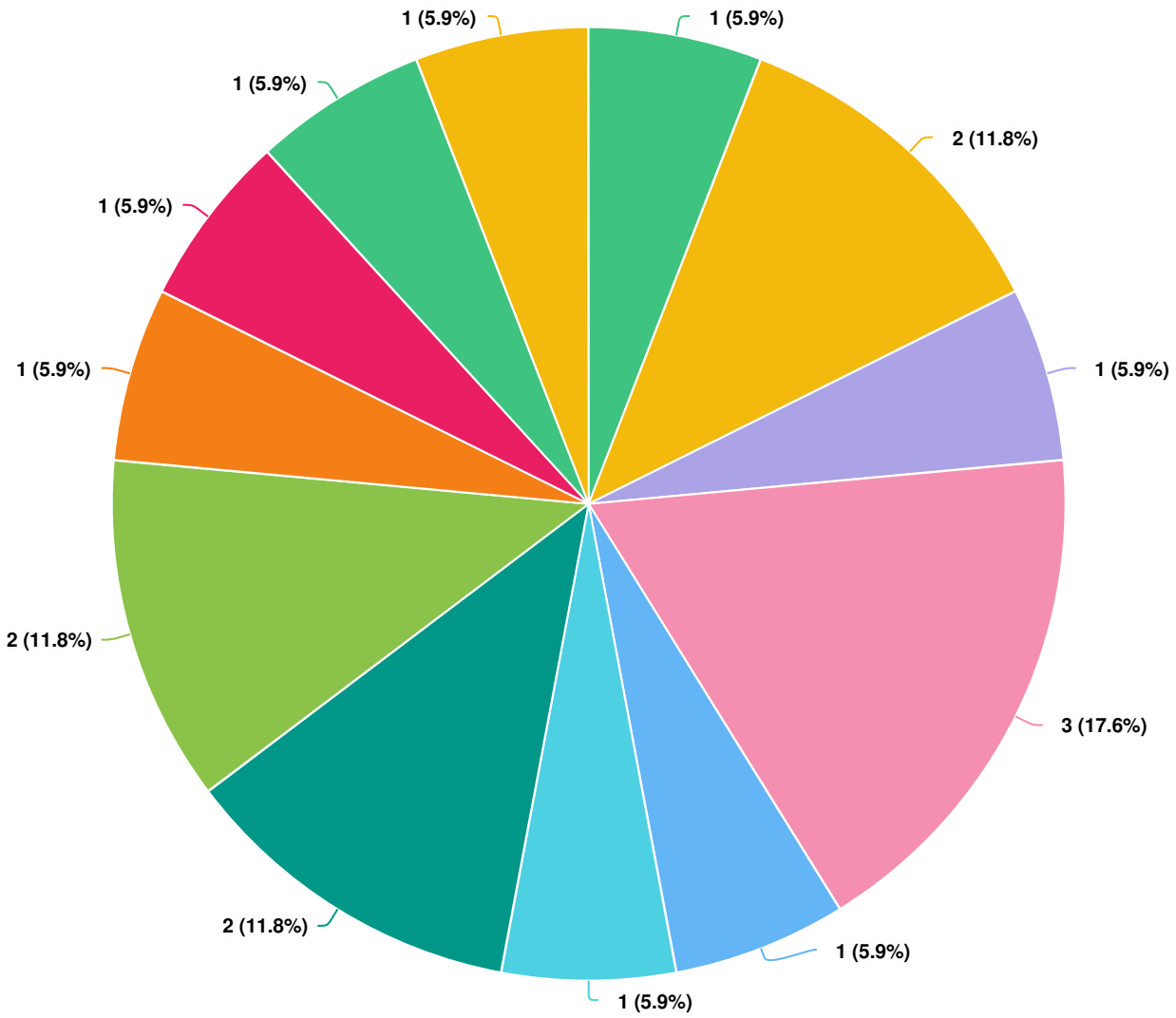
Are you completing this survey as a:(select all that apply)



Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Please select the Croydon ward you live in:



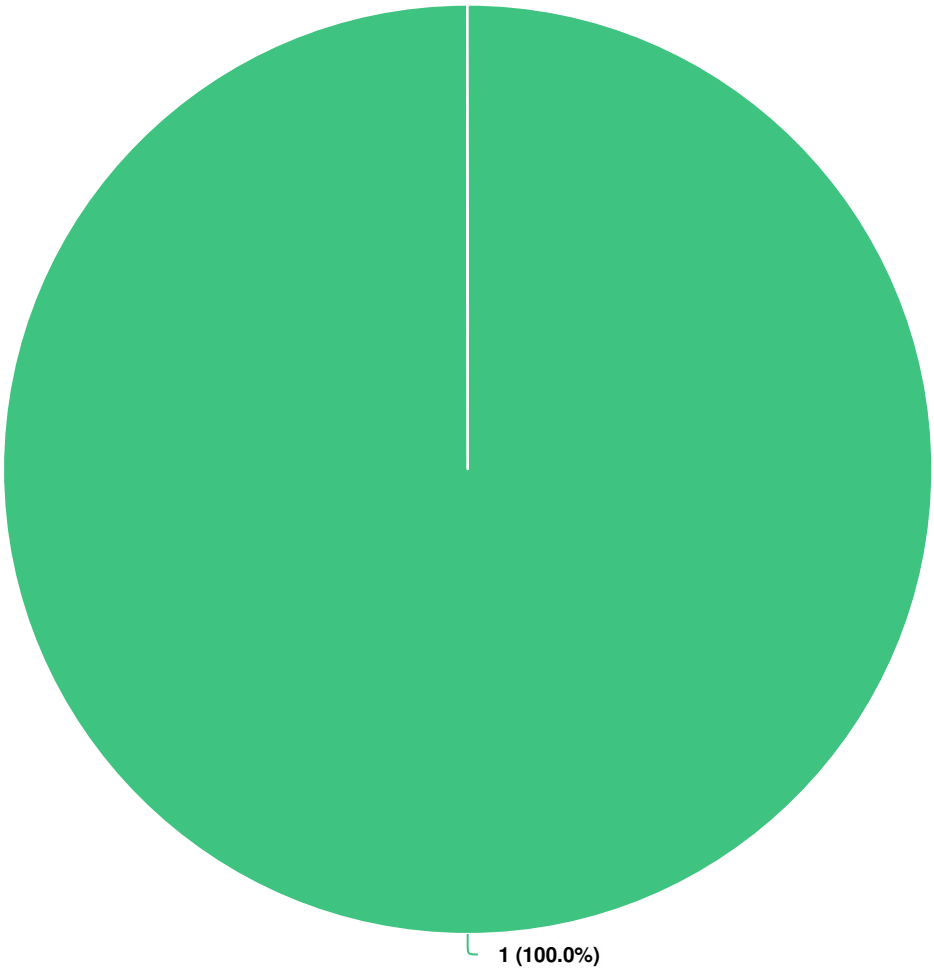
Question options

Addiscombe East | Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood | Fairfield | Kenley | Norbury and Pollards Hill | Park Hill and Whitgift | Purley and Woodcote | Selsdon and Addington Village | Thornton Heath | Waddon | Woodside | Prefer not to say

Optional question (17 response(s), 4 skipped)

Question type: Dropdown Question

Which Croydon ward is your business based in?



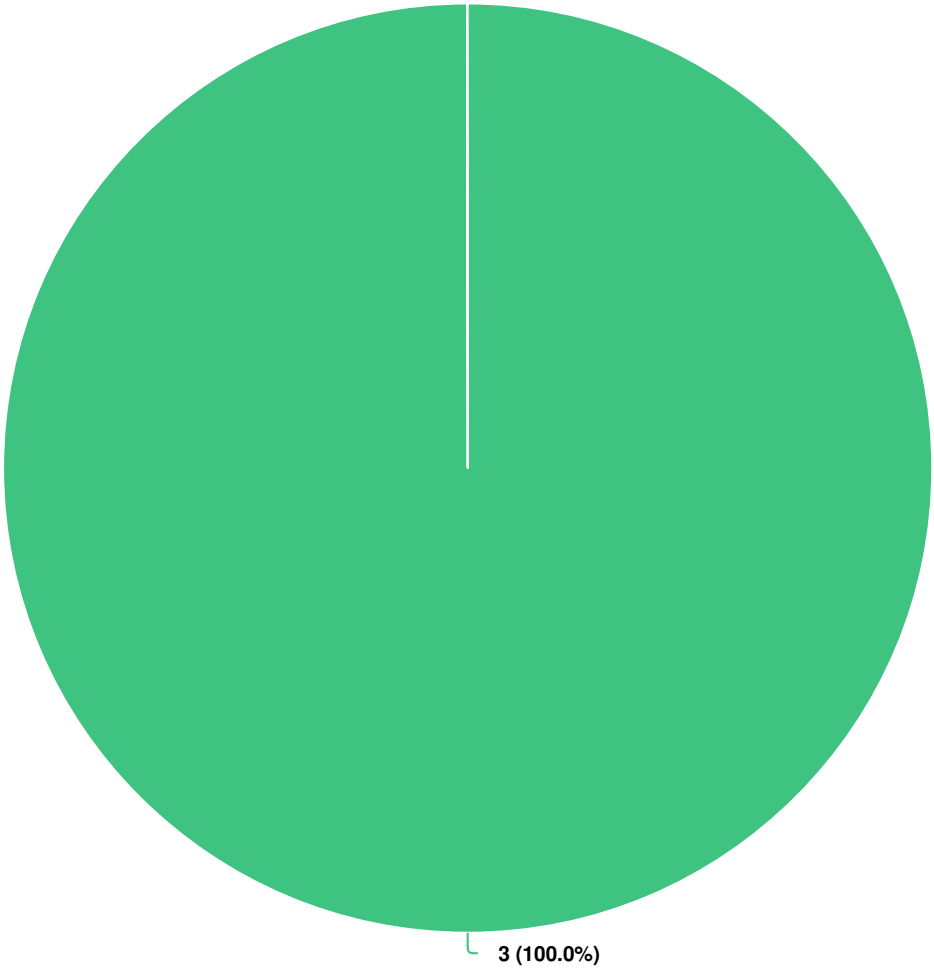
Question options

- Prefer not to say

Optional question (1 response(s), 20 skipped)

Question type: Dropdown Question

Which Croydon ward do you work in?



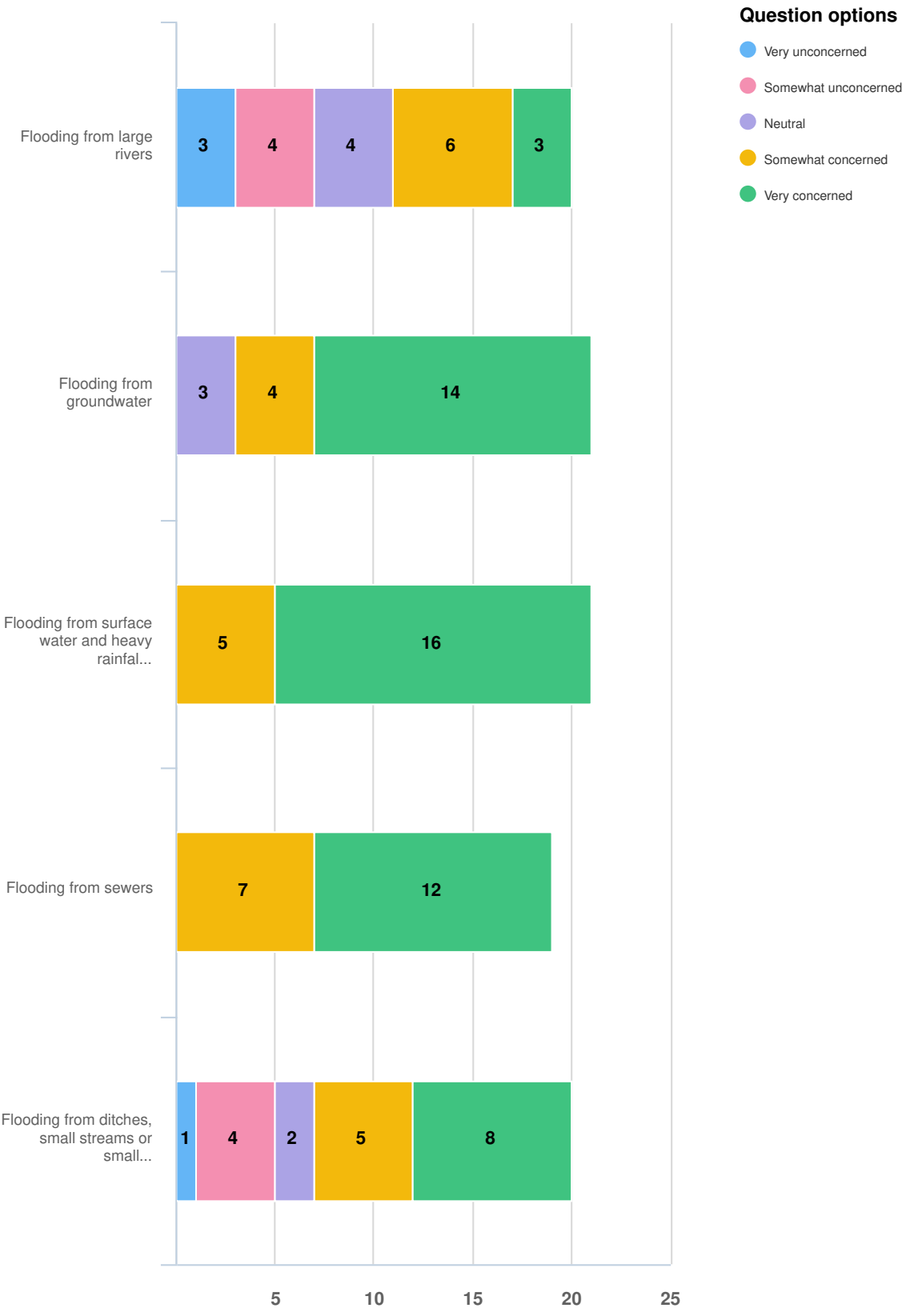
Question options

- Fairfield

Optional question (3 response(s), 18 skipped)

Question type: Dropdown Question

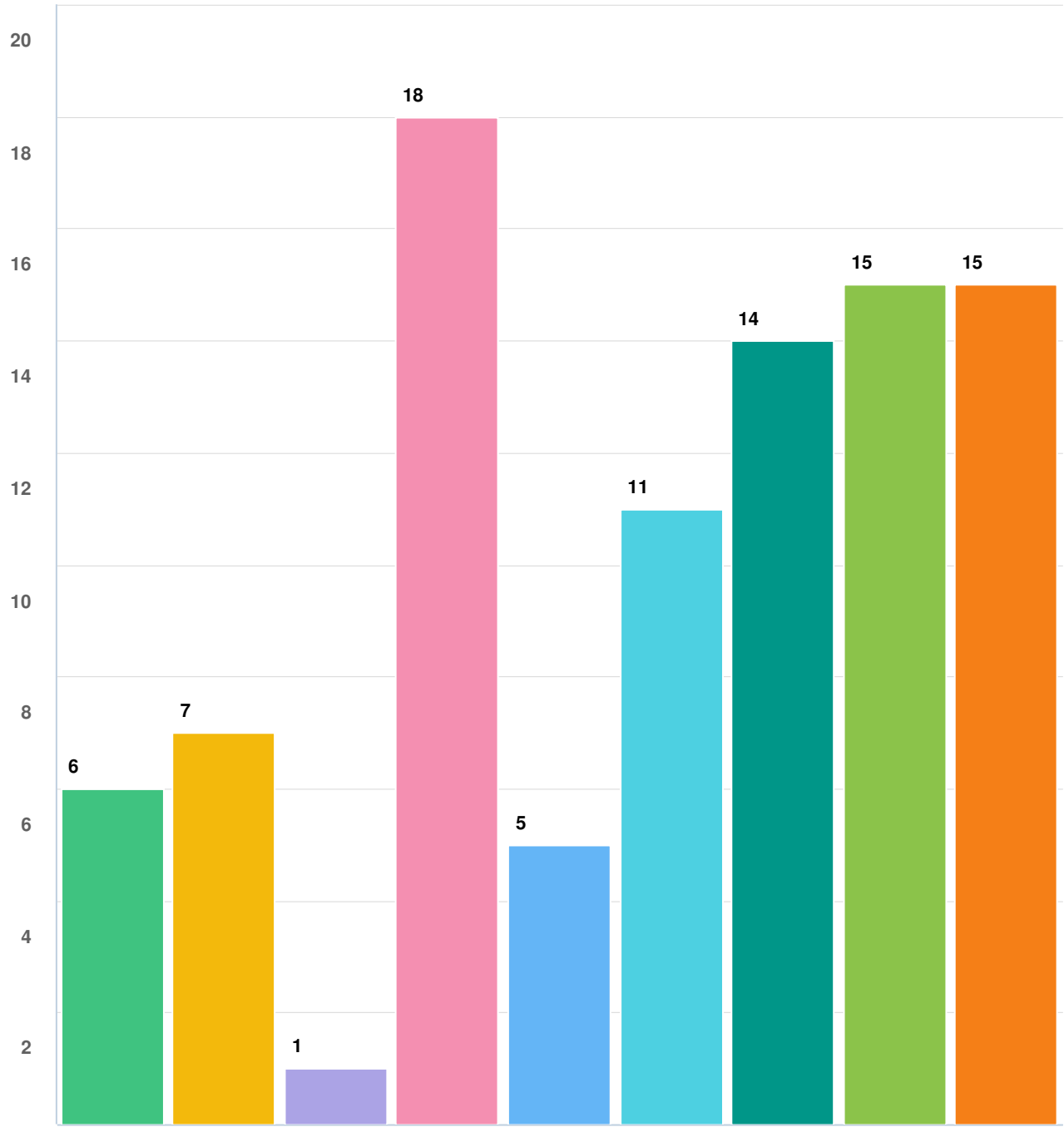
How concerned or not concerned are you about flooding in Croydon? (select all that apply)



Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Likert Question

If you said you were concerned about flooding in Croydon, please explain why:



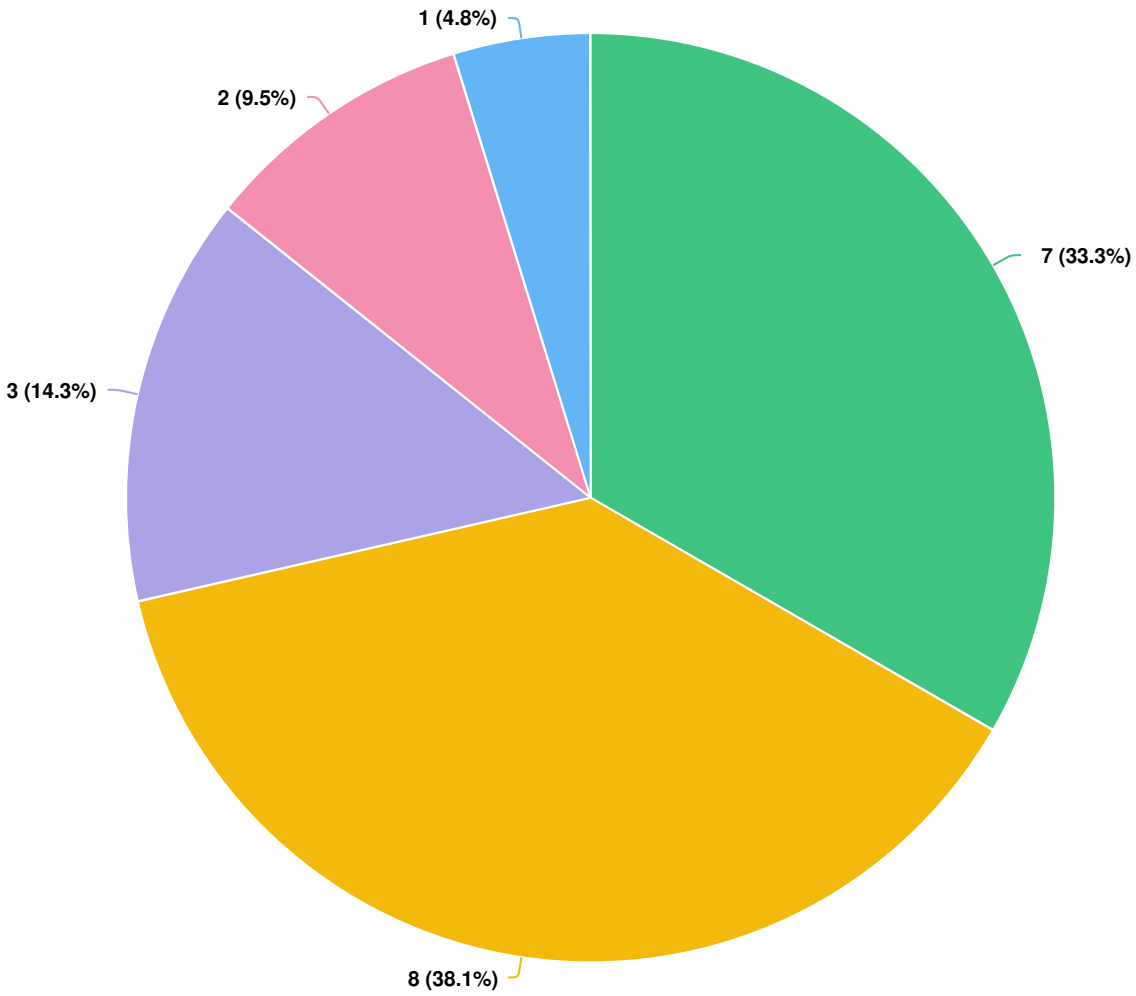
Question options

- Risks to public health
- Disruption to travel (e.g. flooding of roads, rail lines, footpaths)
- Damage to the environment
- Climate change and increasing rainfall
- Lack of access to parks, green spaces or outdoor facilities
- Flooding of local facilities (e.g schools, doctors, shops)
- Damage or disruption to my business
- Damage to my garden, driveway or outbuildings
- Damage to my home

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear what Croydon Council's role is in flood risk management for the borough?



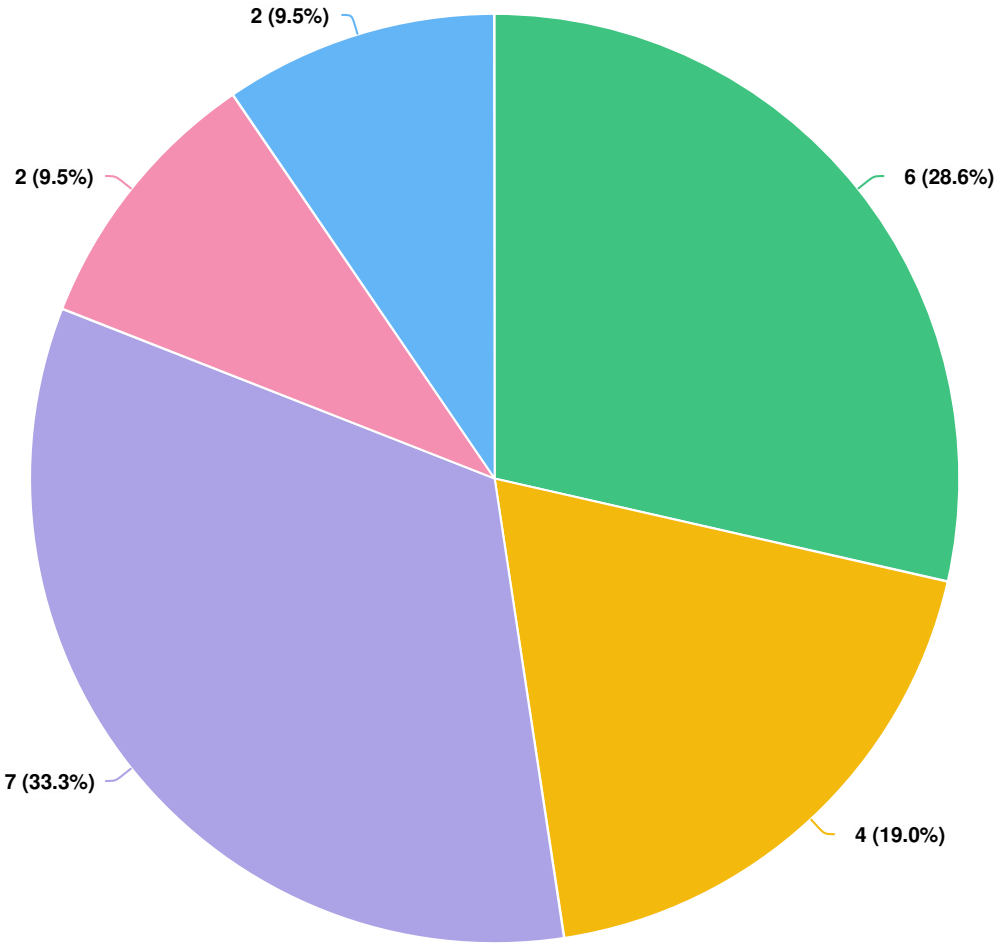
Question options

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

How strongly do you agree or disagree that it is clear which authority is responsible for certain types of flood risk?



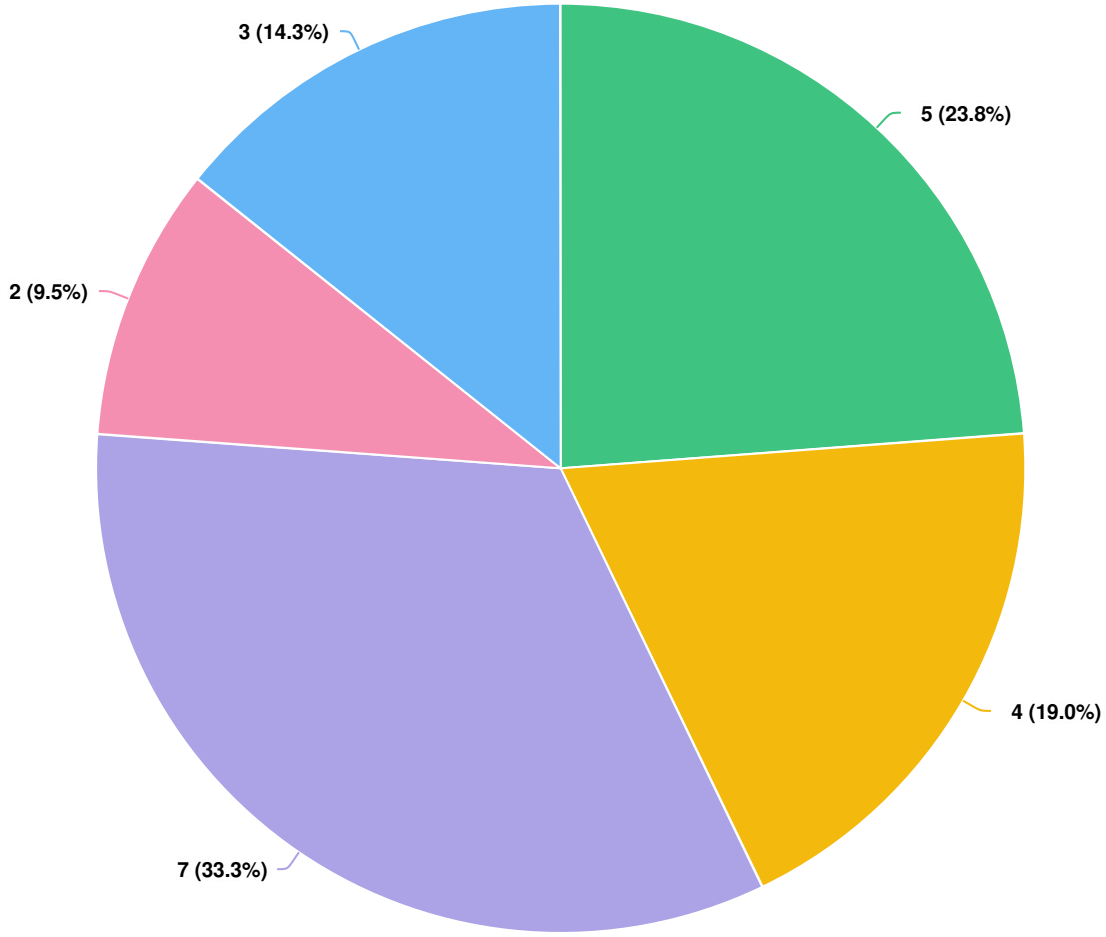
Question options

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

How strongly do you agree or disagree that the assessment of flood risk covers the main areas of risk in Croydon?



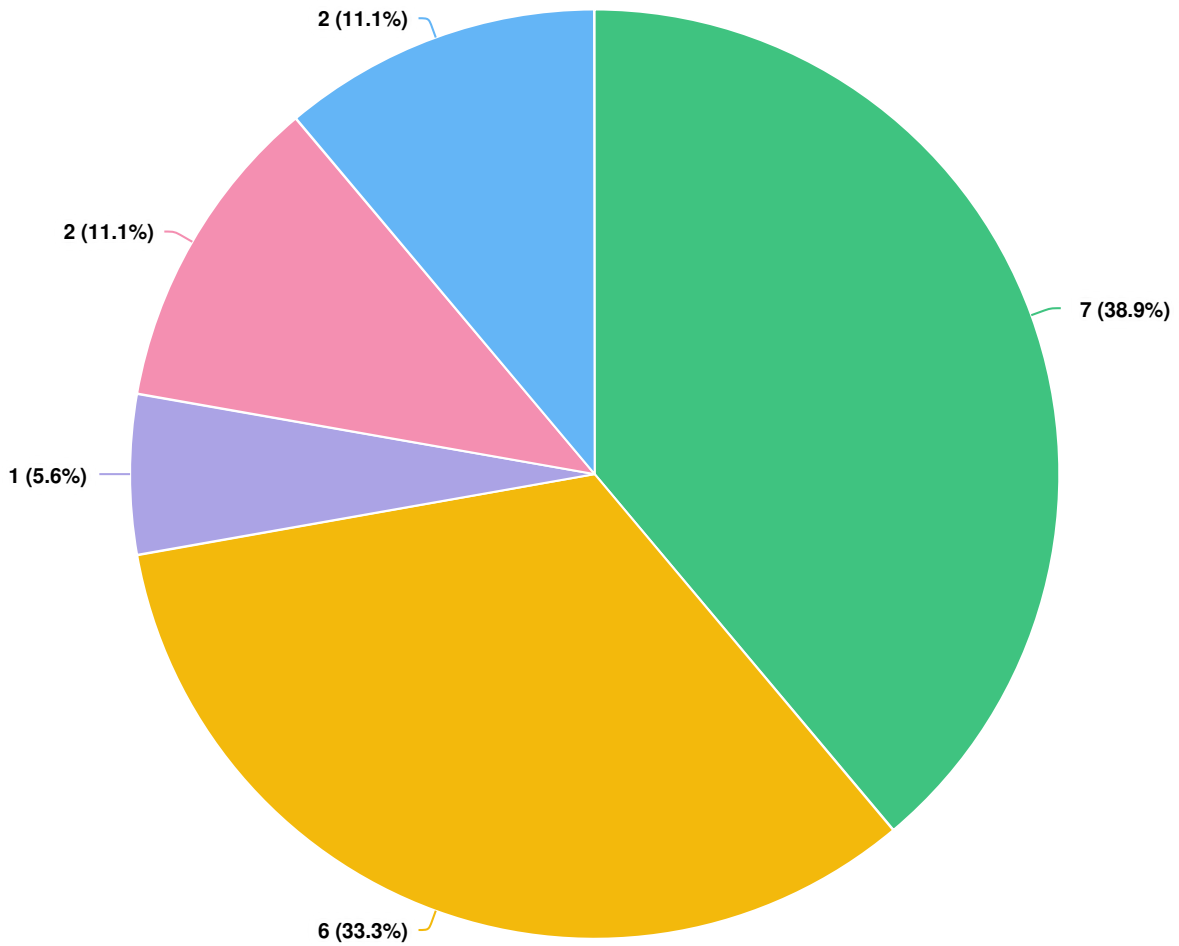
Question options

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed objectives for managing flood risk?



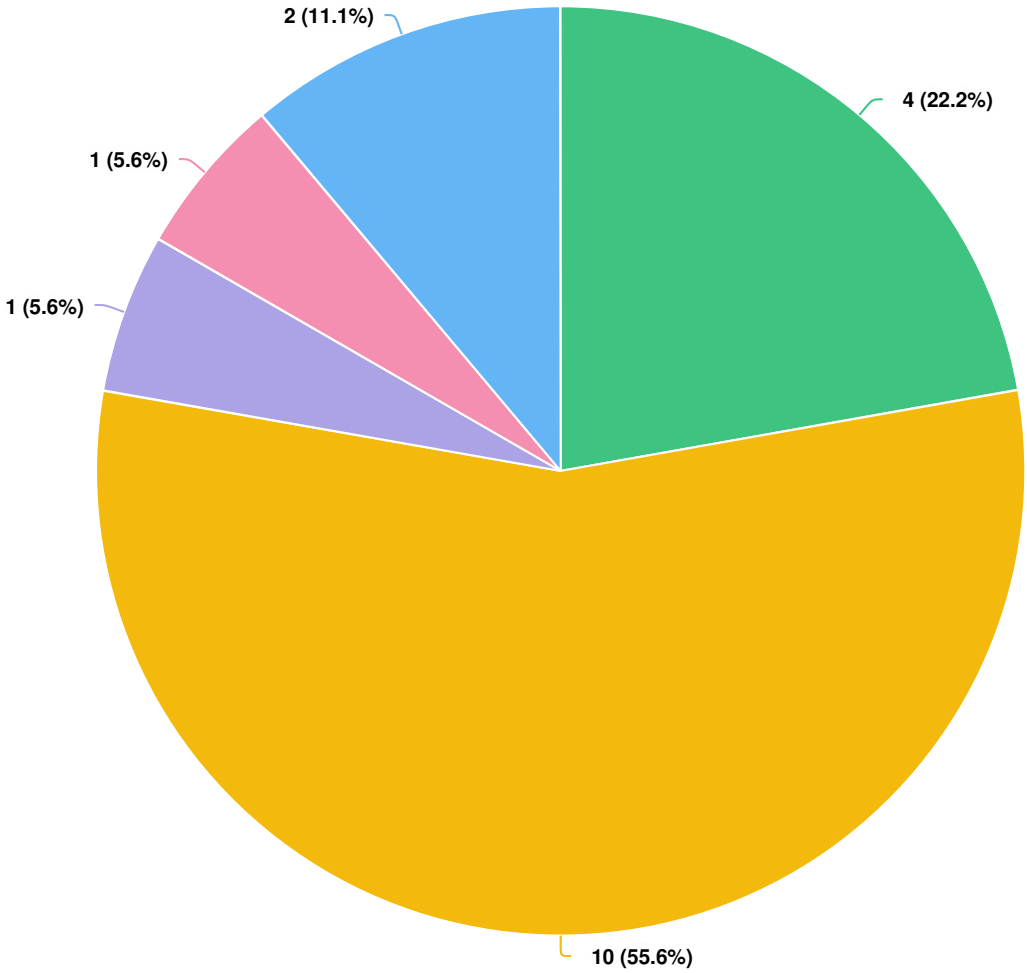
Question options

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

Optional question (18 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed measures to achieve the objectives?



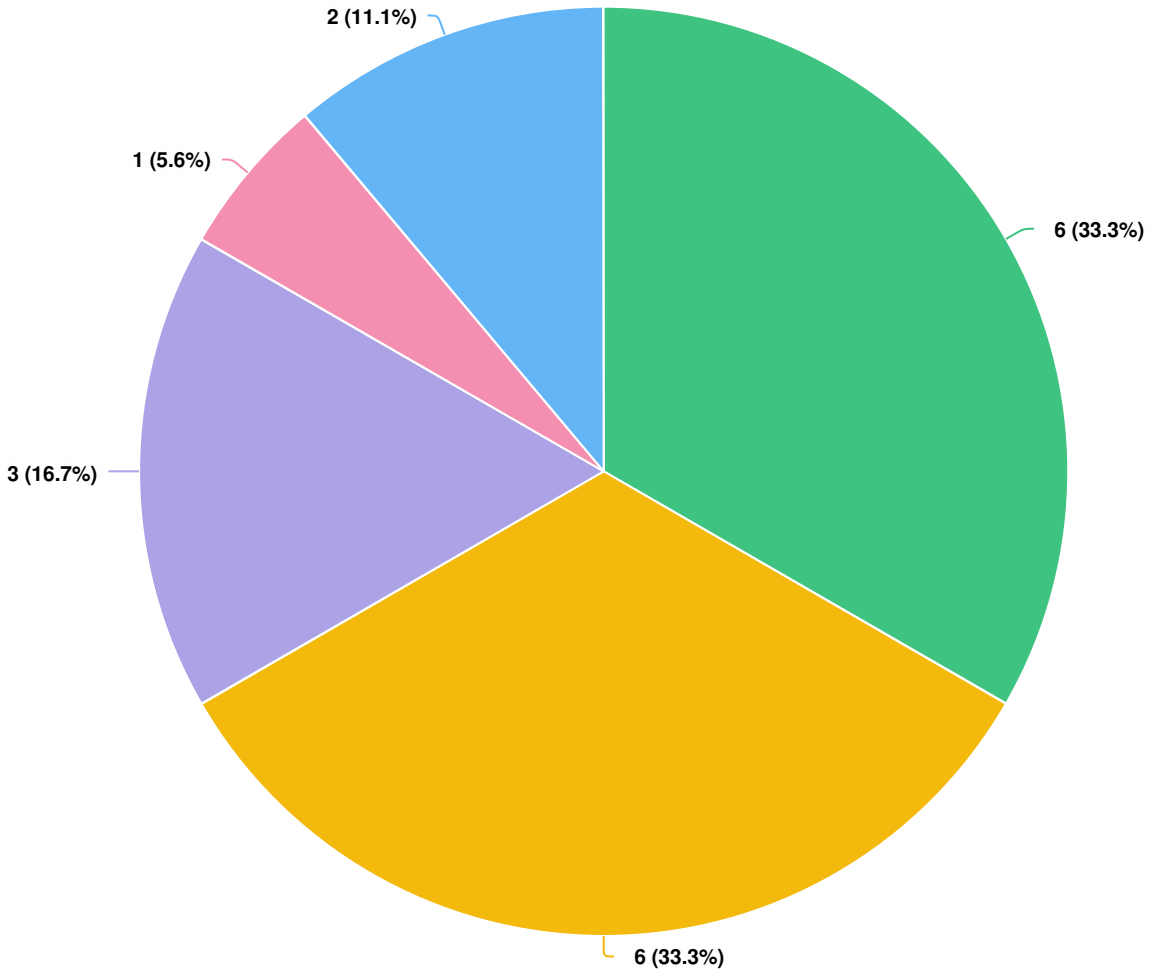
Question options

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

Optional question (18 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the action plan that details how we will monitor the progress of the objectives? appendix c



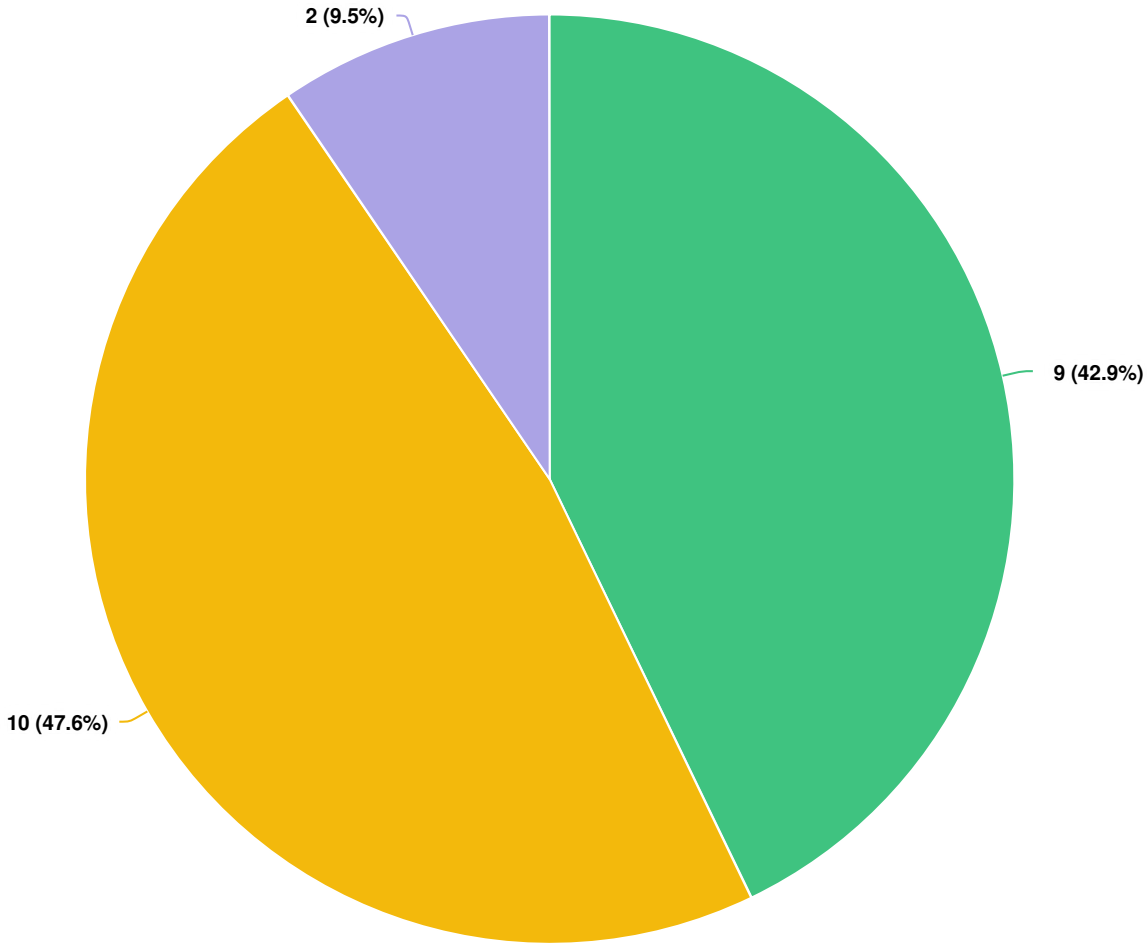
Question options

Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree

Optional question (18 response(s), 3 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

What is your sex? (a question about gender identity will follow if you are aged 16 or over)



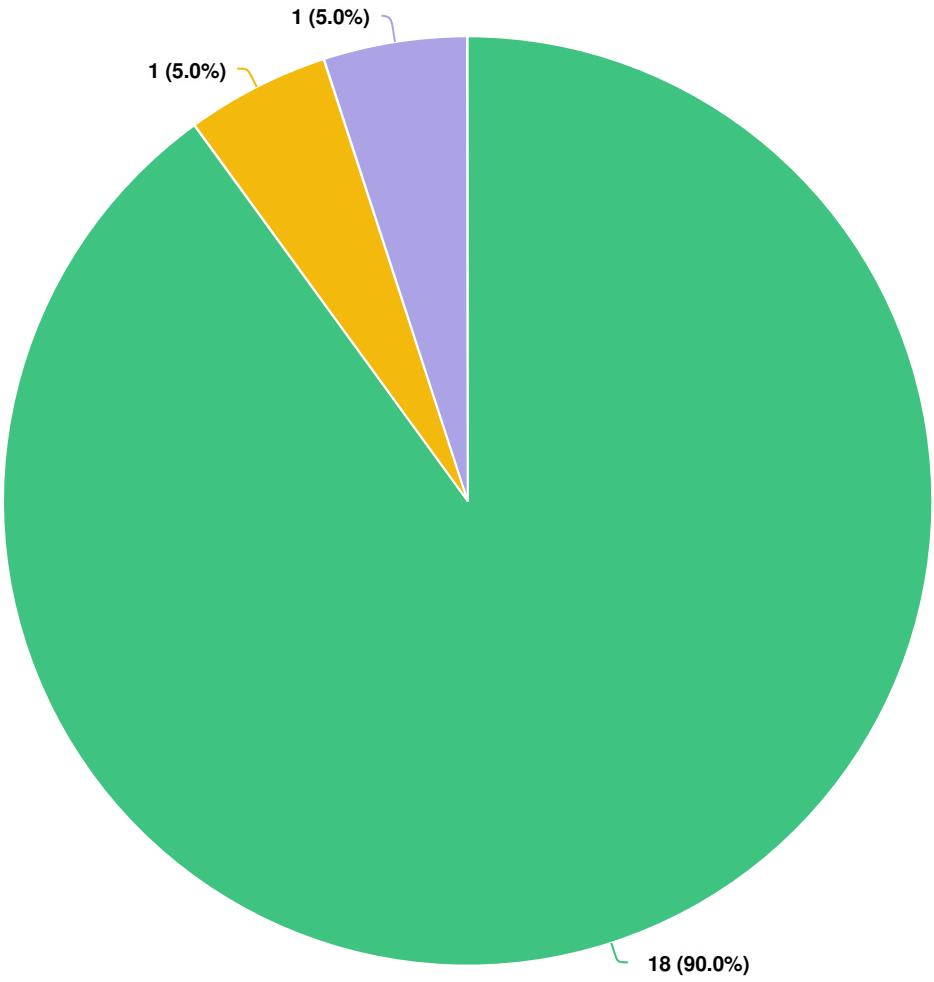
Question options

Prefer not to say Male Female

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

This question is for respondents aged 16 and over: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? (this question is voluntary)



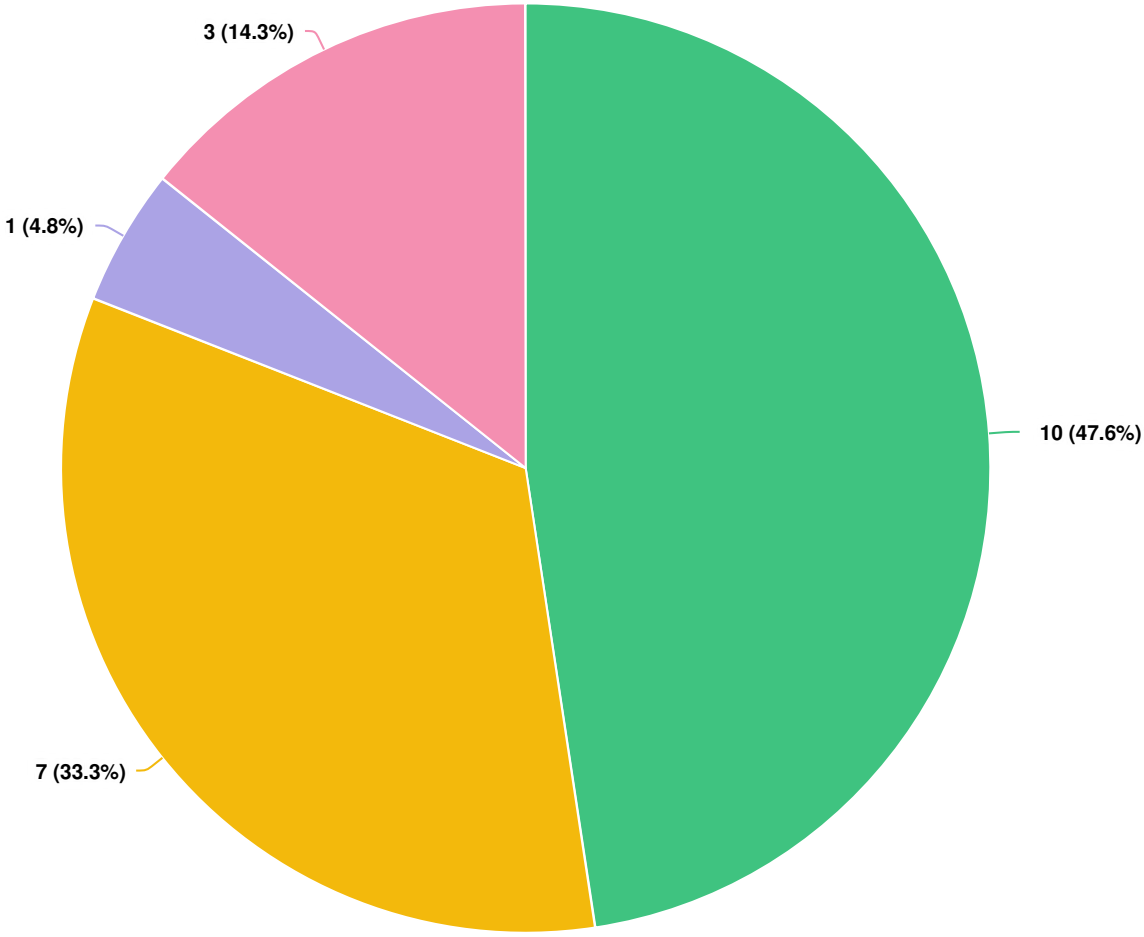
Question options

No - please say what your gender is: Prefer not to say Yes

Optional question (20 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Are you married or in a civil partnership?



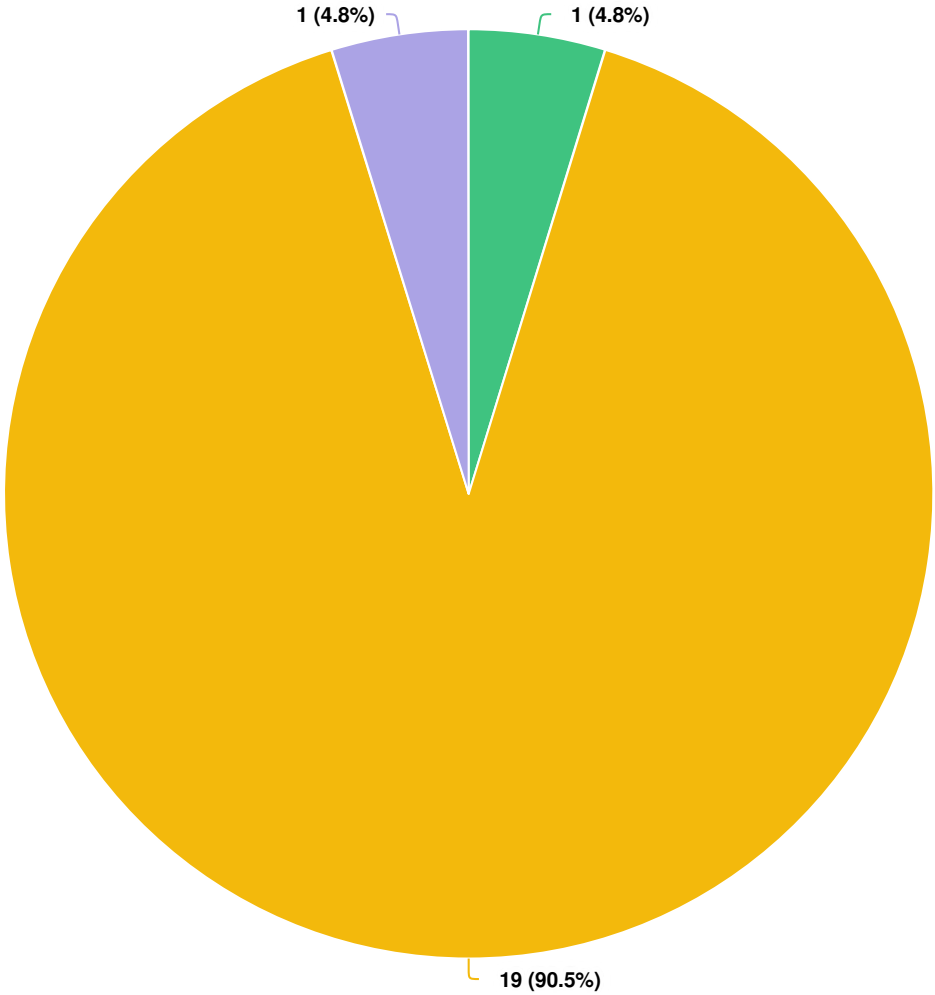
Question options

Prefer not to say | Divorced | Married | Never married and never registered a civil partnership

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Have you or your partner had a baby in the last 12 months?



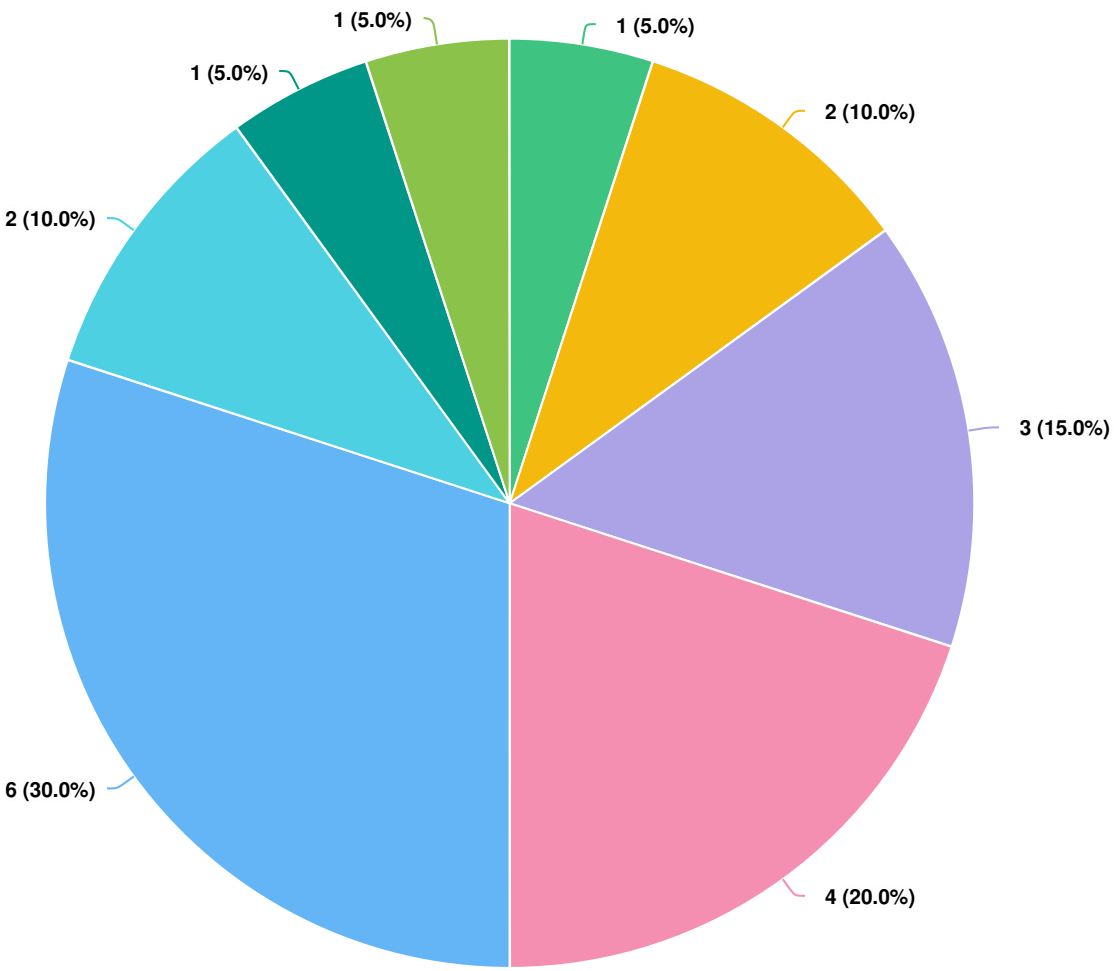
Question options

Prefer not to say No Yes

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

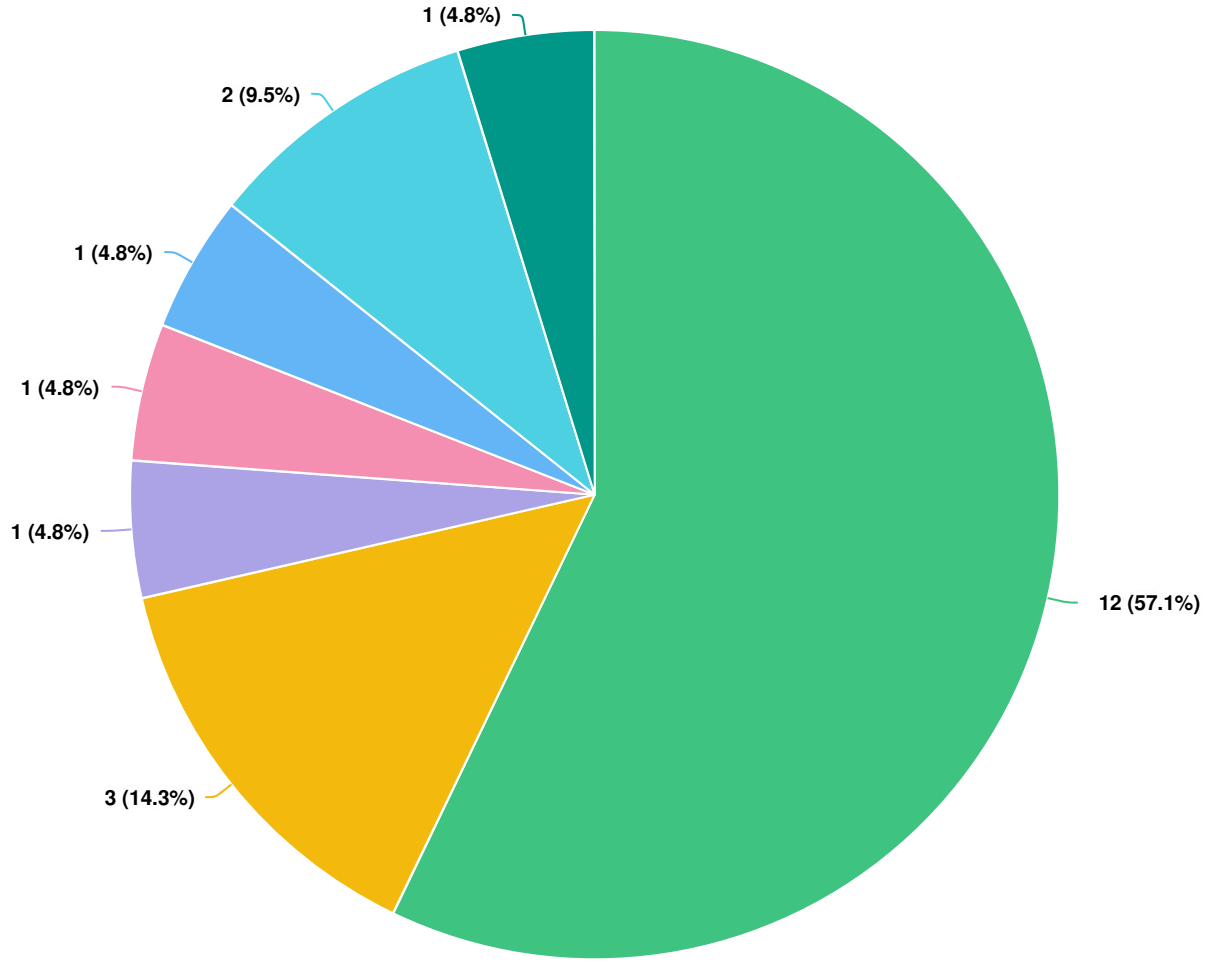
What age range are you in?



Optional question (20 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

How would you describe your ethnic origin?



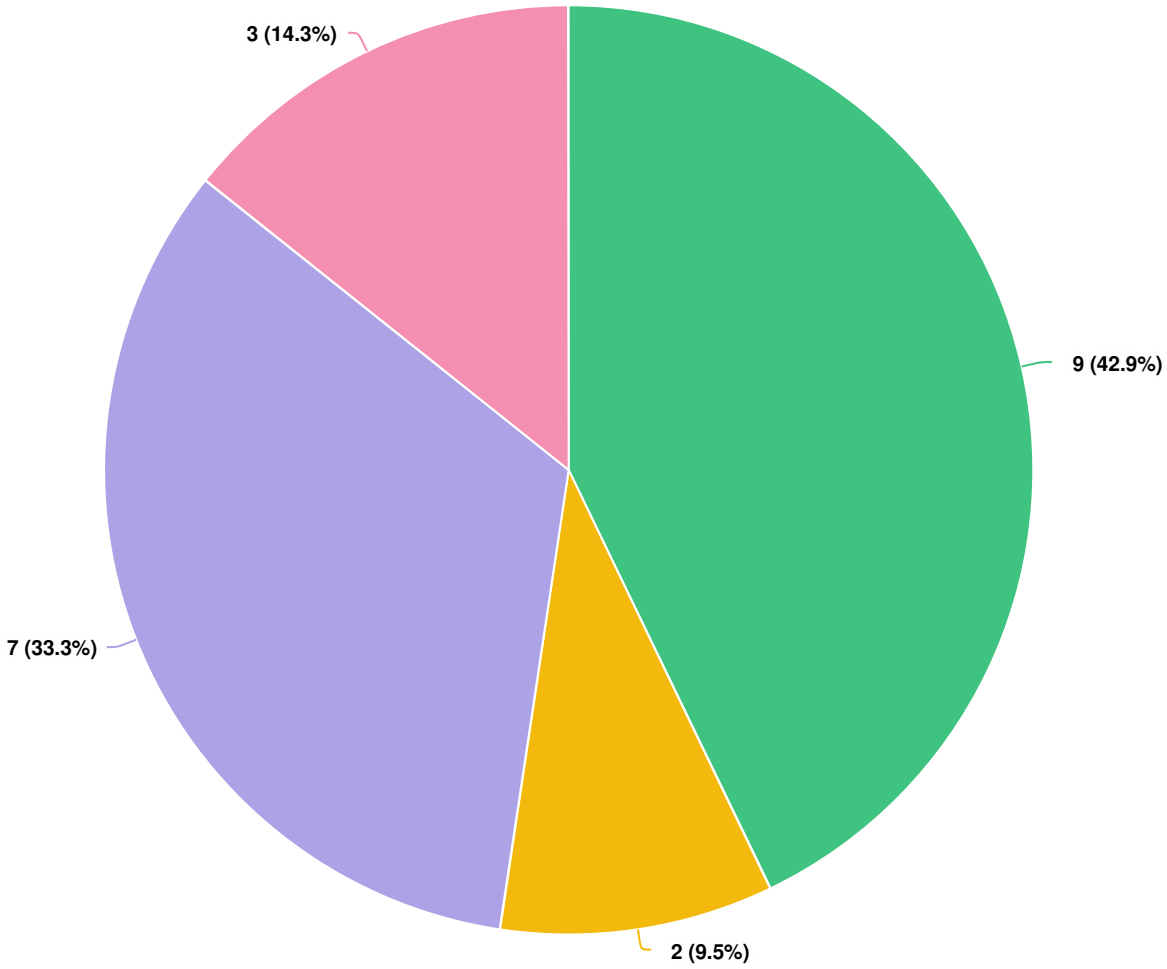
Question options

Other (please specify) Prefer not to say Back Caribbean Black African Chinese Indian
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

What is your religion?



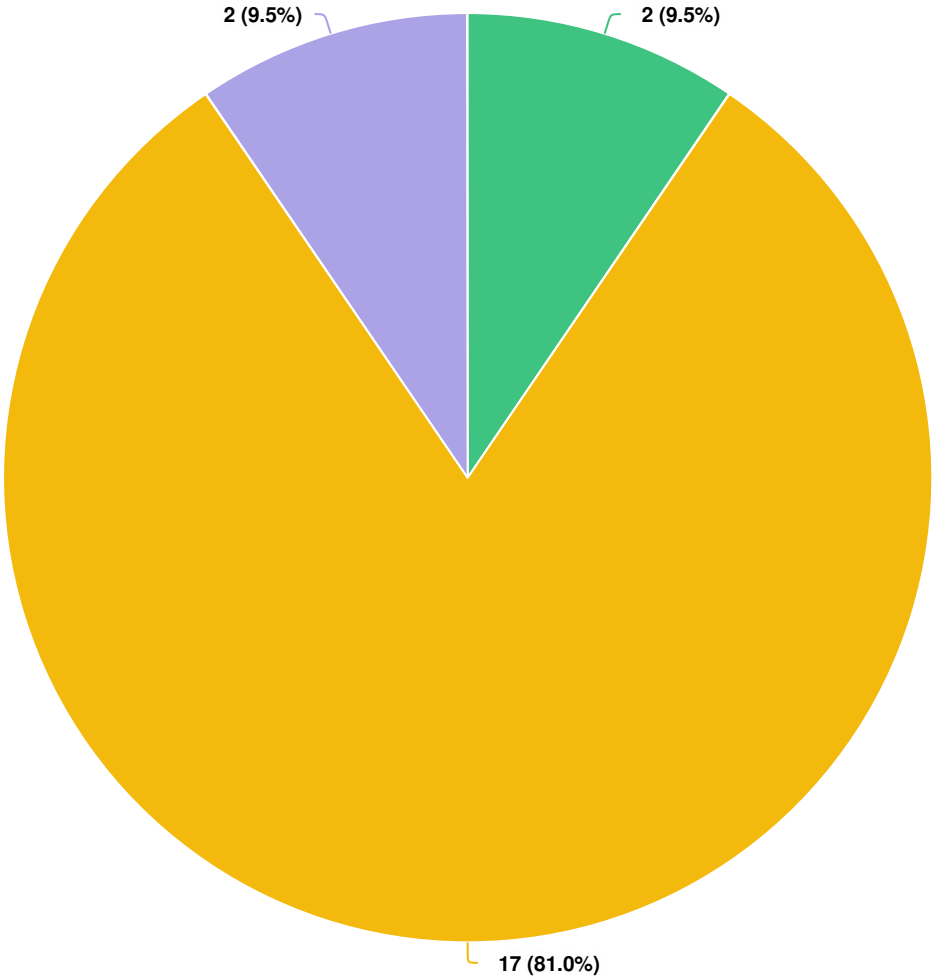
Question options

Prefer not to say No religion Hindu Christian

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



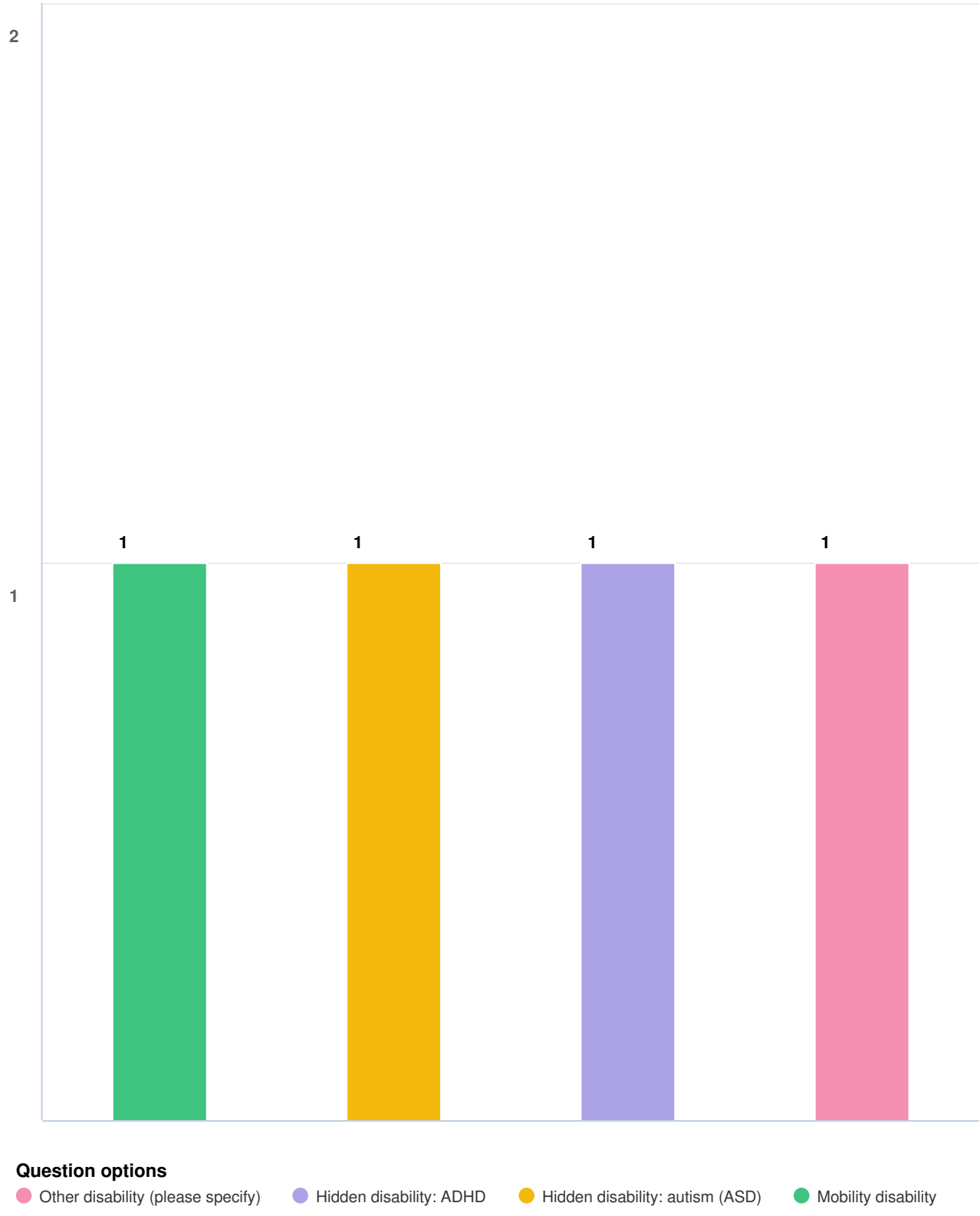
Question options

Prefer not to say No Yes

Optional question (21 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Please select the disability(ies) you consider yourself to have:(select all that apply)



Optional question (2 response(s), 19 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Equality Analysis Form

CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term **'proposed change'** broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria.

2. Proposed change

Directorate	**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES, REGENERATION & ECONOMIC RECOVERY**
Title of proposed change	**Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2023**
Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	**Darragh Creegan, Flood Risk Officer**

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) set new statutory responsibilities for managing flood risk and gives local authorities the lead role for managing local flood risk through the creation of Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) while the Environment Agency (EA) was given a strategic overview role. Local flood risk relates to the risk of flooding from surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater. The FWMA under Section 9 places a responsibility on the Council, as a LLFA to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management and requires it to be consistent with the National Strategy which was published by the EA in July 2020.

The LFRMS will form the basis on which the Council, as LLFA will manage local flood risk in the borough for the next 5 years. The Strategy aligns with the EA's National Strategy while being relevant at local level. Objectives and measures have been drafted in collaboration between Highways, Development Management, Spatial Planning, Corporate Resilience, Parks and Green Spaces, ICT Systems and GIS, Building Control and Environmental, collectively known as the LBC Flood Management Group. These objectives and measures relate to funding for local flood risk management, new development and nature based solutions, asset management, resident and business owner understanding of and preparedness for flood risk, sustainable growth, understanding of current and future flood risk and collaboration with other risk management authorities. An action plan has been drafted alongside the Strategy which will help the Council meet these objectives and measures.

3. Impact of the proposed change

Important Note: It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. Who benefits and how (and who, therefore doesn't and why?) Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic.
Where an impact is unknown, state so. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments http://www.croydonobservatory.org/ Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

3.1 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

Table 1 – Positive/Negative impact

For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. . If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.

Protected characteristic group(s)	Positive impact	Negative impact	Source of evidence

Age	The elderly can be particularly vulnerable to flood risk as they may be less able to take action and/or evacuate their property. They may also be less resilient in recovering from a flood both in terms of health and restoring their property from the impacts of a flood. A reduced risk of flooding will have a positive impact on elderly residents.	No negative impact.	Creating the LFRMS is a requirement of the Council as LLFA under the FWMA 2010. Figures from www.croydonobservatory.org show that the percentage of the population in Croydon over 65 years of age is 13.6%. This is above the London percentage of 11.9% but below the national percentage of 18.4%. The source of these figures is the 2021 census.
Disability	Those with a disability can be particularly vulnerable to flood risk as they may be less able to prepare for a flood and evacuate during a flood if needed. They may be less resilient in recovering from a flood particularly in restoring their property to how it was prior to being flooded. The impact of flooding may also negatively impact the health of people in this group. A reduced risk of flooding will have a positive impact on residents with a disability.	No negative impact.	Data from www.croydonobservatory.org, based on 2021 census data, shows that 14% of the population in Croydon is classed as disabled under the Equality Act. This is compared to a London average of 12.5%. This places Croydon at 24 out of 32 London boroughs plus the City of London in terms of the percentage of the population with a disability. The same data shows that under the Equality Act, 6.1% of the population in Croydon are limited a lot in their day today activities. This compares to a London percentage of 5.7% and a national percentage of 7.3%.
Sex	No impact.	No negative impact.	N/A
Gender Reassignment	No impact.	No negative impact.	N/A
Marriage or Civil Partnership	No impact.	No negative impact.	N/A
Religion or belief	No impact.	No negative impact.	N/A

Race	No impact.	No negative impact.	N/A
Sexual Orientation	No impact.	No negative impact.	N/A
Pregnancy or Maternity	Those who are pregnant may be less able to evacuate during a flood event if needed. Through informing residents on how to better prepare for a flood event, and reducing the risk of flooding, the strategy will have a positive impact on this group.	No negative impact.	There is limited data available on pregnancy in the borough although data taken from www.croydonobservatory.org, which is based on the GLA DataStore 2020 and ONS births 2020, shows that there were 5,304 births in the borough in 2019. The general trend is showing that there is a decline in the number of births per year in the borough in the period 2010 to 2019.

Important note: You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics. **Please use table 4 to record actions that will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact**

3.2 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

Table 2 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table. Please use the table below to describe any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposed change. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:

Additional information needed and or Consultation Findings	Information source	Date for completion

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation

3.3 Impact scores

Example
If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact)
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood** (2) x **Severity** (2**) = 4**

Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

Severity of Impact				
	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	Likelihood of Impact			

Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
6 – 9	High
3 – 5	Medium
1 – 3	Low

Equality Analysis

Table 3 – Impact scores

Column 1 PROTECTED GROUP	Column 2 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **likelihood** of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 3 SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **severity** of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 4 EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE Calculate the **equality impact score** for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group. **Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.**
Age	2	2	4
Disability	2	2	2
Sex	1	1	1
Gender reassignment	1	1	1
Marriage / Civil Partnership	1	1	1
Race	1	1	1
Religion or belief	1	1	1
Sexual Orientation	1	1	1
Pregnancy or Maternity	2	2	2

DRAFT

4. Statutory duties

4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups ☐

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation ☐

Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups ☐

Important note: If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

Important note: Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative impact identified in Table 1. Attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc:

Table 4 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.

Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Disability				
Race				
Sex (gender)				
Gender reassignment				
Sexual orientation				

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Age				
Religion or belief				
Pregnancy or maternity				
Marriage/civil partnership				

6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter **X** in column 3 (**Conclusion**) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.

Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. **If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision**.	X
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. **If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form**	
Continue the proposed change	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. **If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.**	
Stop or amend the proposed change	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	

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Equality Analysis

Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet	Meeting title: Cabinet Date: 31 January 2024

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision	
Equalities Lead	**Name:** Naseer Ahmad **Date:** 09/11/2023 **Position:** Interim Senior Equalities Officer
Director	**Name:** **Karen Agbabiaka** **Date: 18/12/2023** **Position: Director of Streets and Environment**

DRAFT

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	**CABINET**	
DATE OF DECISION	**January 31 2024**	
REPORT TITLE:	**Building Safety Act and Building Control Readiness**	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	**Nick Hibberd, Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery Heather Cheesbrough, Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration**	
LEAD OFFICER:	**Richard Patterson, Head of Building Control Email: Richard.patterson@croydon.gov.uk**	
LEAD MEMBER:	**Cllr Jeet Bains, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration**	
KEY DECISION?	**No**	
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**No**	**N/A**
WARDS AFFECTED:		**All**

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 The report proposes a strategic response to the current dynamic landscape of the building industry, regulatory changes, and Building Control in particular arising from the introduction of the new Building Safety Act and the establishment of the Building Safety Regulator, prompted by the Grenfell tragedy and subsequent Hackitt Report and Public Inquiry. It outlines the transformation of the Council's Building Control service to effectively address these major changes, together with the existing longstanding challenges relating to resourcing and fee income. The primary goal is to establish a service that is not only operationally resilient but also financially viable, sustainable, and highly efficient.

1.2 The recommended programme helps further several of the Mayor's Business Plan outcomes and priorities, including:

- The council balances its books, listens to residents, and delivers good sustainable services
- Priority: Ensure new homes are safe, well-designed and in keeping with the local area

The proposed changes to the service resonate with the broader vision of balancing fiscal health alongside the delivery of quality services.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet, is recommended:

2.1 to note the content of this report and endorse the ongoing in-house transformation of Croydon Building Control

2.2 to note Croydon Building Controls intent to sign up to the Framework Agreement in respect of regional working through a Hub arrangement for the facilitation of Section 13 requests from the Building Safety Regulator under the Building Safety Act 2022

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The advent of the Building Safety Act and the establishment of the Building Safety Regulator mark a pivotal moment reshaping the landscape of building safety management and provisioning of Building Control services. These transformative regulations usher in a new era, requiring a strategic response from Croydon Building Control. Recognising the vast impact of these changes, a comprehensive 5-year transformation program has been initiated. This program aims not only to meet the evolving statutory requirements but also to strengthen the service, making it resilient, cost-efficient, and commercially robust. The vision is a turnaround programme which will position the service on a robust commercial platform to complement the local authority context of a trusted provider and to better respond to the opportunities of in-house fee generating work, which would otherwise be lost to the private sector. The retention and recycling of these monies, allows these to support and maintain a statutory service.

3.2 The transformation into a robust, resilient, and commercially astute service creates a strong platform from which further collaboration opportunities can be progressed on terms favourable to the Council and maintains its role as a lead authority in pan-London relationships and influence.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

Building Safety Act and Building Safety Regulator

4.1 The Building Safety Act (BSA) received Royal Assent on 28th April 2022, and comprises of two significant phased implementation dates 1st October 2023 and the 1st April 2024. Secondary legislation continues to be drafted and introduced at short notice but ongoing engagement through the London District Surveyors Association (LDSA) and Local Authority Building Control (LABC), who represent the voices of local authority Building Control services in London, and England and Wales respectively, continues as they try to negate any negative implications arising from this.

4.2 The Grenfell Tower fire shone a spotlight on the regulatory system in the UK and acted as a catalyst for change, initiating the subsequent ‘Independent Review of Building

Regulations and Fire Safety' by Dame Judith Hackitt and the Public Inquiry, both of which in turn have ushered in the biggest paradigm shift in the Building Control regime in a generation since its commercial sector inception 40 years ago – key developments include:

- transfer of overall oversight from the Department for Housing, Local Government and Communities (DHLUC) to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

- the creation of the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) endowed with robust statutory and regulatory powers, headed up by a Chief Inspector of Buildings signifies a fundamental alteration in the regulatory landscape.

- the BSR assumes the role of the Building Control Authority (BCA) with statutory responsibility for compliance with Building Regulations in all High-Risk Buildings (HRB's). Local authorities are engaged by the BSR as Building Control advisors within the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) in conjunction with the Fire Service in the first instance (the reversion of which to the public sector is a significant reversal of the previous stance of depending on the market);

- at a London-wide level, the creation of a collaborative Hub supported by LDSA in the City of London to service the High-Risk Building requirements of the BSR on behalf of pan London Authorities.

- the BSR will oversee the safety and standard of all buildings and the registration of the Building Control profession all of which will have significant implications for local authorities.

- a new competency framework is underway mandating local authority BC Surveyors and Registered Building Control Approvers (RBCA), formally private sector Approved Inspectors (AI's) to prove their competence against the Building Inspector Competence Framework (BICoF) to become Registered Building Inspectors (RBI's). This involves a formal application process, portfolio assessment, examination, interview, and a commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) representing an additional workload obligation equivalent to c. 0.5 FTE across the current Croydon Building Control (CBC) surveyor's teams).

- any surveyor not on the Register by April 2024 will no longer be able to undertake restricted activities and functions.

- Croydon will be required to employ an adequate number of Registered Building Inspectors (RBIs) to carry out restricted functions including plan checking and site inspections. Decisions and certification must be verified by a suitably validated RBI.

- the BSR has introduced new Operational Standards Rules (OSRs) for Building Control bodies. These will require information to be collected to enable the Regulator to assess and analyse the performance of all Building Control Bodies (BCB's). It will be vital that they have robust and auditable processes and procedures and employ adequate numbers of Registered Building Inspectors (RB'Is) to carry out restricted functions including plan checking and site inspections, or face sanctions including being placed in 'Special Measures.'

- this confluence of regulatory developments reflects a pivotal moment in reshaping the approach to building safety and Building Control in the UK. It is expected that local authority Building Control will take a more active role in enforcing market compliance in a more regulatory focused way as opposed to the collaborative approach adapted to thrive in a highly competitive market – this is not perhaps unexpected given the Grenfell backdrop and having the HSE as the umbrella organisation.

- in entirety, this creates seismic change and a new regime across the industry but putting stress on an already challenged operating model. These changes will be experienced most acutely in London which has significant resourcing issues, the tallest and most High Risk Buildings.

Transformation of Croydon Building Control

4.1 Croydon Building Control (CBC) plays a crucial role in regulating the built environment within Croydon, safeguarding the public by implementing and enforcing Building Regulations and related legislation. However, the service faces a unique challenge, being the sole statutory and regulatory local authority service contending with competition from the private sector

4.2 The financial strain on CBC has been palpable, marked by steadily declining fee income since 2016/17, with consequential budgetary pressures, and recruitment and retention challenges. The service's fragility, relying on a few key individuals, poses increased corporate risk. The imperative for change was underscored by the consequential increasing corporate risk and the new duties and responsibilities arising from the Building Safety Act

4.3 In 2017, immediately following Grenfell an extensive Peer Review was conducted to evaluate the service's adherence to regulations, processes, and standards. This comprehensive assessment revealed an overall alignment with regulatory requirements, highlighting compliance in terms of regulations, processes, and systems. Notably, the review concluded that operating within a competitive environment did not distort technical judgments.

4.4 However, a significant concern surfaced during the review, emphasising the critical issue of inadequate resources. The identified lack of resources was flagged as a key

risk, highlighting the potential impact on the service's overall effectiveness. The findings underscored the imperative for a transformation in the operating model to address the identified shortcoming.

4.5 Despite the recognised imperative for transformation, the initiation of work on the transformational process was temporarily paused in anticipation of the outcomes of the Hackitt Review**.**

4.6 In November 2021, CBC resumed its transformation plans enlisting the expertise of iESE, a public sector consultancy with proficiency in Building Control transformations. The first phase, an initial scoping and position exercise highlighted the instability and unsustainability of the current service, emphasising the urgent need for change to ensure affordability for the Council, compliance with statutory obligations, and alignment with the needs of local residents and businesses.

Alternative Options Considered

4.7 A detailed analysis of options which appraised the future delivery of Building Control services concluded in October 2022. Following this, an outline business case for the preferred future delivery option was prepared.

Option	Basis
Option 1	Do nothing
Option 2	Retain in-house but reconfigure as an appropriately funded service to assure service quality, minimise corporate risk and avoid further net cost deterioration.
Option 3	Retain in house as statutory only service (noting discontinuing the Service entirely is not an option as Building Control is a statutory service).
Option 4	Formal collaborative working with neighbouring authorities.
Option 5	Outsource the Service.
Option 6	Creation of an arms-length local authority trading company (‘LATC’) including seeking AI accreditation for that venture.

4.8 Do nothing (option 1) is only viable in the short-term - deferring a decision would accelerate service decline, posing a risk of catastrophic failure. Option 3), operating as

a statutory-only service, was deemed unsustainable upon detailed review. This would not provide an offer which would attract and retain staff.

4.9 Collaboration (option 4) would be logical and should not be ruled out in future in some form, but extensive dialogue with neighbours revealed a lack of interest in pursuing this path. Neighbouring authorities bar one, have smaller and less robust services, with a lack of permanent management and a shortage of staff. Collaboration conversations will continue; however, this will not provide an immediate solution.

4.10 Outsourcing the service (option 5) Soft market testing subsequently indicated limited market interest, with corresponding prohibitive charge out rates (especially in the additional statutory non fee earning work of Dangerous Structures where a 24/7-365 call out service to attend site within a two-hour window must be provided with suitably qualified/experienced Surveyors/Engineers), rendering Outsourcing unviable.

4.11 The remaining options were: 2) Re-resource In-house, 6) Create an arms-length trading company. Each of these was reviewed in detail considering what it looks like for the Council and customer, SWOT, growth opportunities, risk management/deliverability, financial profile, and critical success factors. For the trading company option, a commercial appraisal was completed to qualify and quantify the growth market.

4.12 The decision between the Internal (fully stabilised) option and the Trading option is finely balanced, contingent on the Council's perspective as to whether it is prepared to invest for the longer-term future to reduce net Service costs significantly, forego the longer-term opportunity to generate significant commercial income that could potentially mean the Service could be operated on a no net-cost basis.

4.13 On the basis that the Council must meet the challenge of the BSA now and maintain a robust statutory service, internal stabilisation (option 2) is being progressed with peer collaboration to be embedded in business planning and the current pan London working to be further explored. Internal stabilisation provides the right conditions if a trading company is considered appropriate in the future. However, option 2 does rely on the Council's commitment to fully resource the service. Failure to do so would essentially equate to 'Do Nothing' and render the option unviable.

4.14 In May 2023, a comprehensive Turnaround Plan was formulated, outlining a phased approach to the transformation of CBC in preparation for the imminent Building Safety Act (BSA) and the potential opportunities it may bring:

Phase I: Stabilisation/Platform Building: re-resourcing for compliance, risk assurance, and to enable efficiency/build the income growth platform

Phase II: Building Safety Act Response: buy into the collective Hub solution and resource up to deliver related HRB work (noting such resource is expected to be substantially Central Government funded) – this may presently facilitate further income generation/collaboration opportunities.

Phase III: Build External Fee Income: Build external fee income: active business development and marketing of core service and offering (some) complementary services within the administrative area.

Phase IV: In-Tandem Internal Leadership Support/Collective Commitment to:

- secure the internal market i.e., internalise work currently provided to external contractors that could be delivered internally to save the Council money and help build delivery capability to support further external income growth;

- allow the Service to operate in a commercial manner by following market practices as far as practicable and compliant (in HR staffing practices etc.); and

- enable ICT to support efficient working practices

Five SMART outcomes are identified as required through the Turnaround Plan, being:

- Meeting statutory obligations (including recent changes)
- Managing corporate risk and improving reputation
- Reduction in net cost of service c/o increased fee income to the Council (over-time)
- Provision of a reliable service to local residents and business
- Being best placed to take advance of collaboration opportunities as they present.

Preparation and Readiness of the Service to meet the BSA

4.15 Considerable progress has been accomplished in Phases I and II, involving collaborative efforts with professional organisations at both pan London and national levels cumulating in the pivotal achievement of the formulation of a Hub proposal to govern the distribution of work on HRB's. The London Hub, hosted by the City of London, plays a central role in offering HRB projects initially to the Local Authority Building Control teams within the respective borough it is being constructed within, with subsequent outreach to surrounding boroughs if the host lacks capacity. Not all boroughs have Building Control Surveyors qualified to the highest competency standard, which is necessary to work on these HRB's, therefore collaboration with neighbouring boroughs has become imperative to support colleagues, especially as new arrangements take root

4.16 The service has actively engaged in providing advice and collaboration both directly to the Department for Housing, Local Government, and Communities and the Building Safety Regulator and through active participation in professional bodies to ensure that emerging legislation aligns with the purpose and objectives of all Building Control Bodies.

Recruitment

4.17 The service has been energised with the successful recruitment of five trainees, facilitated through a government scheme, under the New Burdens initiative, aimed at supporting Local Authorities with High-Risk Buildings. This initiative not only contributes to a more diverse age profile but also signals a transformative direction for a service that has suffered years of disinvestment. External funding covers salaries and training costs for these recruits, and the service, recognising the additional burden of unqualified staff, provides mentorship and pastoral support, over the course of their three-year training and examinations, they are anticipated to become increasingly self-supporting and, crucially, income-generating.

4.18 A strategic focus is placed on technical staff and succession planning. Recognising the importance of a well-structured forward-looking plan, the service is committed to nurturing talent within its ranks and ensuring a seamless transition into senior technical and leadership roles through its career development plan.

4.19 It needs to be recognised however, that Building Control surveyors are in high demand across the private and public sectors. These people are highly skilled and tested through challenging examination and registration processes. To attract a sufficient number of appropriately trained staff is extremely challenging, innovative renumeration and reward packages need to be developed, in accordance with the Council's People and Cultural Transformation Strategy a range of measures are being taken to improve talent attraction to Building Control in conjunction with the Council's HR team: -

(i) development of the Council's LinkedIn social media employer profile, with an enhanced council profile, using feature jobs, and branding to improve the council's online presence and employer image. This aims to attract inactive, as well as active job seekers to work for the Council in skills scarce occupations.
(ii) review of the council's market supplement policy to ensure the counter is sufficiently placed to attract skills scarce talent from the hyper-competitive London Labour market.
(iii) Working with specialist search agents, who are able to find and attract skills scarce talent from the labour market to work for the Council.
(iv) Refreshing the council's recruitment policy to enable candidates to apply for jobs in a simple, straightforward way
(v) Migration from the Council's current e-recruitment platform, Taleo to Oracle Recruitment Cloud, to provide a better online experience and functionality for candidates
(vii) Working with the communications team to enhance the Council's employer brand image, providing a clear benefits package of working for the council, as well as video material from Council staff of the rewards of working for the Council.

4.20 To fortify its commercial endeavours, the service is currently recruiting into a new Commercial Development Manager (CDM) role. This new role is 'business critical' for the service as this strategic addition aims to enhance the service's capabilities in navigating commercial aspects and exploring new avenues for growth, ensuring a resilient and sustainable public service function

Digitisation, Marketing and CRM system

4.21 Investments are underway to drive the services commercial profile into a digitally advanced era. A dedicated focus on digitisation under the new CDM involves the establishment of a comprehensive customer database, an innovative marketing strategy, and the creation of a dynamic BC microsite, linked back to the corporate main site. This digital transformation is not only poised to enhance internal processes but will also mark the launch of a fully transformed service, offering improved accessibility and engagement.

Internal Opportunities

4.22 Croydon Building Control has historically served as a cornerstone in construction knowledge, providing invaluable services and trusted advice to various teams and directorates within the Council. Drawing upon an extensive corporate memory, coupled with a wealth of documents and drawings, the service holds the key to unlocking significant fee income. This income, derived from recycling council funding, serves to strengthen this essential statutory service. However, it will be essential to navigate the nuanced landscape introduced by the Building Safety Act (BSA), which seeks to delineate Local Authority Building Control teams from assuming any regulatory authority on their own projects as a conflict of interest.

Neighbouring Boroughs and Pan London Collaboration

4.23 Regular meetings with neighbouring boroughs are held at Director level to sound out what planning and activity is underway to address the new requirements. This has helped to inform earlier option appraisal work and to understand the potential opportunities for collaboration. A key concern is the ‘poaching’ of staff from one London authority by another, which is driving pay to unsustainable levels, and creating instability. Whilst understandable on an individual level, this requires a pan London response orchestrated through London Councils to potentially explore a unified pay award.

4.24 A London Hub agreement has been drafted between the 32 London boroughs and the City, who have agreed to host the Hub on their behalf. The Hub is to provide a single point of contact for the BSR for all works on HRBs in London. The Hub allows S.13 of the BSA requests to be channelled through a single point of contact and a coordinated response to be facilitated. The prioritisation of local Authority Building Control services over the private sector is a welcome step in recognising the unique and trusted role of these services. It also gives some comfort that investment in Council Building Control services would be rewarded through some this potential income stream. The Hub model encourages collaboration and potentially a step towards a more strategic

approach to the provision of Building Control services within London. Prior to this, individual boroughs were very constrained by their borough boundaries, with few cross-borough partnerships and shared service approaches

Timeframes to deliver a relaunch of CBC in April 2024.

4.25 With the foundational steps in place, the turnaround plan started in earnest during the first half of the fiscal year 2023/24.

- **Continued execution in 2023/24 (July 23 - April 24):** This included the implementation of fee increases effective from 1st October 23, initiating the recruitment process for a dedicated Business Development resource, and broader re-resourcing efforts to enhance stability and meet increased statutory obligations.

- **Critical Recruitment (July 23 - December 23):** A key component of the transformation is the recruitment of a new Commercial Delivery Manager. This critical role will be pivotal in driving the commercial aspects of the transformation, ensuring effective financial strategies, and supporting the overall success of the initiative.

- **Collective Hub Solution Implementation (July – December 23):** Simultaneously, efforts will be directed towards buying into the collective Hub solution to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act thus positioning the service advantageously within the changing regulatory landscape.

- **Marketing Enhancement (August 23 – February 24):** A strategic initiative to reverse the decline in income, including exploring new opportunities and repositioning the service in the competitive landscape whilst parallel focus will be on improving marketing efforts, including the development of a micro-site. This initiative is crucial in enhancing the visibility of the service, communicating its strengths, and attracting potential clients in a competitive market.

- **Optimising ICT Core Systems (August 23 – March 24):** To bolster efficiency and adaptability, the optimisation of CBC's core ICT systems and mobile working practices will be a priority. This involves streamlining technological infrastructure to align with the evolving needs of the service.

- **Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation (Ongoing):** Throughout the transformation journey, continuous evaluation and adaptation will be imperative. Regular assessments against key performance indicators, financial targets, and market dynamics will inform adjustments to the strategy, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness.

4.26 In essence, the outlined timeframes and strategic actions present a comprehensive roadmap for the transformation of Croydon Building Control, aligning internal capacities with external market demands and regulatory changes

5 CONSULTATION

Consultation with the CBC team has been integral to the development of transformation options. This was facilitated through an initial workshop with iESE and has been supplemented by an anonymous staff survey with ongoing updates and feedback at team meetings and a presentation to the Corporate Management team. A back to the floor exercise with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration has also helped inform the direction of travel. Following the appointment of the Commercial Delivery Manager capacity will allow engagement, marketing, and business development with existing customers to be a priority, along with the investigation of new partnerships (including inhouse opportunities) and activities to gain greater customer insight through surveys and greater cross selling through relationships in the Planning and Regeneration teams. The use of a Customer Service Management (CRM) application will help collect data on the users of the service and help inform continuous improvement through the Service's Quality Management System (QMS).

6 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 The Review of Building Control is key to delivering Priority 4 in the Mayor's Business Plan "Ensure new homes are safe, well-designed and in keeping with the local area." and Priority 1 "Get a grip on the finances and make the Council financially sustainable"

The Business Plan states that we will:

Priority: Review the building control service to ensure it can fulfil current statutory duties and new obligations relating to building safety.

Priority: Redesign services to improve efficiency and enhance residents' experience.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

With reference to the Financial Outcome, the following comments are made:

7.1.1 It has taken over five years for the Service to decline into its current position (including a reduction of 50% of historic fee income levels) - it will take a similar period (not allowing for any construction downturn or recession) to fully effect income recovery (at least without incurring significant overhead on a risk-basis). That being said, a material marginal financial improvement should be made after three years.

7.1.2 Regardless of the financial model, the overall cost of Building Control to the Council will increase significantly courtesy of the need to re-resource the Service to provide

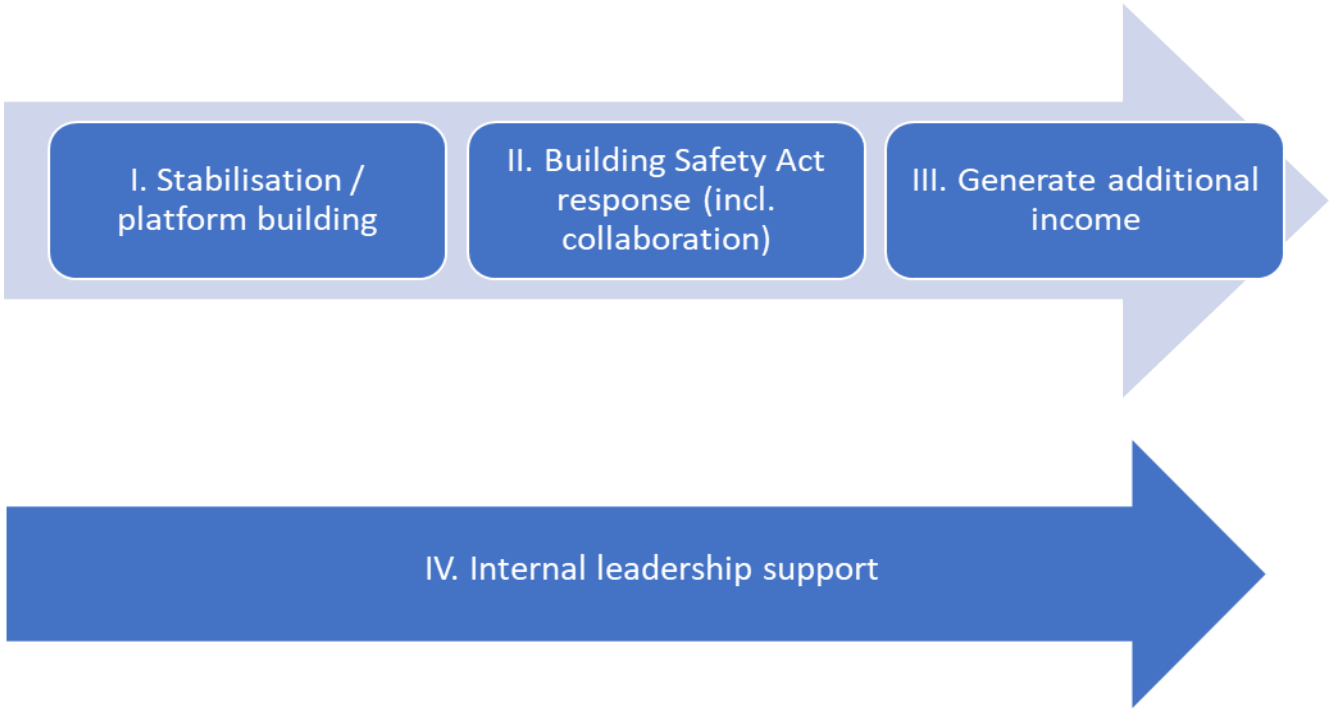
risk assurance and meet additional regulatory requirements (notwithstanding additional Central Government BSA funding).

7.1.3 The expected corporate cost of Building Control over the next five years is £4.08m under the Growth model versus £4.98m under Steady State - that means an overall favourable outcome of £0.90m over 5 years for the Council in pursuing Growth.

7.1.4 Given the risk managed approach to growth together with the uncredited upside opportunities, the Growth model is considered robust and deliverable.

7.1.5 Transformation funding of £450k has already been allocated and this will be fully deployed over five-years under the Growth model (noting a sum of at least £100k would be required under the Steady State model for ICT enhancement and basic marketing).

7.1.6 The overall payback on the transformation funding is c. 3 years, which is considered realistic given the starting position.



Transformation funding of £450k has been allocated to 1) invest in dedicated, experienced commercial management resource; 2) optimise current ICT; 3) re-invest in marketing and 4) re-invest in staff commercial training plus external critical friend support. This is not a new path for the Service, much of the above was historically present but progressively removed in response to cost pressures and the lack of qualified staff, this is the fundamental reason fee income has halved driving the overall adverse (unsustainable) financial position.

7.1.7 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendation

The Building Control service has been allocated £450k of Transformation, £100k in 2022/23 and £350k 2023/24.

	Current Year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3-year forecast		
	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26
Revenue Budget Available				
Expenditure Income				
Effect of decision from report				
Expenditure Income				
Remaining Budget				
Capital Budget available				
Expenditure Income	100	350		
Effect of decision from report				
Expenditure Income	100	350		
Remaining Budget	0	0		

7.1.8 The effect of the decision

As this is an update on the Service Progress on their Transformation then there are no direct financial implications other than continuing spend as allocated to transform the Service.

7.1.9 Risks

There is a risk that the budget allocated will slip into the 2024/25 financial year to maximise the potential of any Transformation.

There is a risk that any benefits that will be realised if inhouse consultation is undertaken with Croydon Building Control on their capacity and capability to offer such services in house is not endorsed.

Comments approved by Darrell Jones Acting Head of Finance (Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery) on behalf of the Director of Finance. Date 24/11/2023

7.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.2.1 The recommendations in this report are to note only and no decisions are being requested as part of this report.

7.2.2 In relation to in-house Building Control transformation, the Council has the power to charge for certain Building Control services pursuant to the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010. The Council must have a charging scheme and the setting of charges must comply with the overriding objective set out in section 6 ("Principles of charging scheme: overriding objective in determining charges") of the Regulations. Section 6(3) states "the overriding objective is that the authority must ensure that, taking one financial year with another, the income derived by the authority from performing chargeable functions and providing chargeable advice ("chargeable income") as nearly as possible equates to the costs incurred by the authority in performing chargeable functions and providing chargeable advice ("chargeable costs")."

7.2.3 In relation to the 'Hub' arrangement, at the request of the Building Regulator the Council has the power under Section 13 ("Local authorities and fire and rescue authorities: assistance etc to regulator") of the Building Safety Act 2022 to do anything for the purpose of "(a) facilitating the exercise by the regulator of a relevant function, or (b) enabling the relevant authority to facilitate the exercise by the regulator of a relevant function". The Building Regulator has the power to direct the Council to do anything specified under (a) or (b) above, with the consent of the Secretary of State.

Comments approved by the Head of Commercial & Property Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 07/12/2023)

7.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010. In summary, the Council must in the exercise of all its functions, "have due regard to" the need to comply with the three arms or aims of the general equality duty. These are to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

7.3.2 As identified, this is an amendment to an existing arrangement (and not a new proposal). Building Control is a statutory service accessible to all residents, regardless of their characteristics (protected or otherwise). The Service prides itself on its ability to support all residents effectively and Transformation is a pressing necessity to ensure that this can continue to be the case against the backdrop of externally imposed pressures. The proposed changes are about investing in the service and its staff to provide a more professional, consistent, and regularised service with staff training given greater priority and Croydon Building Control given first refusal on inhouse work before it is procured externally.

7.3.3 An EQIA has been carried out and show no negative impact on any protected group arising from this proposal.

Comments approved by Naseer Ahmad on behalf of the Equalities Manager. (Date15/01/2024)

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.4 HUMAN RESOURCES

7.4.1 In recognition of the urgent need to recruit highly skilled and technical staff, continuing conversation needed with HR on how this can be accommodated and facilitated within the Council's People and Cultural Transformation Strategy.

7.4.2 Recognise the need for a new Building Control workforce strategy, especially considering the compulsory statutory registration for becoming a Registered Building Inspector (RBI) and the effect this will have on the supply and demand of the limited pool of existing Building Control Surveyors (especially those at the highest Band C / Level 3, who will be the only RBI's authorised under law to work on High Risk Buildings (HRB's).

7.4.3 This will require lateral thinking from HR business partners as to how the necessary financial incentives and rewards can be enabled within the tight restraints presently practiced, to enable the service to retain and recruit these RBI's not only in the face of stiff financial competition from the private sector but also from other councils who are not as far advanced in their thinking as Croydon facing serious staffing shortages which otherwise would result in sanctions from the BSR.

7.4.4 Facilitate recruiting commercial staff with employment package flexibility.

7.4.5 The other main workforce implications are set out in section 4.19 of the report

Comments approved by: Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer. (Date 17/1/2024)

8 APPENDICES

8.1 *N/A*

9 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

9.1 The Building Safety Act - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) - Information relating to the Building Safety Act, which was granted Royal Assent on 28 April 2022.

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:		**CABINET**
DATE OF DECISION		**31st January 2024**
REPORT TITLE:		**Education Estates Strategy**
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:		**Debbie Jones - Interim Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education** **Shelley Davies – Director, Education**
LEAD OFFICER:		**Denise Bushay – Head of Service, School Place Planning, Admissions and Early Years**
LEAD MEMBER:		**Cllr Gatland - Children, Young People and Learning**
KEY DECISION?	**Yes**	Community Impact Criteria –Significant Impact on one or more of the borough
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**NO**	**N/A**
WARDS AFFECTED:		**All**

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the draft education estates strategy for the three-year period 2023-2026. It is an all-inclusive report that outlines the council's strategy for three stages of education: Early Years, Primary and Secondary, including Special Educational Needs and Disability and Pupil Referral Unit.

1.2 The strategy aims to minimise council borrowing to an absolute minimum whilst fulfilling the council's statutory duty for sufficiency of school places.

1.3 The proposals outlined in this report will ensure that the Council is compliant with its school place planning duties (s13-14 Education Act 1996) to promote high standards of education and fair access to education; secure provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities; and respond to parental preference.

1.4 This report focuses on 3 of Croydon's main statutory responsibilities as an education authority:

- School Admissions – determination of admission arrangements for all Croydon community schools for admission in 2025/26, and Pan London co-ordination arrangements.
- School Place Planning – ensuring a sufficient supply of school places and early education / childcare to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties.
- School Maintenance – ensuring that school buildings meet minimum standards.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

School Admissions:

2.1 agree to the proposed community schools' Admission Arrangements for the 2025/26 academic year (Appendix 1).

2.2 approve the continued adoption of the proposed Pan London scheme for co-ordination of admissions to Reception and Junior schools – Appendix 1a; and adoption of the proposed Pan London scheme for co-ordination of admissions to secondary schools (Appendix 1b).

2.3 Note that there are no changes proposed to the previously agreed admission arrangements for our community schools.

School Maintenance and Compliance

2.4 approve the draft Capital Programme Budget summary (Appendix 2).

2.5 approve the proposed Schools' Maintenance Plan (Appendix 3) for 2024/25 with an overall budget cost of £3,412m for 2024/25 and £3,777m for 2025/26.

2.6 Delegate authority to the Interim Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Education to vary the proposed Schools' Maintenance Plan to reflect actual prices and new urgent issues that may arise, including authorising spend against the allowance for emergency and reactive works. The Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education shall report back to the Executive Mayor in Cabinet in respect of any exercise of such authority.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is asked to note the following:

School Place Planning

2.7 Comparison between the available school places vs 2023 School Capacity (SCAP) Pupil Projections – Appendix 4 (primary) and Appendix 4a secondary).

2.8 There is sufficiency of school places to meet demand at early years, primary and secondary education phases.

2.9 Managing Surplus School Places
The local authority is continuing to work in partnership with school leaders to manage the risk of falling school roll, especially in the primary educational phase. The main strategy used at this time is a reduction of the relevant school's Published Admission Number (PAN) and/or variation of their in-year admission number.

2.10 Early Years
Croydon Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023 (Appendix 5) which measures the demand for, and supply of childcare across the borough indicates that currently there is sufficient childcare available across the borough for all age groups. This is

being reviewed to consider the childcare reforms will introduce significant changes to early years education and childcare through the extension of the free childcare on offer. Implementation will be extended in phases, starting from April 2024.

2.11 Maintained Nursery Schools
Following informal consultation on the future options for Croydon's five Maintained Nursery Schools, the Executive Mayor in cabinet have considered the outcomes of the consultation and recommendations and requested that officers explore and carry out more detailed modelling of other options suggested as part of the consultation process, to determine if any of these are feasible and will make MNS financially viable.

2.12 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
The demand for Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) continues to increase. The data on prevalence and needs of our SEND community is reviewed monthly in order to inform resource and placement planning.

2.13 Alternative Provision / Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
The proposed conversion of Saffron Valley Collegiate to an academy has been moved to 1st April 2024. Additional demand for Alternative Provision places is met by commissioning suitable places via our Approved Alternative Provision Provider List.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The recommendations of this report are set out to ensure that the Council is compliant with its statutory duties as an education authority:

- School Admissions (School Admission Code 2014) to determine the Admission Arrangements for its community schools annually.

- School Maintenance - The council is responsible for larger repairs to the fabric of school building for which it is the responsible body and to ensure its school buildings meet the minimum standard and premises are maintained so that they provide a suitable learning environment.

- School Place Planning (s13-14 Education Act 1996) to promote high standards of education and fair access to education; secure sufficient primary and secondary education, including SEN to meet the needs of the population of its area.

- Under the Childcare Act 2006 local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for the needs of working parents/carers in their area.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 School Admissions

4.1.1 A parent / carer can apply for a place for their child at any school at any time. All applications must be processed by the relevant admission authority in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014. Croydon is the Admission Authority for Community schools and is therefore responsible for determining the Admission Arrangements for these schools. Where the admission arrangements have not

changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years. Croydon is not proposing any changes to the previously agreed admission arrangements.

4.1.2 Admission authorities must determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2025 by 28 February 2024. The proposed Admission Arrangements for Community schools include the criteria by which school places are allocated when a school receives more applications than places. The council is not proposing any significant changes to the previously agreed admission arrangements.

4.1.3 The Council is also responsible for having in place a scheme for coordinating admission arrangements. Croydon has participated in a Pan London arrangement for the Co-ordinated Admissions rounds for both primary and secondary applications for several years.

4.1.4 The Council is required by statute and regulations to approve its admissions policies for the schools it is responsible for the 2025/26 academic year (including Published Admissions Numbers – PANs). Accordingly, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet is requested to determine the proposed Admission Arrangements for Croydon's community schools for the 2025/26 academic year (Appendix 1) and approve the adoption of the proposed Pan London co-ordination arrangements (Appendix 1a & Appendix1b).

4.1.5 The governing bodies of voluntary aided, foundation schools and academies are their own admission authorities and therefore responsible for determining their own admission arrangements. All Saints Primary School is proposing to reduce its Published Admission Number from 60 to 30, The Minster Junior School from 120 to 90, Oasis Shirley Park Primary School 120 to 90 with effect from September 2024. In line with DfE guidance - making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools - the admission authority – governing body - is the decision-maker.

4.1.6 <u>Coordinated Admissions</u>
The "normal admissions round" covers applications for admission in a relevant age group (also known as the normal year of entry such as reception, Year 3 or year 7) which are made in time for the local authority to offer a school place on National Offer Day. The deadlines for submitting applications to be allocated on National Offer Day are 31 October for secondary school and 15 January for primary school. "Late applications" are applications for entry in a relevant age group which are submitted before the first day of the first term in the admission year but have not been made in time to enable the local authority to offer a place on National Offer Day.

4.1.7 For the 2023/24 academic year - the percentage of first preference primary offers is up by two per cent to 88.5%. The percentage of parents/carers receiving one of their top three preference schools is 97.8% - an increase of 1.3% compared to 2022. There also has been a slight decrease of 0.16% in the number of primary applications received on-time with 4358 pupils applying for primary school places, compared to 4365 in 2022**.**

4.1.8 Secondary Schools: There are two secondary educational phase planning areas, North and South, which reflect home to school journeys tend to travel further to school independently due to good transport links.

4.1.9 For the 2023/24 academic year, 68% of secondary school applicants received their first preference school and 89.65% one of their first three preference.

4.1.10 In-year admissions

When applications are made outside the normal admissions round (and they are not a late application) they are considered in-year applications. An in-year admission is when parents/carers apply to a school outside the normal admissions round and at a time when their child should already be attending school. In-year admissions generally arise when a parent/carer wants their child to transfer between schools or when a child moves into the area. 'In year' applications create an all-year pressure to find additional places, and since families who make these applications characteristically have young families with primary aged children, there is a continued pressure across the whole primary estate.

4.1.11 Local authorities must, on request, provide information to prospective parents/carers about the places still available in all schools within their area. To enable them to do this, the admission authorities for all schools in the area must provide the local authority with details of the number of places available at their schools whenever this information is requested, to assist a parent/carer in seeking a school place.

4.1.12 The council is not required to co-ordinate in-year applications for schools for which it is not the admission authority. However, Croydon School Admissions manage the in-year admissions for the majority of primary schools in Croydon either because they are a community school or on behalf of the governing body of an academy, Voluntary Aided, Foundation or Free school. Croydon also administer the application process on behalf of the majority of secondary schools, however the admission authority of the secondary schools manages the decisions on who can be offered.

4.1.13 We are experiencing a significantly higher than average number of in-year admissions over the past year. For example, the total number of in-year applications received this year between September to November has increased by 282 in comparison to last year. This increase in in-year applications is due to several factors including families choosing to move to different boroughs due to changes in working patterns and lifestyle choices following the Covid-19 pandemic, and inward migration including from Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Ukraine.

4.2.14 The high numbers of pupils arriving during term time can put significant pressure on individual schools in terms of ensuring sufficient quality teaching and support is available. Funding for in-year admissions is linked to school census on a termly basis dates, therefore no immediate funding is made available by the Department for Education, and this can put some schools under considerable financial pressure.

4.1.15 Fair Access Protocol

The Fair Access Panel (FAP) is a mechanism developed by the local authority in partnership with all schools in their area. Its aim is to ensure that vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible.

4.1.16 A new Fair Access Protocol for secondary schools in Croydon has been agreed by most schools following consultation and implemented from November 2023. The Protocol will be reviewed on a half yearly basis with admissions authority leaders.

4.2 **School Maintenance and Compliance**

4.2.1 Local Authorities have responsibility to maintain school buildings so that they are safe, warm and weather tight and provide a suitable learning environment, including dealing with emergencies promptly and effectively and managing and procuring maintenance works efficiently and ensuring the council meets its full statutory compliance obligations. The Council is responsible for the larger condition and maintenance works in maintained schools and regularly undertakes reviews of legislation changes and ensures it meets its obligations. The health and safety of children, staff and the school community is paramount.

4.2.2 As part of the schools planned maintenance programme (which includes electrical, mechanical and general build works) a certain reduction in CO2 emissions is achieved as a result of replacing electrical/mechanical equipment which is at the end of its lifetime with new efficient equipment. The Council took the initiative of completing feasibility studies and heat decarbonisation plans at four schools in the borough to explore suitable low carbon heating systems such as Ground source heat pumps, Air source heat pumps, the installation of photovoltaic panels and improving the fabric of the schools' buildings.

4.2.3 Several suitable options have been proposed as part of the feasibility studies; however, the challenge continues to be that adopting such measures requires additional funding and forward planning and at this time there is no additional funding available from the DfE to carry forward any plans. We are however continuing to improve on the efficiency of heating and insulation to our schools' estates and we will be looking at further ways of improving their efficiency whilst undergoing major maintenance.

4.2.4 There are several funding schemes that are available to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures (provided that the criteria are met); last year we were successful in obtaining funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to aid with the installation of LED lighting in 3 schools. The next steps would be to carry out further feasibility studies, following the review of the school's condition surveys which were completed in 2021, to establish in which schools' where energy efficiency measures can be adopted (which meet the criteria of the public sector decarbonisation funding schemes) to enable the Council to apply for further funding to supplement the planned maintenance programme's budget to deliver such measures.

4.2.5 The condition of some of the education estate has improved due to investment in the refurbishment of the building fabric and maintenance / replacement of electrical and mechanical equipment. However, as school buildings age, they present age related issues and the cost of maintaining them is increasing steadily. In addition, some of the buildings are nearing the end of their lives and structural issues are beginning to emerge.

4.2.6 The 2024/25 annual maintenance capital budget (Appendix 2) stands at £3.412m which is sufficient to only undertake the highest ranked projects; those categorised as the worst defects designated D1 in the condition survey report. The council retains a percentage of its annual maintenance capital budget to address unexpected and urgent reactive works in schools, we are also reviewing risk on compliance within our school's estate and will be looking to ensure that the council meets its statutory compliance with any changes to legislation.

4.2.7 The School's Maintenance plan (Appendix 3) has been developed using information from condition surveys commissioned by the Council. These surveys are comprehensive and identify costed items across each school rated from A (good condition) to D (poor condition) as well as assessing the urgency of each (on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the most urgent). School Condition surveys have been undertaken in 2021, they will continue to be reviewed and validated to inform the 2 next year's school maintenance programmes.

4.2.8 Asbestos Management in Community Schools

Where asbestos is present, the council will take the following steps to manage asbestos in our schools ensuring they have the following:

a) Management survey of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs)

b) A plan for managing asbestos which includes an asbestos register detailing the location and condition of all known ACMs

c) A monitoring / reinspection regime to ensure that all known ACMs are managed / treated accordingly

d) Relevant training for those with responsibilities for managing asbestos

e) Regular review meetings to ensure that asbestos is being managed effectively.

4.2.9 Statutory compliance Inspections and works

Both the Council and maintained schools are required to ensure school buildings are meeting the statutory standards by regularly undertaking statutory tests and maintenance which includes Legionella Risk Assessments, Gas Safety Checks, Fire Alarm tests, NICEIC 5 Year Periodic Inspections, NICEIC Emergency Lighting, Energy Performance Certification, Fire Risk Assessments and Asbestos Management and compliance related work. The Council ensures that the policies, and the condition of the school estate are compliant with appropriate legislation by requesting and checking the relevant certification and where necessary ensure that works are carried out.

4.2.10 Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

The authority completed RAAC surveys this year. The presence of RAAC has not been identified in any schools in Croydon. During the surveys Cross Laminated

Timber Panels (CLT) and Wood wool were used instead of RAAC concrete in construction. CLT and Wood wool was identified in 13 schools. As a preventative measure these will be monitored throughout the year.

4.2.11 Fire Safety

Cabinet approved an additional £3m from 2018/19 through to 2019/20, which was extended to 2020/21 to undertake fire safety remedial works at schools for which it is the responsible body. This works programme will now conclude in 2023/24 due to various challenges that have arisen in delivering the works on–site. The works are progressing across the estate with progress made in 2022/23. The remaining works are currently being reviewed against other planned/agreed works in 2023/24 to ensure the works are coordinated and minimise disruption to teaching and learning.

4.2.12 Weekend working was introduced in early 2023 to minimise disruption to teaching and learning. This has improved the delivery of the programme and it will be completed by the end of March 2024 except for one school. Going forward there will be a fire strategy for all maintained school from 2024 onwards to ensure there is continuous compliancy, therefore we will be creating a holistic approach and template for fire safety work.

4.3 School Place Planning

4.3.1 Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, every local authority (LA) has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for all pupils in its area. This includes the planning and reviewing of school places, securing diversity and increasing opportunities for parental choice to ensure the needs of the community are met, as well as managing surplus places.

4.3.2 Pupil Projections for SCAP 2023

Like most London Boroughs, Croydon commissions the Greater London Authority (GLA) School Roll Projection (SRP) service to forecast future demand for school places. The GLA methodology generally has provided a more accurate and credible set of pupil projection numbers to support better pupil places planning for Croydon. The projections are also used to complete the council's annual statutory School Capacity (SCAP) return to the Department for Education.

4.3.3 The projections are designed to give a strategic-level indication of where additional demand may arise in future. It is not intended that the projections be considered as definitive evidence that additional provision is required in a particular planning area. We apply local knowledge to ensure that local factors are taken into account to enhance the robustness of the projected figures.

4.3.4 Currently, there are more places than pupils at both primary and secondary levels, but the balance between the two varies across the borough, within educational planning areas and particularly school-by-school.

4.3.5 Shortages of places at popular schools can exist alongside surplus places at others. And over the next three years, the expected growth in pupil numbers varies widely: in some places, numbers are expected to increase due to pupil yield from planned housing developments; in others, particularly in the primary phase, they are expected to decrease due to fall in birth rates.

4.3.6 Pupil projection indicates sufficiency of mainstream school places for both primary and secondary schools for the next 3 years. There is the potential for some schools across the borough, both primary and secondary, to have higher levels of unfilled places. Appendices 4 (primary) and 4a (secondary) contain a table that shows a comparison between the Available School Places vs 2023 School Capacity (SCAP) Projections Pupil Projections.

4.3.7 Changes in demand

Across London, local authorities are trying to manage a high level of unfilled places which in part is due to a drop-in birth rate. Over the 10 year period to 2019, the number of births in Croydon has averaged around 5,600 a year, however since 2019 there has been a reduction in the number of births from 5,761 to 5,304.

4.3.8 Due to new housing developments and/or high numbers of families arriving from overseas, we are forecasting pockets of in-year growth, but this growth can be transient and hard to forecast in the long term. There appears to be some decline in child yield from new housing development which makes it difficult to forecast accurately the number of children that will need school places.

4.3.9 Broadly, provisional data from the Office for National Statistics suggests there was a temporary decline in babies conceived during the first three months of the first lockdown in 2020, but then the fertility rate rebounded to levels above those seen in previous years.

4.4 Surplus Places

4.4.1 The birth rate is the main driver behind the decrease in demand for school places, leading to some school across the borough having a higher level of surplus school places. This can have a negative impact on school's finance as schools are funded on a per pupil basis and unfilled places mean that schools will get less funding which could affect the quality of education as schools might have to reduce staff and resource.

4.4.2 The majority of school revenue funding is allocated on a per pupil basis. Therefore, any decrease in pupil numbers will reduce the funding a school receives. Some primary schools in Croydon are already struggling to balance budgets due to a combination of factors including inflationary price increases.

4.4.3 The government has provided local authorities with additional funding in 2023 to 2024 financial year to support individual schools that find themselves in particular financial

difficulties. Croydon will receive an additional DSG allocation of £264,529.05 to support schools in financial difficulty.

4.4.4 To allow for unexpected in-year growth in demand and parental choice and provide some leeway in case the projections underestimate the actual level of demand, the Council aim to allow between 5% and 10% surplus places across the borough, with the higher percentage in areas of planned housing developments.

4.4.5 Managing Surplus School Places

There is a high level of surplus primary school places, however, some planning areas and schools are more affected than others. A high level of surplus places can lead to financial and organisational inefficiency for schools. This could affect the quality of education as schools might have to reduce staff, resource, and overheads. Since the last report to cabinet in January 2023, three primary schools and one secondary school have reduced their PAN by 1 form of entry (30 places). Other schools have reduced their admission number via in-year variation.

4.4.6 The council continues to work with and advise affected schools with an aim to help stabilise each school's intake and enable school leaders to plan and deliver school provision effectively and meet local demand. The council is also exploring alternative uses of the spare capacity with primary schools, such as re-purposing empty classrooms for SEND provision.

4.4.7 Primary Schools: Croydon has six educational planning areas – North West, East, Central, South East, South, and South West - for the primary phase of pupil place planning; each with its own distinct demographic profile and migration patterns. A significant number of schools in the North West, East and South East planning areas have experienced the biggest fall in demand resulting in the highest number of surplus places. The South East has the highest percentage of surplus places but consists of only six schools. To date,1350 places have been removed, across primary year groups (Reception – Year 6). Most of these unfilled places, were in the North West and East planning areas. Borough-wide, the percentage of surplus school places at primary level is 12%.

4.4.8 Borough-wide, the percentage of surplus school places at secondary level is 8%. This is concentrated in the North of the borough, which has 11% surplus places in year 7. Pupil projections suggest that there is a small number of surplus places in the South planning area, currently 3%, and additional places may be needed if demand increases above the predicted level.

5 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

5.1 The number of children with SEND continues to increase in Croydon. The data on prevalence and needs of our SEND community is reviewed on a monthly basis in order to inform resource and placement planning. In line with monitoring of data through the SEND data dashboard the current Early Years SEND population as of November 23 is detailed in the following table 5.1a.

5.1a Early years Children with an EHCP by NCY and primary need as at 29th November 2023

	NCY -2	NCY -1	NCY 0 (Reception)	Total
Speech,Lang or Comm Diff	0	5	123	**128**
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	0	2	43	**45**
Medical Problems	0	4	9	**13**
Hearing Impairment	0	0	5	**5**
Physical Disability	0	0	3	**3**
Multi-Sensory Impairment	1	0	2	**3**
Moderate Learning Difficulty	0	0	3	**3**
Other Difficulty/Disability	0	0	3	**3**
Soc, Em and Ment Health	0	0	2	**2**
Profound & Multi Learn Diff	1	0	0	**1**
Vision Impairment	0	1	0	**1**
(blank)	0	0	1	**1**
Total	**2**	**12**	**194**	**208**

5.1.2 From this data we can see the prevalence of speech, language and communication difficulties within our current Early Years population. This equates to 62% of the total and supports the need for effective commissioning of therapy services and provision.

5.1.3 As at November 29th 2023 we have 4576 children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans.

5.1.4 Table 5.1.4a provides a full breakdown across all ages and types of need.

5.1.4a Children and young people with an EHCP by phase and primary need as at 29th November 2023

	Early Years (NCY <=0)	KS1 (NCY 1-2)	KS2 (NCY 3-6)	KS3 (NCY 7-9)	KS4 (NCY 10-11)	KS5 (NCY 12-13)	19-25 (NCY >=14)	Total
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	45	157	226	201	163	156	248	1196
Hearing Impairment	5	9	16	21	6	10	16	83
Medical Problems	13	14	10	7	2	2	3	51
Moderate Learning Difficulty	3	21	74	76	43	44	125	386
Multi-Sensory Impairment	3	2	6	0	0	1	5	17
Other Difficulty/Disability	3	6	8	6	6	0	2	31
Physical Disability	3	4	29	30	37	20	49	172
Profound & Multi Learn Diff	1	3	2	7	9	6	14	42
SEN supp no specialist assess	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Severe Learning Diff	0	5	27	16	23	21	62	154
Soc, Em and Ment Health	2	27	368	313	218	179	151	1258
Speech,Lang or Comm Diff	128	175	186	212	91	97	98	987
Spl Learning Diff(Dyslexia)	0	0	14	14	11	10	14	63
Vision Impairment	1	3	21	11	8	5	9	58
(blank)	1	15	21	16	12	6	5	76
Total	**208**	**441**	**1008**	**932**	**629**	**557**	**801**	**4576**

5.1.5 The data identifies the top 3 areas of need – SEMH / ASD and Speech, language and communication difficulties.

5.1.6 Of the 4576, we are currently seeking appropriate placements for 183. 10 of these are currently receiving alternative packages as they are not attending school provision. In analysing the 183, it is evident that we have a high demand for provision which meets the needs of children and young people identified as having Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) with 79 of the 183 having SEMH as their primary need. This equates to 43%. 23 of those are within the 0-11 age range and 56 within ages 12-25.

Work is underway to identify opportunities within the borough in the first instance to increase provision available for this group.

5.1.7 Provision development for 2024:
Monks Orchard Primary School: provision design work is underway for a 25 place Education Learning Provision (ELP) for children with Autism Spectrum Conditions. It is hoped this will open in April 2024 subject to building works. This will be a phased approach initially opening with 14 places (2 per year group).

5.1.8 Expansion of special school provision:
Early discussions are underway with several our current special schools in order to look at expansion opportunities for the known numbers we have requiring provision for September 2024. This forms part of the overall review of provision developments and requirements currently under review within the Education Directorate as a whole.

5.1.9 The table at Appendix 5 details works completed, underway or proposed for Specialist provision.

6. Early Years

6.1 Under the Childcare Act 2006 local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for the needs of working parents/carers in their area. The Council's duties around inclusion birth to five are detailed in the Children and Families Act 2014, (section 2 Childcare Act 2016).

6.1.2 The early years and childcare sector is primarily made up of private, voluntary and independent nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. Childcare in early years is also provided in the schools' sector. It is offered in state-funded schools and independent schools.

6.1.3 There are several different types of Early Education and Childcare providers, each offering a variety of options for families. In total, there are 543 early years childcare providers in our local authority, offering a maximum of 10,273 full time equivalent[1] early years childcare places. There are 55 providers of childcare for primary school age children during term time, and 22 providers of childcare for primary school age children during the holidays.

6.1.4 In total, there are 25,200 children under the age of five living in Croydon2. These children may require early years childcare. In total there are 37,644 children aged 5-11, and 15,855 children aged 12-14 living in our local authority. Families are entitled to support with childcare for children up to the age 14. These children may require childcare before and after school, and/or during the school holidays.

6.1.5 Children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18 The number of children/young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan in our local authority is: 4,556 as at November 2023.

6.2 Croydon Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023

Croydon Council is required by law to 'report annually to elected council members on

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[2] Census 2021 Englan5210d and Wales Dec 2022

how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents'. The report is attached as Appendix 5.

7. **Alternative Provision / Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)**

7.1 Under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority has a statutory duty to make arrangements for the provision of suitable full-time education to those pupils who are unable to attend a mainstream school due to illness, exclusion or otherwise.

7.2 Saffron Valley Collegiate Pupil Referral Unit provides education for young people from across the borough. It intent to convert to academy status in February 2024. It consists of 5 provisions:

- KS3 : KS3 pupils who have been excluded or at risk of exclusion
- KS4 South: KS4 pupils who have been excluded or at risk of exclusion
- KS4 North: KS4 pupils who have been excluded or at risk of exclusion
- Cotelands: KS 3 and 4 emotionally based school refusers
- Springboard: a tuition service providing for pupils with medical needs

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

8.2 Croydon community schools admission arrangements were consulted on for the 2018-19 academic year.

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

8.3.1 This report will go to a Scrutiny meeting.

9 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

9.1 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 also want to make Croydon safer for young people and keep vulnerable children and young people safe from harm.

IMPLICATIONS

10.1 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The table below details the Education Capital Programme for the current and future years and the associated funding sources. There is currently no financial risk envisaged so far. None of the funding sources is from borrowing therefore, there is no impact on the council general fund. The service had always followed the grant conditions and efficient resource utilization on the capital budget.

10.2 The capital budget allocation in 2023/24 and future years demonstrates the Local Authority strategy commitment to also invest in Special Education Needs capital

projects which will ensure an excellent strategic fit with the five years overall Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit Recovery Plan.

10.3 **The effect of the decision**

The use of the free school's route to provide new school places within the borough in the future will result in a reduction in the requirements for future capital funding from the Council as this will be funded by central government.

10.4 **Risks**

Due to the nature of this programme, there is a risk that projects may overspend. The service regularly monitors all projects and the programme will be undertaken and reported to this Cabinet as part of the quarterly financial monitoring reports.

10.5 Capital Budget

Table 2 below represents the overall capital budget over the next three years. Detailed can be found in Appendix 2 appended to this report. As shown below, most of the capital budget is allocated to major maintenance work and Special Education Needs provision. The slippage is subject to final approval at the 25th January Cabinet.

Table 2. Capital Budget from 2023/24 to 2025/26

Capital Schemes/Funding Source	Budget 2023/24 £'000	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Budget 2025/26 £'000	Total Budget £'000
Capital Budgets:				
Permanent Expansion	297	1,158	-	1,455
Fixed Term Expansion /Bulge	225	-	1,493	1,718
SEN Provision	1,600	2,894	3,000	7,494
Major Maintenance	3,412	3,777	2,544	9,733
Fire Safety Works	450	-	-	450
Miscellaneous	116	760	-	876
Effect of Decision from Report (Total)	**6,100**	**8,589**	**7,037**	**21,726**
Funding Sources:				
School Condition Allocation	3,877	4,537	2,544	10,958
Special Provision	1,600	2,894	3,000	7,494
Basic Needs Funding	623	1,158	1,493	3,274
Total Funding	**6,100**	**8,589**	**7,037**	**21,726**

10.6 The table above details the current Education Capital Programme for 2023/24 and the future two financial years and the associated funding sources. The spend in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 may increase dependent on the outcome of the following:

a) The completion of an in-depth review of legionella and compliance related works across all our community schools. This will determine the required level of funding over the coming years to ensure that our schools are compliant and safe.

b) The completion of a review regarding CDM management of the capital programme and risk analysis on reducing overall risk to the council regarding H&S management legislation on site and implementation of its recommendations.

c) The addition of an asset manager to the delivery team and their review of the compliance work we undertake and statutory documentation we hold on to our schools and implementation of recommendations to ensure we reduce the risk to the council.

d) The Creation of an RAAC register for all our community schools' estates where the material is identified and the creation of cyclical yearly structural survey plan on schools affected.

e) Additional works as needed to increase the SEND provision places, we offer in mainstream schools.

f) Additional detail on the overall capital programme is shown in appendix 2. There are some historical works with budget allocated which the service is also reviewing. This includes Smitham, Harris Purley and Heathfield.

10.7 A detailed breakdown of the projects can be found in Appendix 3 – School Maintenance Plan – appended to this report.

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10.8 Future savings/efficiencies

If additional free school providers are interested in opening schools in Croydon, the cost to the Council could be reduced further in the future years. Also, the Council's borrowing requirement may also be reduced if any further funding is allocated by the Department for Education. The fall in birth rate and associated demand for school places would however result in reduced demand and this would be monitored closely to make future savings.

10.9 The provision of more school places within the borough for children with special education needs and disability (SEND) will result in a reduction in the need for young people to travel outside of the borough, which will result in financial savings to the SEND budget.

10.10 Approved by: Charles Quaye Acting Head Of Finance - Education

on behalf of the Director of Finance. (Date 05/01/2024)

11 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to secure (so far as their powers enable them to do so) that efficient primary, secondary and further education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 13A requires local authorities to ensure that their relevant education and training functions are exercised (so far as they are capable of being so exercised) with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and

training and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential for children and young people in their area. Section 14 requires local authorities to secure sufficient schools for primary and secondary education for their area, and sufficient is defined by reference to number, character and equipment to provide appropriate education based on age, ability and aptitude, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their needs. These duties are overarching duties and apply regardless of whether schools are maintained by the local authority or independent of local authority support.

11.2 As the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools, the Council is required under The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Admissions Code 2021 (updated 11 March 2022) to determine the admissions arrangements by 28 February 2024.

In relation to the recommendations relating to the maintenance of schools, any procured works will need to comply with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Tenders and Contracts Regulations. At present the delegations in the Council's Tenders and Contracts Regulations have been superseded by the Executive Mayor's Scheme of Delegation following the introduction of the Mayoral Model and, if needed, specific delegations as part of the annual procurement plan can be requested.

Comments approved by Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation & Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 04/01/2024)

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 An equality analysis has been undertaken as part of the January 2024 report to help us to understand whether people with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, will be disproportionately affected by the proposed changes and recommendations in the Education Estates Strategy report. The equality analysis indicates that the proposed changes and recommendations will not negatively impact on any groups that share protected characteristics and that no major change is required as the strategy meets the general and specific equality duties as required by the Equality Act. This is attached at Appendix 7.

12.2 The proposed strategy supports the Council's general equality duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.3 Approved by: Helen Reeves (Interim) Head of Strategy and Policy (Date 03/01/2024)

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

13 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

13.1 There are no immediate HR implications arising from this report. However, any resultant future changes in staffing, following service delivery review options and consultation will be handled by schools' governing bodies in accordance with the appropriate school/council policy and procedures, and in consultation with the relevant impacted workforce and their trade union representatives.

13.2 Approved by: Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer, 18/12/2023.

14. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

14.1 Through the delivery of the Education Capital Programme of works the Council will strive to deliver energy efficient solutions through design and construction methodologies with the intention to reduce energy use and associated carbon emissions in our schools.

14.2 The Council will work with schools to monitor the energy performance post works so that this can be captured in lessons learnt for future projects.

15 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 Children being in school will help prevent criminal and anti-social behavior or being victim of such behavior and reduce the number of children and young people in the criminal justice system.

16 OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

16.1 In relation to mainstream schools, there are no plans to deliver any new/additional school places. Should there be an increase in demand for new schools, this will be delivered through the free school route which is funded by central government.

17 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Community Schools Admission Arrangements 2025/26- draft

Appendix 1b - PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SYSTEM - draft

Appendix 2 – Capital Programme Budget summary

Appendix 3 – Schools Maintenance Plan

Appendix 4 & 4a - Available Primary & Secondary School Places vs SCAP 2023 Pupil Projections

Appendix 5 – SEND details works

Appendix 6 – Croydon's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 202

Appendix 7 – Equality Impact Assessment – Education Estates Strategy Cabinet Report - January 2024

Background Info

N/A

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DRAFT - Community Schools Admission Arrangements 2025/26

The criteria outlined below apply only to Croydon community schools.

Should any community school convert to academy status prior to September 2025, the admissions arrangements will apply as published below unless stated otherwise in their funding agreement.

Where the number of applications for a community school is higher than the published admission number, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below to decide the allocation of places:

Children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) that names a school will be admitted to the school before the admissions criteria are applied to all other applicants. (See note 7)

1. **Looked-after children and previously looked-after children** (see Note 1).

2. **Linked schools**
   Children who are on the roll of their linked infant school at the time of application. (see Note 2).

3. **Siblings:**
   Children with a brother or sister who will be in attendance at the school or the linked infant/junior school at the time of enrolment of the new pupil (see Note 3).

4. **Exceptional medical need:**
   Pupils with a serious medical need for attending a particular school. (See Note 4)

   Supporting professional evidence must provide specific reasons why a particular school is the only school that can meet your child's needs and the detriment that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. Your application must be supported by a GP or consultant.

   For primary age children, their need to attend a particular school because of a parent's serious and continuing medical condition may also be relevant.

   Supporting evidence should be set out on the online medical form. Please refer to the guidance which is available online at: https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/school-admissions/applications-due-to-a-medical-need Both the completed medical form and the supporting evidence from the GP or consultant must be submitted with the application (see Note 4).

By submitting your evidence to the local authority you consent to this information being shared with the local authority's medical advisor.

5. **Distance:**
   Priority will be given to pupils living nearest to the school as measured in a straight line (see Notes 5 and 6).

Tiebreaker

In the event that the number of applications for places exceeds the number of places available, after application of the admissions criteria, distance will be used to decide between applications. Where distance is the same for two or more applications the authority will use random allocation.

Note 1: Looked-after children are defined as 'children in public care at the date on which the application is made'. Previously looked-after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately after being looked-after. This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

If an application is made under the 'looked-after' criterion, it must be supported by:

- a letter from the relevant local authority children's services department and/or relevant documents or
- evidence which demonstrates that a child was in state care outside of England and left that care as a result of being adopted.

Note 2: This criterion does not include siblings on the roll of the infant school's nursery class, if it has one.

A list of all infant and junior schools is provided in the table below. The shaded schools are their own admission authority, therefore, please refer to the individual school's admissions policy.

Linked Infant School	Linked Junior School
Beulah Infant	Beulah Junior
Elmwood Infant	Elmwood Junior
The Minster Nursery and Infant	The Minster Junior

Park Hill Infant	Park Hill Junior
St Joseph's Catholic Infant and Nursery	St Joseph's Catholic Junior
St Mary's Catholic Infant	St Mary's RC Junior
Whitehorse Manor Infant and Nursery	Whitehorse Manor Junior
Winterbourne Infant	Winterbourne Junior Girls
Winterbourne Infant	Winterbourne Junior Boys

Note 3: A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half-brother or sister, step brother or sister, foster-brother or sister or adopted brother or sister whose main residence is the same address as the child for whom the school place application is being made.

Children with siblings allocated a place in the Reception or Year 3 class at a linked junior school to start in September will be eligible for priority under the sibling criterion from 1 August each year when this local authority opens waiting lists for the new academic year.

In the case of in-year admissions, eligibility for sibling priority will apply at the time of an offer.

This criterion does not include siblings on the roll of the school's nursery class, if it has one.

Note 4: All schools have experience in dealing with children with a range of medical needs and all schools are required to make reasonable adjustments in order to do this.

In a very few exceptional cases however, there may be reasons why a child needs to attend a specific school and this could be due to the child's medical need or the medical condition of the parent or the main carer with responsibility for the child. Providing evidence does not guarantee that a child will be given priority at a particular school and in each case a decision will be made based on the merits of the case and whether the evidence demonstrates that a placement should be made at one particular school above any other.

If you feel there are exceptional reasons for your child to be considered for a priority placement at a particular school, you must indicate this in the section provided in your application and complete the online medical form. More information on the medical application process is available online at:
https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/school-admissions/applications-due-to-a-medical-need

All requests for priority consideration on medical grounds must be supported in writing by a doctor or consultant and this must make clear which school you are making a special case for, the reason why it is necessary for your child to attend this school in particular and the difficulties it will cause for your child to attend another school.

It is for you to decide how to support your case and what documents to provide but these must be submitted, together with the completed medical form and supporting statement by the GP/consultant, by the closing date of **15 January 2025**. The admissions team is not responsible for chasing you to submit medical evidence or for contacting professionals for information about your case. Any decision will be based on documents you submit by the closing date.

The local authority, using guidance received from Croydon's admissions panel (this is comprised of professionals from health and education), will decide whether an application for a school is to be prioritised on medical grounds, in light of the medical evidence submitted by the parent for their child to attend a particular school. Claims for priority of admission on medical grounds submitted after a decision on the original application has been made will only be considered if the documents submitted were not readily available at the time of application or if they relate to a new medical condition. Any submission made after the initial application must be supported by details of how the circumstances have changed since the original application and by further professional evidence.

Applicants who submit supporting information on medical grounds will not be advised whether their application is likely to be successful prior to the offer of places on 16 April 2025. If evidence is received after the closing date of 15 January 2025, it will not be taken into account until after places have been offered on 16 April 2025.

Note 5: 'Home' is defined as the address where the child normally resides Monday to Friday as their only or principal residence.

Addresses involving child-minding (professional or relatives) are excluded. There have been occasions when parents/carers have tried to use false addresses to obtain a place at a school. To prevent this happening, Croydon Council undertakes checks using an address verification tool called Datatank. If after these checks have taken place we cannot be satisfied that the address is the parent and child's normal place of residence, the parent/carer will be asked to provide further proof of their home address. In this instance two forms of address verification will be required: a solicitor's letter confirming completion of contract or a tenancy agreement along with a recent utility bill in the applicant's name.

If the parent/carer is found to have used a false address or deliberately provided misleading information to obtain a school place, the offer will be withdrawn.

Should there be doubts about the address to be used, parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence concerning the child's normal place of residence. This could include a court order stating where the child should live during the course of the week. The local authority would expect that the parent/carer with whom the child is normally resident receives the child benefit for the child. If the residence is split equally between both parents, the home address may be determined to be the address where the child is registered with the doctor. This may be used to determine the normal place of residence for the purpose of measuring the home to school distance.

If parents/carers have more than one property they may be required to provide proof of the normal place of residence for the child.

The processing of applications outside England for admission to school within the normal admissions rounds (excluding Crown servants)

Applications with an address outside England can only be accepted for processing when this local authority is satisfied that there is **evidence of a link to an address in its area** and that **the child will be resident at that address on or before the date of admission (**i.e.start of September). Such evidence must include:

- Booked travel tickets and
- End of lease/notice to tenants in Croydon property or

- Start of employment contract in the Croydon area or
- End of employment contract abroad

The address outside England will apply until such time as there is evidence of a child's return to the linked address. In the event that a family does not return to the linked address provided by the start of September, this local authority will withdraw the application submitted and any offer made.

Note 6: The distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the designated entrance(s) of the school using a computerised measuring system (GIS) and geographical reference points as provided by the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). Those living closer to the school will receive higher priority.

If a child lives in a shared property such as flats, the geographical references will determine the start point within the property boundaries to be used for distance calculation purposes.

Distance measurements can be obtained using various internet sources however these do not replicate the system used by Croydon Council. Additionally, the distance measurement which can be obtained from the Croydon website using the 'Find It' link on the home page will not always be identical to that of the measurement obtained using the Croydon school admissions measuring tool (known as GIS) as the 'Find It' link is set up to measure to a range of council facilities and is not set up to measure for school admission purposes. It also does not give measurements to three decimal points.

Note 7: Education, Health and Care Plan

An Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) is an integrated support plan for children and young people with complex special needs and disabilities. The plan gives a detailed description of the range of difficulties a child is facing and the level and type of provision required to help the child make progress and achieve positive outcomes.

Child minding arrangements:

Child-minding cannot be taken into account when allocating places at oversubscribed community schools.

Children attending a nursery class attached to an infant or primary school

Parents of children attending the nursery class at an infant or primary school must apply for a reception class place in the usual way. These children are not guaranteed a reception place at the school where they are attending the nursery class.

All applications are considered strictly in accordance with a school's admission criteria. Unless otherwise stated, children on the roll of a school's nursery class are not given priority admission into a reception class.

Twins/triplets or other multiple births for admission into an infant class

If you are applying for twins, or children from a multiple birth, and there is only one place available at the school, legislation allows us to admit them all i.e. all siblings from a multiple birth.

Waiting lists

If you are offered a place at a school through the in-year admissions process and you have also expressed a higher preference for another school or other schools, you will not be placed on the waiting list for your higher preference school/schools. You may request for your child to be added to the waiting list by completing a new in-year application form using the online parent portal on the website.

In-year waiting lists are maintained for one academic year and applicants who have been unsuccessful for their preferred school(s) and who wish to remain on the waiting list are required to re-apply the following academic year.

Waiting lists for community schools for applicants who applied as part of the main admissions rounds are held for the first term of the reception year and thereafter, applicants are required to complete the local authority's in-year online application form if they wish to remain on the waiting list.

Admission of children below compulsory school age deferred entry to school

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the application was made. Parents can also take up a part-time place until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

A child reaches compulsory school age the term after their fifth birthday. Therefore, if you are offered a reception class place at a school, you can opt to defer your child's start date, but they MUST start full time school following their fifth birthday by the dates given below:

- Children born on or between 1 September and the end of December must start full time school by the beginning of the spring term in January

- Children born from 1 January to the end of March must start full time school on 1 April

- Children born from 1 April to the end of August must start school at the beginning of the autumn term in September.

The local authority's expectation is that a child born between 1 April and 31 August should start the reception class at the beginning of the summer term at the latest. However, parents may choose that their child does not start school until the September (beginning of the autumn term) following their fifth birthday. Parents must note the place cannot be held open beyond the summer term, this will mean that as their child will be a year one pupil when they join, parents will need to apply for a year one school place, using the in-year application form.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is exceptionally admitted outside their normal age group. The admission authority will decide whether or not the individual child's circumstances make this appropriate on educational grounds.

It is the expectation of Croydon Council that a child is educated alongside his/her age equivalent peers, in almost all cases. We would strongly advise that all children enter into their normal year group. The responsibility for addressing individual educational needs lies with the school through an appropriately differentiated and enriched curriculum.

Parents must submit their request for their child to be educated outside their normal year group by completing the local authority online form at: **https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/school-admissions/admission-outside-of-normal-year-group/admission-outside-normal-year-group-request**

Parents should include evidence from a relevant professional detailing their child's needs and circumstances which make education outside the normal age group necessary. This could include:

- Evidence from a health or social care professional who is involved in the care or treatment of the child e.g. speech and language therapist, social worker, paediatrician.

- The view of any nursery or other early years setting the child attends and any records of the child's development.

- The progress the child has made in an early years setting, including the rate of progress.

- Whether the child's premature birth has caused health problems or developmental delays that mean the child would benefit from a delayed school start.

Decisions are made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interest of the child. This will require the admission authority to take account of the child's individual needs and abilities and to consider whether these can best be met in reception or year one. It will also involve taking account of the potential impact on the child of being admitted to year one without first having completed the reception year. The admission authority will consider:

- Parents' views.
- Information relating to the child's academic, social and emotional development, where relevant medical history and the views of a medical professional.
- Any previous history of a child being educated outside of their normal age group.
- If a child was born prematurely, the age group the child would have fallen if the child had been born on time.
- Views of the head teacher of the school(s) concerned.

Appendix 1b

DRAFT - PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SYSTEM

Template LA Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in Maintained Schools and Academies in 2025/26

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Page 12: Content of Common Application Form -Year 7 Scheme (Schedule 1)

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PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SYSTEM

Template LA Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in 2025/26

Definitions used in the template schemes

"the Application Year"	the academic year in which the parent makes an application (i.e. in relation to the academic year of entry, the academic year preceding it)
"the Board"	the Pan-London Admissions Executive Board, which is responsible for the Scheme
"the Business User Guide (BUG)"	the document issued annually to participating LAs setting out the operational procedures of the Scheme
"the Common Application Form"	this is the form that each authority must have under the Regulations for parents to use to express their preferences, set out in rank order
"the Equal Preference System"	the model whereby all preferences listed by parents on the Common Application Form are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil is eligible to be offered a place at more than one school within an LA, or across more than one participating LA, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the school ranked highest of those which can offer a place
"the Highly Recommended Elements"	the elements of the Template Scheme that are not mandatory but to which subscription is strongly recommended in order to maximise co-ordination and thereby simplify the application process as far as possible
"the Home LA"	the LA in which the applicant/parent/carer is resident
"the LIAAG Address Verification Register"	the document containing the address verification policy of each participating LA
"the Local Admission System	the IT module for administering admissions in

(LAS)”	each LA and for determining the highest offer both within and between participating LAs
“the London E-Admissions Portal”	the common online application system used by the 33 London LAs and Surrey County Council
“the Maintaining LA”	the LA which maintains a school, or within whose area an academy is situated, for which a preference has been expressed
“the Mandatory Elements”	those elements of the Template Scheme to which authorities **must** subscribe in order to be considered as ‘Participating Authorities’ and to benefit from use of the Pan-London Register
“the Notification Letter”	the agreed form of letter sent to applicants on the Prescribed Day which communicates any determination granting or refusing admission to a primary or secondary school, which is attached as Schedule 2
“the Prescribed Day”	the day on which parents/carers are notified of their outcome. 1 March (secondary) in the year following the relevant determination year except that, in any year in which that day is not a working day, the prescribed day shall be the next working day.
“the Pan-London Register (PLR)”	the database which will sort and transmit application and outcome data between the LAS of each participating LA
“the Pan-London Timetable”	the framework for processing of application and outcome data, which is attached as Schedule 3A
“the Participating LA”	any LA that has indicated in the Memorandum of Agreement that they are willing to incorporate, at a minimum, the mandatory elements of the Template LA Scheme presented here.
“the Qualifying Scheme”	the scheme which each LA is required to formulate in accordance with The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012, for co-ordinating

arrangements for the admission of children to maintained secondary schools and academies.

PAN LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SYSTEM

Template Scheme for Co-ordination of Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in 2025/26

All the numbered sections contained in this scheme are mandatory, except those marked with an which are highly desirable.*

Applications

1. Croydon LA will advise home LAs of their resident pupils on the roll of this LA's maintained primary schools and academies who are eligible to transfer to secondary school in the forthcoming academic year.

2. Applications from residents of Croydon LA will be made on this LA's Common Application Form, which will be available and able to be submitted on-line. This will include all the fields and information specified in Schedule 1 to this Template LA Scheme. These will be supplemented by any additional fields and information which are deemed necessary by Croydon LA to enable the admission authorities in the LA area to apply their published oversubscription criteria.

3. Croydon LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent/carer who is resident in this LA and has a child in their last year of primary education within a maintained school or academy, either in Croydon LA or any other maintaining LA, is informed how they can access Croydon's composite prospectus and apply online. Parents/carers who do not live in Croydon LA will have access to this LA's composite prospectus which will advise parents/carers to contact their home LA for further details on the application process.

4. The admission authorities within Croydon LA will not use supplementary information forms except where the information available through the Common Application Form is insufficient for consideration of the application against the published oversubscription criteria. Where supplementary information forms are used by the admissions authorities within Croydon LA, the LA will seek to ensure that these only collect information which is required by the published oversubscription criteria, in accordance with paragraph 2.4 of the School Admissions Code 2021.

5. Where supplementary information forms are used by admission authorities in Croydon LA, they will either be available on the school's website, on the LA's website or a paper copy of the supplementary information form can be requested from the school directly. Such forms will advise parents that they must also complete their home LA's Common Application Form. Croydon LA's composite prospectus will indicate which schools in this LA require

supplementary information forms to be completed and where they can be obtained.

6. Where an admission authority in this LA receives a supplementary information form, Croydon LA will not consider it to be a valid application unless the parent/carer has also listed the school on their home LA's Common Application Form, in accordance with paragraph 2.3 of the School Admissions Code 2021.

7. *Applicants will be able to express a preference for six maintained secondary schools or Academies within and/or outside the Home LA.

8. *Croydon LA will advise applicants that they will receive no more than one offer of a school place on 3 March 2025. Applicants will also be advised that a place will be offered at the highest preference school for which they are eligible for a place. If the parent nominates a school outside of a PAN-London LA, Croydon LA will pass relevant details on to that authority and will make every reasonable effort to resolve any multiple offers with them.*

9. The order of preference given on the Common Application Form will not be revealed to a school within the area of this LA. This is to comply with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2021 which states that admission authorities must not give extra priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in particular order, including ‘first preference first’ arrangements. However, where a parent resident in Croydon LA expresses a preference for schools in the area of another LA, the order of preference for that LA’s schools will be revealed to that LA in order that it can determine the highest ranked preference in cases where an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school in that LA’s area.

10. Croydon LA undertakes to carry out the address verification process as set out in its entry in the LIAAG Address Protocol. This will in all cases include validation of resident applicants against this LA’s primary school data and the further investigation of any discrepancy using Council Tax and Electoral Register records. Where Croydon LA is not satisfied as to the validity of an address of an applicant whose preference has been sent to a maintaining LA, it will advise the maintaining LA no later than **17 December 2024.**

11. Croydon LA will confirm the status of any resident child for whom it receives a Common Application Form stating s/he is currently or previously a 'Child Looked After' and will provide any additional evidence on receipt of a reasonable request by the maintaining LA in respect of a preference for a school in its area by **14 November 2024.**

12. Croydon LA will advise a maintaining LA of the reason for any application which is made in respect of a child resident in the area of this LA to be admitted outside of their correct age cohort, and will forward any supporting documentation to the maintaining LA by **14 November 2024.**

Processing

13. Applicants resident within Croydon LA must return the Common Application Form**,** which will be available and able to be submitted online, to this LA by **31 October 2024.**

14. Application data relating to all preferences for schools in the area of a participating LA, which have been expressed within the terms of this LA's scheme, will be up-loaded to the PLR by **14 November 2024.** Supporting documentation provided with the Common Application Form will be sent to maintaining LAs by the same date.

15. Croydon LA shall, in consultation with the admission authorities within its area and within the framework of the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3A, determine and state its own timetable for the processing of preference data and the application of published oversubscription criteria.

16. *Supplementary information forms must be returned directly to the relevant school by the date specified by the school.* Under the requirements of the scheme, parents/carers will not have to complete a supplementary information form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their admission criteria or where this is not a requirement in a school's admission arrangements.

17. *Admission authorities will start seeing details of their applications on the Schools Access Module (SAM) from **4 November 2024.** Schools that require a supplementary form will check that a supplementary form has been completed for each child and will contact parents/carers who have not completed a supplementary information form. Schools will also check that parents/carers who have completed a supplementary information form have completed the LA's Common Application Form. If a parent has not completed a Common Application Form, schools will share this information with Croydon LA.*

18. *Croydon LA will accept late applications only if they are late for a good reason, deciding each case on its own merits. *The latest date that an application that is late for good reason can be accepted for a resident of this LA is **12 December 2024.***

19. Where such applications contain preferences for schools in other LAs, Croydon LA will forward the details to maintaining LAs via the PLR as they are received. This LA will accept late applications which are considered to be on time within the terms of the home LA's scheme.

20. The latest date for the upload to the PLR of late applications which are considered to be on-time within the terms of the home LA's scheme is **17 December 2024.**

21. Where an applicant moves from one participating home LA to another after submitting an on-time application under the terms of the former home LA's scheme, the new home LA will accept the application as on-time up to **12 December 2024**, on the basis that an on-time application already exists within the Pan-London system.

22. *Applications which are late for no good reason and applications received after **12 December 2024** but before **3 March 2025** will be considered after all on-time applications have been processed.*

23. Croydon LA will participate in the application data checking exercise scheduled between **17 December 2024 and 2 January 2025** in the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3A.

24. All preferences for schools within Croydon LA will be considered by the relevant admission authorities without reference to rank order to comply with paragraphs 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2021. When the admission authorities within Croydon LA have provided a list of applicants in criteria order to this LA, this LA shall, for each applicant to its schools for whom more than one potential offer is available, use the highest ranked preference to decide which single potential offer to make. This is the 'Equal Preference System'.

25. *Schools must provide Croydon LA with an electronic list of their applicants ranked in criteria order by **13 January 2025.***

26. Croydon LA will carry out all reasonable checks to ensure that pupil rankings are correctly held in its LAS for all maintained schools and academies in this LA before uploading data to the PLR.

27. Croydon LA will upload the highest potential offer available to an applicant for a maintained school or academy in this LA to the PLR by **31 January 2025.** The PLR will transmit the highest potential offer specified by the Maintaining LA to the Home LA.

28. The LAS of this LA will eliminate, as a Home LA, all but the highest ranked offer where an applicant has more than one potential offer across Maintaining LAs submitting information within deadline to the PLR. This will involve exchanges of preference outcomes between the LAS and the PLR (in accordance with the iterative timetable published in the Business User Guide) which will continue until notification that a steady state has been achieved, or until **13 February 2025.** Where a management decision is made that additional iterations are necessary, these will continue no later than **17 February 2025**.

29. Croydon LA will not make an additional offer between the end of the iterative process and **3 March 2025** which may impact on an offer being made by another participating LA.

30. Notwithstanding paragraph 29, if an error is identified within the allocation of places at a maintained school or academy in this LA, Croydon LA will attempt to manually resolve the allocation to correct the error. Where this impacts on another LA (either as a home or maintaining LA) Croydon LA will liaise with that LA to attempt to resolve the correct offer and any multiple offers which might occur. However, if another LA is unable to resolve a multiple offer, or if the impact is too far reaching, this LA will accept that the applicant(s) affected might receive a multiple offer.

31. Croydon LA will participate in the offer data checking exercise scheduled between **14 (18) and 26 February 2025** in the Pan-London timetable in Schedule 3A.

32. Croydon LA will send a file to the E-Admissions portal with outcomes for all resident applicants who have applied online no later than **27 February 2025**. (33 London LAs & Surrey LA only).

Offers

33. Croydon LA will ensure that, if there are places available, each resident applicant who cannot be offered a place at one of the preferences expressed on the Common Application Form, receives the offer of an alternative school place in accordance with paragraph 2.11 of the School Admissions Code 2021. This will usually be the nearest school to the child's home address which has a place available, after the allocation of places has been completed.

34. Croydon LA will inform all resident applicants of their highest offer of a school place and, where relevant, the reasons why higher preferences were not offered, whether they were for schools in the Home LA or in other participating LAs.

35. This LA's online notification will include the information set out in Schedule 2.

36. On **3 March 2025,** *all resident applicants who applied online will be able to view their outcome online as well as accept or decline their offer. Croydon LA will not send outcome letters in the post.*

37. *All maintained primary schools and academies in this LA will be able to view destination data of their resident applicants on the SAM portal by the end of the summer term 2025.

Post Offer

38. Croydon LA will request that resident applicants accept or decline the offer of a place by **17 March 2025,** or within two weeks of the date of any subsequent offer.

39. Where an applicant resident in this LA accepts or declines a place in a school within the area of another LA by **17 March 2025,** Croydon LA will forward the information to the maintaining LA by **24 March 2025**. Where such information is received from applicants after **17 March 2025**, this LA will pass it to the maintaining LA as it is received.

40. Where a place becomes available in an oversubscribed maintained school or academy in this LA's area, it will be offered from a waiting list ordered in accordance with paragraph 2.15 of the School Admissions Code 2021.

41. Where a waiting list is maintained by an admission authority of a maintained school or academy in this LA's area, the admission authority will inform Croydon LA of a potential offer, in order that the home LA can offer the place.

42. When acting as a maintaining LA, Croydon LA will inform the home LA, where different, of an offer for a maintained school or Academy in this LA's area which can be made to an applicant resident in the home LA's area, in order that the home LA can offer the place.

43. When acting as a maintaining LA, this LA and the admission authorities within it, will not inform an applicant resident in another LA that a place can be offered.

44. When acting as a home LA, Croydon LA will offer a place at a maintained school or Academy in the area of another LA to an applicant resident in its area, provided that the school is ranked higher on the Common Application Form than any school already offered.

45. When acting as a home LA, when Croydon LA is informed by a maintaining LA of an offer which can be made to an applicant resident in this LA's area which is ranked lower on the Common Application Form than any school already offered, it will inform the maintaining LA that the offer will not be made.

46. When acting as a home LA, when Croydon LA has agreed to a change of preference order for good reason, it will inform any maintaining LA affected by the change. In such cases, paragraphs 44 and 45 shall apply to the revised order of preferences.

47. When acting as a maintaining LA, Croydon LA will inform the home LA, where different, of any change to an applicant's offer status as soon as it occurs.

48. When acting as a maintaining LA, Croydon LA will accept a change of preferences or preference order (including reinstated or additional preferences) from home LAs for maintained schools and academies in its area.

49. When acting as a maintaining LA, Croydon LA will accept new applications (including additional preferences) from home LAs for maintained schools and academies in its area.

50. This LA, when acting as a home LA, will allow applicants to express additional preferences before the start of the school term, after National Offer Day. The number of additional preferences will be unrestricted.

51. Croydon LA, when acting as a home LA, will aim to start filling any vacancies which become available after 3 March 2025 within four weeks of National Offer Day. Secondary schools will be asked to rank all applicants on their waiting list, including late applications received after 31 October 2024, in accordance with their oversubscription criteria. Secondary schools will then advise Croydon LA of the offers to be made.

52. *Resident applicants who receive an offer at their first preference school will only be placed onto a waiting list for a lower preference school in exceptional circumstances which would need to be supported with relevant evidence. In accordance with the Pan London agreement and to ensure that Croydon meets its duty to continue to coordinate admissions beyond National Offer Day and comply with the parents' highest possible preference, Croydon will ensure that waiting lists do not contain lower ranked preferences except where it has received a parent's request for a child to be placed on the waiting list for a lower preference school following a change of circumstances.*

Waiting lists

Waiting lists will be maintained by Croydon secondary schools for at least one term until **31 December 2025** and places will be filled in accordance with each school's admission criteria. After this date, parents/carers will need to apply through the in-year application process if they wish their child to remain on a school's waiting list. Parents/carers must also refer to each school's admission policy for more information regarding the management of waiting lists.

Parents/carers' enquiries regarding waiting list positions or appeal procedures must be made directly to the schools.

The PAN London Coordinated Admission Scheme ends on **31 August 2025**. Applications for Year 7 received after this date will be treated as in-year applications. Please refer to Croydon Council's website and the in-year admissions guidance for more information.

PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
SCHEDULE 1

Minimum Content of Common Application Form for Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in 2025/26

Child's details:
Surname
Forename(s)
Middle name(s)
Date of Birth
Gender
Home address
Name of current school
Address of current school (if outside home LA)

Parent's details:
Title
Surname
Forename
Address (if different to child's address)
Telephone Number (Home, Daytime, Mobile)
Email address
Relationship to child

Preference details (x 6 recommended):
Name of school
Address of school
Preference ranking
Local authority in which the school is based

Additional information:
Reasons for Preferences (including any medical or social reasons)
Does the child have an Education, Health and Care Plan Y/N*

Is the child a ‘Child Looked After (CLA)’? Y/N
Is the child formerly CLA but now adopted or subject of a ‘Child Arrangements Order or ‘Special Guardianship Order’? Y/N
If yes, name of responsible local authority
Surname of sibling
Forename of sibling
DOB of sibling
Gender of sibling
Name of school sibling attends

Other:
Signature of parent or guardian

Date of signature

*Where an LA decides not to request this information on the CAF, it must guarantee that no details of a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be sent via the PLR.

SCHEDULE 2
Template Outcome Letter for Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in 2025/2026

From: Home LA

Date: **3 March 2025 (sec)**

Dear Parent,

Application for a Secondary School

I am writing to let you know the outcome of your application for a secondary/primary school. Your child has been offered a place at X School. The school will write to you with further details.

I am sorry that it was not possible for your child to be offered a place at any of the schools which you listed as a higher preference on your application form. For each of these schools there were more applications than places, and other applicants has a higher priority than your child under the school's published admission criteria.

Your child's name has been automatically added on the waiting list for any higher preference school you have been unsuccessful.

Offers which could have been made for any schools which you placed lower in your preference list, were automatically withdrawn under the co-ordinated admission arrangements, as a higher preference has been offered.

If you would like more information about the reason that your child was not offered a place at any higher preference school, you should contact the admission authority that is responsible for admissions to the school within the next few days. Details of the different admission authorities for schools in the borough of X are attached to this letter. If the school is outside the borough of X, the admission authority will either be the borough in which the school is situated, or the school itself.

You have the right of appeal under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 against the refusal of a place at any of the schools for which you have applied. If you wish to appeal, you must contact the admission authority for the school within the next few days to obtain the procedure and the date by which an appeal must be received by them.

Please would you confirm that you wish to accept the place at X School by completing the reply slip below. If you do not wish to accept the place, you will need to let me know what alternative arrangements you are making for your child's education.

*Please return the reply slip to me by **17 March 2025(sec).** If you have any questions about this letter, please contact me on _____.*

Yours sincerely

(First preference offer letters should include the paragraphs in italics only)

PAN-LONDON CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME
SCHEDULE 3A

Timetable for Admissions to Year 7/Year 10 in 2025/26

Thurs 31 Oct 2024	Statutory deadline for receipt of applications
Thurs 14 Nov 2024	Deadline for the transfer of application information by the Home LA to the PLR (ADT file)
Thurs 12 Dec 2024	Deadline for receipt of late applications considered as 'on-time' to Home LA
Tues 17 Dec 2024	Deadline for the upload of late applications considered as 'on-time' to the PLR
Tues 17 Dec 2024 – Thurs 2 Jan 2025	Checking of application data
Fri 31 Jan 2025	Deadline for the transfer of potential offer information from Maintaining LAs to the PLR (ALT file)
Thur 13 Feb 2025	Final ALT file to PLR
Fri 14 (Tues 18) – Wed 26 Feb 2025	Checking of offer data
Thurs 27 Feb 2025	Deadline for on-line ALT file to portal
Mon 3 Mar 2025	Outcomes published online.
Mon 17 Mar 2025	Deadline for return of acceptances
Mon 24 Mar 2025	Deadline for transfer of acceptances to maintaining LAs

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Appendix 2 - Capital Programme Budget Summary					
Planning Area	**Project Description**	**2023-2024**	**2024-2025**	**2025-2026**	**Total Budget**
	Fixed Term Expansions / Bulges				
South West	Smitham Primary School (Bulge)*	28,092			28,092
South	Gresham Bulge & Caretakers House	197,102			197,102
Various	Basic Need Fund			1,493,000	1,493,000
	Total Fixed Term expansion	**225,195**	**0**	**1,493,000**	**1,718,195**
	Permanent Expansion & New Build				
Central	Harris Purley Way (pka Fiveways) *	235,514	20,000		255,514
South	Heathfield Academy, Aberdeen Rd (pka Spicers Yard)*	7,158			7,158
South West	Smitham Primary School*	34,449			34,449
South	Greenvale Primary Expansion	20,000	1,138,000		1,158,000
	Total Perm. Expansion	**297,120**	**1,158,000**	**0**	**1,455,120**
	SEN				
South East	Addington Valley Academy (For ESFA)	23,727	454,000	100,000	577,727
	Castlehill School places for children with ASD at primary ELP	50,000			50,000
South East	Redgates Staffroom Extension	36,171			36,171
South East	Redgates Playground Works	321,244			321,244
North East	Priory School Suitability & Safeguard Works	420,000			420,000
Central	Post 16 SEN Provision with Croydon College	45,000	100,000	100,000	245,000
South	Post 16 SEN Temp. Modular - Coulsdon College Site	82,089	60,840		142,929
South East	Red Gates Modular Building (bulge 2019)	31,665	22,464		54,129
South East	Red Gates permanent expansion (1FE bulge 2018)	34,900	27,648		62,548
South	St Giles 2 Classroom Additions 2020	75,616	59,099		134,715
South	St Nicholas (112 place SEN primary expansion)	220,000	296,095	100,000	616,095
	Post 16 SEN Temp provision sept 23 for 35 pupils subject to options appraisal	0	338,370	500,000	838,370
	Pathways programme Post 16 SEN Permanent Provision	0	1,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000
North East	Priory Art Room and staffroom extension (requires feasibility estimated)	10,000	50,000		60,000
	SEN secondary expansion 30 pupils Sept 2023/2024 & 2024/2025(Estimated)	0	200,000	200,000	400,000
North East	Selhurst Nursery sensory room and small enclosed garden	0	25,000		25,000

Central	Crossfield's Nursery sensory room and small enclosed garden	0	25,000		25,000
South	St Giles 5 extra Places by 2023/2024	0	20,000		20,000
Various sites	ELP – MLD – 25 additional places needed by 2023/2024	0	125,000		125,000
Various sites	HI ELP 12 additional places required in the borough satellite site TBC	0	65,000		65,000
North West	Norbury Manor acoustic improvements	0	25,000		25,000
South East	Monks Orchard Sen Wing Refurbishment	250,000			250,000
	Total SEN	**1,600,411**	**2,893,516**	**3,000,000**	**7,493,927**
	Education - Miscellaneous				
	Purley Oaks Primary Kitchen Refurbishment		75,000		75,000
	Ridgeway Primary Health and Safety Reconfiguration of toilets, ventilation, and drainage		25,000		25,000
	Gresham Primary Boys' toilets Refurbishment		30,000		30,000
North West	Winterbourne Nursery and Infants Boys' toilets Refurbishment		30,000		30,000
North West	Winterbourne Girls School Dining & Kitchen Facilities	15,000	600,000		615,000
south	Kenley Primary School Modular Replacement	100,579			100,579
	Total Miscellaneous	**115,579**	**760,000**	**0**	**875,579**
	Fire Safety Works				
Various sites	Fire Safety Works	450,000			450,000
	Total Fire Safety Works	**450,000**	**0**	**0**	**450,000**
	Major Maintenance				
Various	Major Maintenance Programme	3,411,514	3,777,268		7,188,782
Central	Provision (SCA) - not yet allocated	0	0	2,544,000	2,544,000
	Total Maintenance	**3,411,514**	**3,777,268**	**2,544,000**	**9,732,782**
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET		**6,099,819**	**8,588,784**	**7,037,000**	**21,725,604**

*These budgets are related to historical works on Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment's. Those schools will be funded after completion and submission of evidence with receipts.

Appendix 3 - Schools Capital Maintenance plan 2023-2025				
SCHOOL	**WORKS DESCRIPTION**	**2023/24 Budget**	**2024/25 Budget**	**Comments**
GENRAL BUILD WORKS PROGRAMME				
Bensham Manor School	Windows replacement including Survey	3,500	30,000	
Beulah	Front playground resurfacing	29,000		
Beulah Junior	Installation of new windows - subject to survey	334,471		
Beulah Junior	External Brickwork Survey and repairs and possible rainwater goods replacement		40,000	
Crossfield's nursery	Rubber crumb and replacement and play area improvements	25,000		
Downsview Primary	Survey KS2 windows in Block C only		2,000	
Elmwood Infants	Replacement of doors/window units to 3 areas including Survey	2,000	55,000	
Forestdale Primary	Repairs to Main Building Brickwork and Flat Roof		12,000	
Greenvale Primary	Window Replacement to Main Building including Survey	1,500	50,000	
Gresham Primary	Dining Block - repair external decorations to render and external stair wall.		30,000	
Howard Primary	Repairs to Flooding Playground	20,000		
Norbury Manor Primary	Phase 1 - Roof Replacement works to include rainwater goods replacement	2,500	110,000	Works to be phased over 2 years
Priory School	Timber façade and window finishes to all outbuildings require exterior painting solar reflective external robust finishing	25,000		
Priory School	Structural survey and review of damp proofing options to main building and Gym (chemical injection type)	60,000		
Priory School	Window and window sill repairs survey, including all rooflights	45,000		
Priory School	Timber façade and window finishes to all outbuildings require external painting solar reflective external robust finish		25,000	
Purley Oaks Primary	Final Phase Window Replacement including Survey	2,500	200,000	
Red Gates School	Phase 1 - Roof Replacement		100,000	Works to be phased over 2 – 3 years
Ridgeway Primary	Survey Roof, Rooflight and Rainwater Goods Replacement		100,000	
Selhurst Nursery	Roof Repairs phase 1 (flat roof replacement 2022) phase 2 (pitch roof repairs 2023)	20,000		
Selsdon Primary	Rainwater Goods Replacement		10,000	

Selsdon Primary & Nursery	Windows replacement Survey and main block, canteen block, C & B	2,500		
Smitham Primary school	Windows replacement including Survey	3,500		
St Giles	Roof works phase 2	332,000		
The Hayes Primary	Roof and Rainwater Remedial Works to include to works to external walls, doors, and window surrounds		25,000	
Winterbourne Nursery and Infants	Phase 1 Window Replacement including survey	2,000	100,000	Works to be phased over 2 years
Winterbourne Nursery and Infants	Phase 1 - Roof and external wall survey including outbuildings and works to include replacement of rainwater goods in school/Nursery and Jenden Building		100,000	Works to be phased over 2 years
Allow for contingency 15% due to market conditions			155,475	
Sub-Total General Build		**910,471**	**1,144,475**	
ELECTRICAL WORKS PROGRAMME				
Beaumont Primary	Replace existing HRC/Rewireable boards with new metal clad MCB/RCBO split load/split metered power and lighting lockable distribution boards in Boiler room	42,000		
Beaumont Primary	To survey and replace Fluorescent Lighting with LED throughout the school		50,500	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Downsview	Replace all 25+ year luminaries throughout school – end of life	66,000		
Elmwood infants	Electricals	1,817		
Elmwood Infants	To survey and replace Fluorescent Lighting with LED throughout the school		47,000	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Elmwood Junior	To survey and replace Fluorescent Lighting with LED throughout the school		47,000	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Heavers Farm Primary	To survey and replace Fluorescent Lighting with LED throughout the school		27,100	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Norbury Manor	Replace all 25+ year luminaries throughout school – end of life	80,000		
Ridgeway Primary	To survey and replace Fluorescent Lighting with LED throughout the school		50,000	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Ridgway primary	Lighting upgrade survey and electrical work from 21/22	6,978		
Selsdon Primary	General electrical upgrades of distrubution board	89,000		
Selsdon Primary	To survey and replace Fluorescent Lighting with LED throughout the school		50,000	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs

Selsdon Primary school	Lighting upgrade survey	4,762		
Smitham Primary	Replace all 25+ year luminaries throughout school – end of life	57,000		
St. Giles School	To survey and replace Fluorescent Lighting with LED throughout the school		44,750	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Winterborne Junior Girls	Electrical work from 21/22	18,459		
Allow for contingency 15% due to market conditions			47,453	
Sub-total Electrical Works		**366,016**	**363,803**	
MECHANICAL WORKS PROGRAMME				
Bensham Manor	Hot and cold storage	13,000		
Crosfield Nursery	Individual water heaters (hot and cold-water services)		7,898	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Downsview Primary	Full Boiler Room Survey		10,000	
Elmwood Infants	Full boiler room survey and boiler replacement to include associated plant room works		310,000	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Elmwood Infants	Replace 500l Unvented Indirect HW Heater (Hot & Cold-Water Services)		25,000	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs
Greenvale primary	Pipework rad replacements	300,000		
Heavers Farm Primary	Replace outdated Stokvis heat exchangers. (Hot & Cold-Water Services)		18,850	
Red Gates School	Full Boiler Room Survey		10,000	Subject to the outcome of surveys and costs. A conversation will need to be had with Quest Academy who shares the boilers with /Red Gates School as there will be a cost implication
Ridgeway	Plant room boilers and rads (slipped) uplift needed for additional work found 2022	909,400		
Selhurst	Plant	53,000		
St Giles	Plant room boilers and rads Phase 2	309,938		
Allow for contingency 15% due to market conditions			57,262	
Sub-total Mechanical Works		**1,585,338**	**439,010**	
HEALTH AND SAFETY /COMPLIANCE WORKS				
All Schools	Undertake Surveys for Legionella compliance work for completion 2024-2026 surveys 2k + work element to commence programme	25,000	125,000	

All Schools	Asbestos - AMP/Re-inspections. Annual re-inspection survey/required remedial works in schools	20,000	30,000	
All Schools	Rainwater goods clearance PPM checks and Upgrading rainwater goods in schools	15,000	43,500	Check that schools are completing regular rainwater goods maintenance and leaf clearance, which should ensure we get less water ingress from blocked gutters and downpipes
CDM and Urgent Health and Safety Works	Engage consultants to manage and ensure compliance on all maintenance and urgent H+S works		50,000	
Downsview Primary	Grease Trap remedial Works, and Roller Shutter Works. To include fire evacuation works in Nursery Block/linking fire alarm system to main building (2-way system)		130,000	
Fire Strategy in Schools - 2024 onwards	For continuous compliancy, create a holistic approach and template for future fire safety work in maintained schools		70,000	
Howard Primary	Fire safety -H&S and Compliance Works	150,000	50,000	
Priory School	Carry our remedial Fire Safety Works		50,000	
RAAC register	RAAC surveys in identified schools and creation of a schools RAAC register and set up of an annual survey programme for inspection of at risk properties	60,689		
RAAC/CLT Monitoring	As a preventive measure, monitor woodwool and CLT panels in 13 schools (used instead of RAAC concrete in construction but is as dangerous)		20,000	
Red gate	Fire safety works to move dry riser Position of dry riser outlet within Gilbert Scott Academy grounds nearer to block 4 modular as I identified on the 2020 condition report	15,000		
Redgate's	Tarmac pedestrian path beside the roadway to be extended	15,000		
Ridgeway primary	Replacement of timber decking	10,000		
Selhurst Nursery School	Survey and replacement of defective rubber crumb and planters in playground		25,000	
Smitham Primary	Survey and Replacement of 9 defective external doors – end of life		10,000	
St. Giles School	Additional path from new modular needed for wheelchair fire escape to rear of school to create a	17,000		

	larger/easier accessible fire assembly point			
St. Giles School	Survey and Remedial Works to loosen paving stones at the main entrance of the school.		5,000	
St. Giles School	Survey and Remedial work to defective masonry at various locations to include fire exit ramps where the railings have loosened.		5,000	
Winterbourne Nursery & Primary	Reinstatement and repairs to paths	22,000		
Allow for contingency 15% due to market conditions			76,275	
SUB-TOTAL Health and Safety/Compliance Works		**349,689**	**689,775**	
HISTORICAL DEFECTS				
Forestdale Primary	Manage repair works in the school - Water Damage Repair		20,000	
Priory School	Manage repair works in school - Drainage issues /Rising Damp/Wall		80,000	
Red Gates School	Manage repair works in the school - Replacement of defective doors/ thresholds plus defective drainage and walls.		50,000	
Allow for contingency 15% due to market conditions			22,500	
SUB-TOTAL Historical Defects		**0**	**172,500**	
REACTIVE MAINTENANCE WORKS				
Various Schools	Undertake emergency works in schools throughout the year - 10%	200,000	275,206	
SUBTOTAL REACTIVE		**200,000**	**275,206**	
Grand TOTAL		**3,411,514**	**3,084,768**	
SLIPPAGE 2023-2024				
GENERAL BUILD				
Bensham Manor	Full roof and full school structural survey and remedial works to main façade		125,000	
Beulah Junior	External brickwork Survey and repairs and possible rainwater goods replacement		22,000	
Beulah Junior	Replacement of cast Iron Guttering - rotten brackets subject to survey		50,000	
Elmwood Infants	External walls survey and repairs, replacement guttering and additional drainage outlets to roof		26,000	

Forestdale Primary	Main building brickwork and flat roof survey		2,500	
Forestdale Primary	New External Access Stairs and Ramp		40,000	
Heavers Farm	Replace rooflight film		15,000	
Norbury Manor	Survey extension and remedial work		50,000	
Parkhill infants	Structural survey and remedial work & review of existing modulars for suitability		75,000	Existing modulars to be reviewed for suitability due to rotted floor/ mould on walls in Class 1 and rotting fire door and stairs in Starlight Room
Purley Oaks Primary	Roof and external wall survey and works roofline goods (flat roofs) for replacement 23/24		45,000	
Ridgeway Primary	Roof and external wall survey, rainwater goods replacement rooflight replacement works for 24/25		30,000	
Selsdon Primary and Nursery	Roof survey possible felt replacement and rainwater goods works 24/25 structural brickwork survey		2,500	
Smitham Primary	External structural survey and works to be scheduled for 2024		2,500	
The Hayes Primary	Roof and rainwater goods survey and external wall (door and window surrounds) survey and works		3,000	
Winterbourne Girls	Window survey/replacement HT office, Dep HT office, Class 62 1st floor, 1st and 2nd floor landing		45,000	
Winterbourne Infants and Nursery	Roof and external wall Survey including outbuildings and works to include replacement rainwater goods school/Jensen building and nursery building		55,000	
SUBTOTAL GENERAL BUILD			**£588,500**	
HEALTH & SAFETY WORK				
Review of Client/landlord Compliance responsibilities	Internal review of process and due diligence, with training on fire safety and update training on H&S legislation and site inspection work		15,000	
			£15,000	
MECHANICAL WORK				
Thornton heath	Boiler and pumps, underfloor heating and controls main building replacement plus ventilation extraction survey and possible works		89,000	
SUBTOTAL MECHANICAL			**89,000**	
TOTAL SLIPPAGE			**692,500**	

MAJOR MAINTENANCE TOTAL	**3,411,514**	**3,777,268**	

Appendix 4 – Available Primary School Places vs SCAP 2023 Pupil Projections

Planning Area	Academic Year	Available Places (Year R)	Forecast (Year R)	Surplus / Deficit	Forms of Entry	% Surplus / Deficit
Borough Wide	2023-24	5040	4420	620	21	12
	2024-25	4980	4387	593	20	12
	2025-26	4980	4265	715	24	14
	2026-27	4980	4172	808	27	16
	2027-28	4980	4043	937	31	19
North West	2023-24	1350	1165	185	6	14
	2024-25	1320	1156	164	5	12
	2025-26	1320	1132	188	6	14
	2026-27	1320	1110	210	7	16
	2027-28	1320	1055	265	9	21
East	2023-24	1350	1079	271	9	21
	2024-25	1350	1088	262	9	19
	2025-26	1350	1066	284	9	21
	2026-27	1350	1051	299	10	22
	2027-28	1350	1010	340	11	25
Central	2023-24	660	642	18	1	3
	2024-25	630	621	9	0	1
	2025-26	630	595	35	1	6
	2026-27	630	593	37	1	6
	2027-28	630	581	49	2	8
South	2023-24	660	590	70	2	11
	2024-25	630	566	64	2	10
	2025-26	630	542	88	3	14
	2026-27	630	530	100	3	16
	2027-28	630	522	108	4	17
South East	2023-24	330	259	71	2	21
	2024-25	330	261	69	2	21
	2025-26	330	250	80	3	24
	2026-27	330	243	87	3	26
	2027-28	330	239	91	3	28
South West	2023-24	690	685	5	0	1
	2024-25	690	695	-5	0	0
	2025-26	690	680	10	0	1
	2026-27	690	645	45	2	7
	2027-28	690	636	54	2	8

Appendix 4a - Available Secondary School Places vs SCAP 2023 Pupil Projections

Planning Area	Academic Year	Available Places (Year 7)	Forecast (Year 7)	Surplus / Deficit	Forms of Entry	% Surplus / Deficit
Borough Wide	2023-24	4199	3853	346	12	8
	2024-25	4139	3761	378	13	9
	2025-26	4139	3694	445	15	11
	2026-27	4139	3675	464	16	11
	2027-28	4139	3798	341	11	8
	2028-29	4139	3744	395	13	9
	2029-30	4139	3627	512	17	12
North	2023-24	2655	2358	297	10	11
	2024-25	2595	2257	338	11	13
	2025-26	2595	2216	379	13	15
	2026-27	2595	2205	390	13	15
	2027-28	2595	2279	316	11	12
	2028-29	2595	2246	349	12	13
	2029-30	2595	2176	419	14	16
South	2023-24	1544	1495	49	2	3
	2024-25	1544	1504	40	2	3
	2025-26	1544	1478	66	2	4
	2026-27	1544	1470	74	2	5
	2027-28	1544	1519	25	1	2
	2028-29	1544	1498	46	2	3
	2029-30	1544	1451	93	3	6

Appendix 5

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The following table details works completed, underway or proposed for Specialist provision:

	SEND WORKS COMPLETED ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/ 24 & PLANNED FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2024 / 2025 WITH VALUES					
SITE	**DESCRIPTION OF WORKS**	**WORKS VALUE (In total) £000`s**	**YEAR 2023/2024 £000`s**	**YEAR PLANNED / CONTINUED 2024/2025 £000`s**	**YEAR PLANNED / CONTINUED 2025/2026 £000`s**	**COMMENTS**
Addington Valley	New Build SEN	20	20	0	0	Completed with 20k to spend on BMS system 2023 - 2024
Addington Valley	New Build SEN Extension	2500	200	1800	500	increase size of all teaching areas and facilities expected near double in size
Broadmead	Waddon centre replacement building for pathways provision	3000	200	1800	1000	New Build unit Broadmead playing fields
Monks Orchard	New SEN Wing to Monks Orchard Academy	625	500	125	0	Majority complete 2023 - 2024

St Nicholas	SEN Reconfiguration works	260	260	0	0	Completion year 2023 - 2024
The Crescent	SEN Classroom creation	125	125	0	0	Completion year 2023 - 2024
The Priory	SEN Safeguarding works projects	180	180	0	0	Completion year 2023 - 2024
The Priory	SEN major maintenance works	350	350	0	0	Completion year 2023 - 2024
The Priory	SEN School Fire safety and H & S projects	180	180	0	0	Ongoing and partially completed within year 2023 – 2024 TBC
The Priory	SEN School Classrooms addition and reconfiguration	460	0	460	0	TBC dates and firm costs
Selhurst Nursery	Sensory room and small enclosed garden	25	0	25	0	TBC dates and costs
Crossfield Nursery	Sensory room and small enclosed garden	25	0	25	0	TBC dates and costs

Red Gates Primary School	Remodelling of SEN Big playground - 10 areas	285	285	0	0	Completion year 2023 - 2024
Red Gates Primary School	Phased roof replacement	1000	100	500	400	Phased works 2023 - 2025
Red Gates Primary School	Modular / perm expansion	400	100	300	0	Completion years 2023-2024/5
Red Gates Primary School	Fuschia class rebuild	70	70	0	0	Completion year 2023 - 2024
Croydon College	SEN provision new classes	180	9	171	0	Delayed due to OFSTED start again April 2024
Woodlands Family Hub	Reconfiguration areas	65	65	0	0	To complete 2023 - 2024
St Giles	Additional places	20	0	20	0	TBC
Norbury Manor	SEN Acoustic places	25	0	25	0	TBC

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Appendix 6

Croydon's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023

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1. Summary

2 Demand for childcare

3 Supply of childcare

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7 Quality of childcare in our area

8. Parents/carers and providers views of sufficiency in our local area

1. Summary

Croydon Council is required by law to 'report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents'. We have prepared this report in order to meet this duty.

Having sufficient childcare means that families are able to find childcare that meets their child's learning needs and enables parents to make a real choice about work and training. This applies to all children from birth to age 14, and to children with disabilities. Sufficiency is assessed for different groups, rather than for all children in the local authority.

In this report, we have made an assessment of sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available.
We use information about childcare sufficiency to plan our work supporting the local childcare economy.

This report was compiled using data from the Office for National Statistics; Ofsted; the Croydon Observatory; and the Early Years Sufficiency Team. Views of parent/carer and childcare providers were gathered using an online questionnaire.

In the March 2023 Budget, the government announced plans to extend the existing 30-hour funded entitlement, which is currently available to eligible working families of three- and four-year-olds, to all eligible working families of children aged nine months and above by September 2025.

- From April 2024, working parents of two-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare.
- From September 2024, 15 hours of free childcare will be extended to all children from the age of nine months.
- From September 2025, working parents of children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare per week.

This staggered approach will give childcare providers time to prepare for the changes, ensuring there are enough providers ready to meet demand.

At this point in time, we believe we have sufficient childcare available across the borough for all age groups. The age groups in early years, which are determined by the adult:child ratios set out in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, are 0-2 years; 2-3 years; 3-4 years.

We also believe we have sufficient capacity across the Borough to provide enough places from April 2024 when the first phase of the funding for 2 year olds of eligible working parents/carers begins with 15 hours per week x 38 weeks per year.
To qualify for this funding, each parent needs to be working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours a week at national minimum/living wage and under £100,000 adjusted net income per year. This means that each parent needs to earn from just over £8,600 per year to be eligible for 15 hours a week of childcare during term time. Coupled with the current eligibility criteria for receiving funding (families in receipt of certain benefits and with a household income of £16,190 a year or less before tax), it is likely that *almost* every 2 year will be entitled to 15 hours a week of funded childcare.

Fewer settings current provide for children in the 0-2 years age group. The adult:child ratio is 1:3 and settings are finding it difficult to recruit staff. The Early Years Sufficiency Team is working to evaluate demand and capacity of places for babies, ahead of phase 2 of the reforms which see 15 hours per week x 38 weeks of funded childcare for working families of children from the term after they turn 9 months old.

Local authorities and schools will be given funding for what's known as "wraparound care". This is to ensure that all parents of school-age children can access childcare in their local area from 8am – 6pm. It is expected that, by September 2026, most primary schools will be able to provide their own before and after school care.

There is a growing number of young children being identified as having additional Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Croydon. The needs of these children will need to be taken into account when considering both early years childcare and school "wraparound" childcare.

The Council's Early Learning Team continue to work to support settings in offering high quality early education and childcare to all of Croydon's very young children. Croydon's Family Hub model with foci on early health and education for under 5s will further support the Borough's youngest children.

2 Demand for childcare

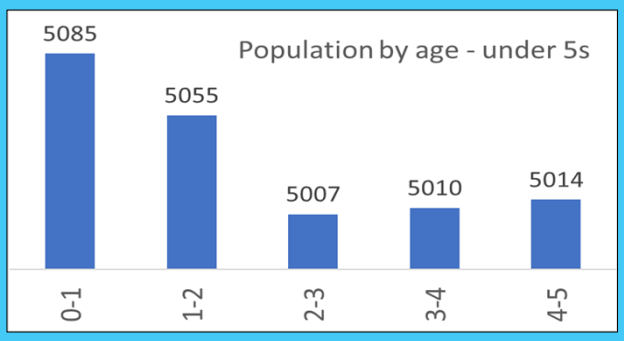
2.1 Population of early years children

In total, there are 25,200 children under the age of five living in Croydon[1]. These children may require early years childcare.

Table 1. Numbers by age[2]

Age	Number of children
Age 0	5,085
Age 1	5,055
Age 2	5,007
Age 3	5,010
Age 4*	5,014

** Some four-year-olds will have started reception*



Graph 1

2.2 Population of school age children

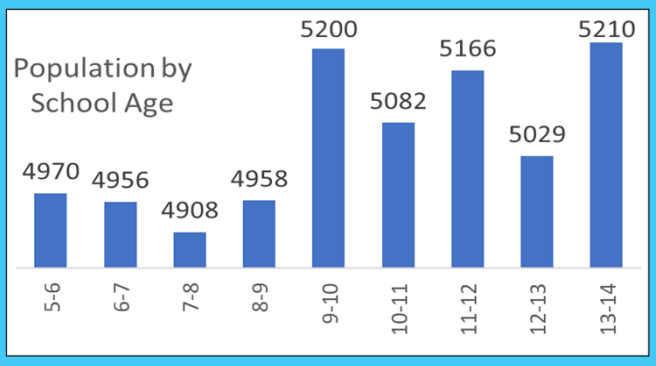
In total there are 37,644 children aged 5-11, and 15,855 children aged 12-14 living in our local authority. Families are entitled to support with childcare for children up to the age 14. These children may require childcare before and after school, and/or during the school holidays.

[1] Census 2021 Englan5210d and Wales Dec 2022

[2] ONS, Mid Year Population Estimates, 2021, Released Dec 2022.

Table 2. Numbers by age

Age	Number of children
Age 5	4,970
Age 6	4,956
Age 7	4,908
Age 8	4,958
Age 9	5,200
Age 10	5,082
Age 11	5,166
Age 12	5,029
Age 13	5,210



Graph 2

2.3 Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18 The number of children/young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan in our local authority is: 4,556*

Age Group	Number of children with an EHCP
Birth to school age	155
Primary school (reception to year 6)	1,742
Secondary school (year 7 to 13)	2,017
Post secondary school (ages 18-25)	642

Table 3. *as at November 2023.

2.4 Children's needs change over time and are identified at different ages. Among the youngest children, SEND may only be identified when they start in a setting or school, and it can take some time from needs being identified to an EHC plan being issued.

2.5 The portage team support pre-school children with complex needs both at home and in groups. Currently 62 children with highly complex needs are being supported in the home. This is an increase from last year (November 2022) when 46 children were accessing portage support.

2.6 There are currently two specialist nursery classes in Croydon. St Giles School, in the south of the Borough, offers 6 full time equivalent (fte) places for children with complex medical needs, complex physical disabilities and / or Severe (SLD) or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) Learning Difficulties and Winterbourne Infant and Nursery School, in the north of the Borough, has an Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) as part of their Nursery provision. The ELP provides high quality specialist teaching for up to 6fte children with social communication difficulties. Willow Tree Nursery, at Red Gates School, which provided an Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP) setting for 6 fte children with severe learning difficulties and autism is currently suspended.

2.7 Many children have SEND but do not have an EHC plan. Pre-school settings apply to the LA for Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) to support children with additional needs. The number of children receiving SENIF in increasing year on year.
September 2021 - August 2022 - 178 pre-school children received SENIF

September 2022 - August 2023 - 250 pre-school children received SENIF

In the Autumn term last year (2022) there were 45 successful applications for SENIF. This year (September 2023- November 2023) there have been 146 successful applications for SENIF. This represents a 224% increase in the number of pre-school children being identified an supported with additional needs.

Supply of childcare

3.1 Number of early years providers and places

There are a number of different types of Early Education and Childcare providers, each offering a variety of options for families:

	Provision	Description of offer	Ofsted
PVIs	Day Nursery	Generally open all year round; usual core hours 8am – 6pm; registered with Ofsted to take children from 3 months – 5 years; can be a stand-alone setting or part of a chain of nurseries; often privately run with a single proprietor	Must join the Early Years register if caring for children aged from birth to 31 August after their fifth birthday. Need to meet all the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development requirements of the Statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage.
	Pre-school	Usually operate in line with school hours so open term time only, 9am – 3.30pm; often run from church/community halls; often "pack-away" (need to clear rooms on a daily or weekly basis to allow for other uses); Often committee run	
	Independent	Operate as part of an independent school; term-time only; hours based on the school day	Not required to register on early years register unless taking children under 2 years
	Childminder	Most commonly a lone practitioner working from own home; all year round provision; usually core hours 8am-6pm; able to work with assistants; several now registered with a Childminding Agency	Must join the Early Years register if caring for children aged from birth to 31 August after their fifth birthday. Need to meet all the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development requirements of the Statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage.
School	Maintained Nursery School	Stand-alone nursery school with head teacher and at least one Qualified Teacher Status staff member; qualified school SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator); term-time only; usual hours 9am-3.30pm	Not required to register on early years register unless taking children under 2 years

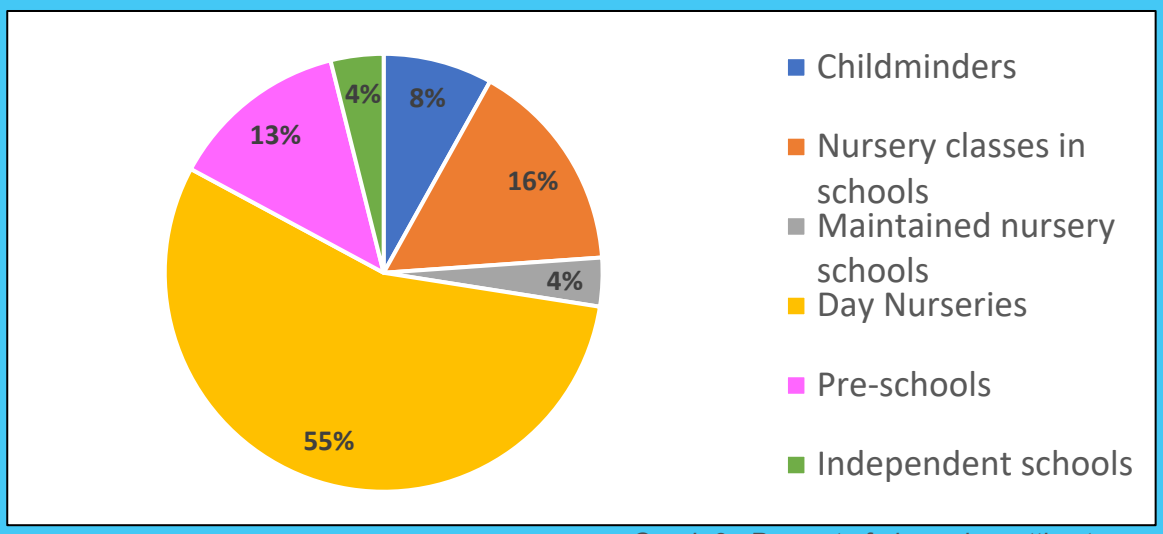
	Nursery Class	Operate as part of a school or academy, led by school headteacher/principal; term-time only; usual hours 9am-3.30pm	
	Nanny/Au pair	Also known as 'home childcarers'; look after children of any age in the child's own home. Can look after children from 2 different families at the home of one of the families.	Only need to register on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register if want parents to be able to get help with childcare costs.

Table 4

In total, there are 543 early years childcare providers in our local authority, offering a *maximum* of 10,273 full time equivalent[3] early years childcare places (see table 5).

Type of provision	*Number of providers*	*Number of registered places*
Childminders*	332	830
Nursery classes in schools	47	1,624
Maintained nursery schools	5	369
Day Nurseries	109	5,689
Pre-schools	40	1,360
Independent schools	10	401

Table 5. The data in this table was correct in November 2023
**Childminders usually have 2 or 3 early years aged children. For the purpose of this table, an average of 2.5 children has been assumed.*



Graph 3. Percent of places by setting type.

3.2 For private, voluntary and independent nurseries and childminders, the number of registered places represents the maximum number of children who can be on the premises at any given time. In practice, many providers choose to operate below their number of registered places.

[3] Full time places record children who attend for as many hours as a setting is open on a daily basis. In many cases two children may attend part time, taking up a full time equivalent place (fte).

3.3 **Early years vacancies**

In Croydon we ask providers to report vacancies to us so we can help promote them. Not all choose to do this and therefore we do not have current data on the number of vacancies each setting type has. In general, vacancy rates are higher in the autumn, after older children have moved to school. As stated above, many providers do not operate at capacity numbers to ensure a lower adult:child ratio.

3.4 **Early years atypical hours**

Childcare is most commonly delivered during the typical working day – between 8am and 6pm on weekdays. Some parents require childcare outside these times in order to fit with their work or other responsibilities.

70 day nurseries in Croydon offer atypical hours on weekdays, with the majority of these settings operating from 7.30/7.45am and/or until 6.30pm. There are no known settings operating at weekends. It is unknown how many childminders offer childcare outside of the typical hours or at weekends.

3.5 **Number of school age providers and places**

In total, there are 55 providers of childcare for primary school age children during term time, and 22 providers of childcare for primary school age children during the holidays.

Type of provision	*Number of providers*	*Number of registered places*
Breakfast club – primary school	55	2,023
After-school club – primary school	55	2,371
Holiday club	22	1,378
Childminders	332	830

*Table 6 . *Childminders usually have 2 or 3 school aged children. For the purpose of this table, an average of 2.5 children has been assumed.*

4 Funded early education

4.1 Introduction to funded early education

- All children aged 3[4] and 4 are entitled to 15 funded hours per week over 38 weeks (570 hours) until they start reception class in a maintained school or academy. This is known as the 'universal offer'. Parents can access these 570 hours over more weeks, with less hours per week, depending on each setting's offer. This is known as a 'stretched offer'.

- Children aged 3 and 4, where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to an additional 15 funded hours per week (1140 total hours) until they start reception class in school

- Some children, from the term after their 2nd birthday, are entitled to 15 hours per week, over 38 weeks per academic year. The criteria for these funded hours is:

[4] From the term after a child's 3rd birthday

- Families are in receipt of certain benefits (including low income families in receipt of in-work benefits)
- Child is looked after by a local authority
- Child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Child gets Disability Living Allowance
- Child has left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order
- Some families who have 'no recourse to public funds' linked to an economic criteria

4.2 Nationally, about 40% of 2 year olds are entitled to this offer, but the proportion varies by area.

4.3 Parents do not have to use all the hours of their funded entitlement. They may also choose to split them between providers.

4.4 In April 2023 the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a number of significant changes to early years education and childcare. These childcare reforms will change the offer provided to parents and carers significantly over the next 3 years. Table 7 explains the changes the reforms will bring and timeline of when these will be implemented.

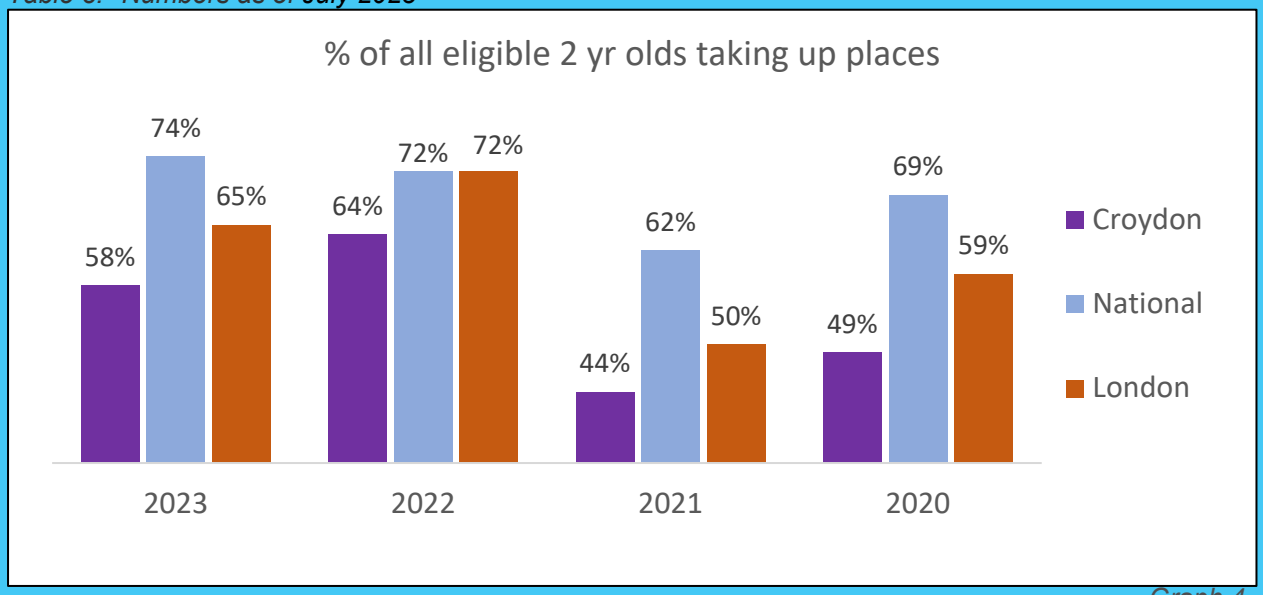
Timescale	Reforms
September 2023	• Childminder grants to become available to those entering the profession.
April 2024	• 15 hours of childcare each week for 38 weeks a year for eligible working parents of 2YO's.
September 2024	• 15 hours a week of childcare for 38 weeks a year for eligible working parents of children aged 9 months plus. • The National Wraparound Care support begins.
September 2025	• 30 hours of childcare each week for 38 weeks a year for eligible working parents of children aged from 9 months to school age.
September 2026	• All schools able to offer 8am-6pm wraparound on their own or in partnership

Table 7

4.5 **Take up of funded early education - 2 year olds (2YOs)**
In Croydon, the number of eligible 2 year olds who take up a funded place is lower than both National and London figures. The uptake of 2YO funded places is shown in the table below: As of November 2023, the number of funded 2 year olds in Croydon settings is 911.

Year	No of 2YOs eligible for funding - Croydon	No. of funded 2YOs - Croydon	% of all eligible 2YOs - Croydon	% of all eligible 2YOs - Nationally	% of all eligible 2YOs - London
2023	1549	890	57.5%	73.9%	65.2%
2022	1410	903	64%	72%	72%
2021	1825	803	44%	62%	50%
2020	2069	1014	49%	69%	59%

*Table 8. *Numbers as of July 2023*

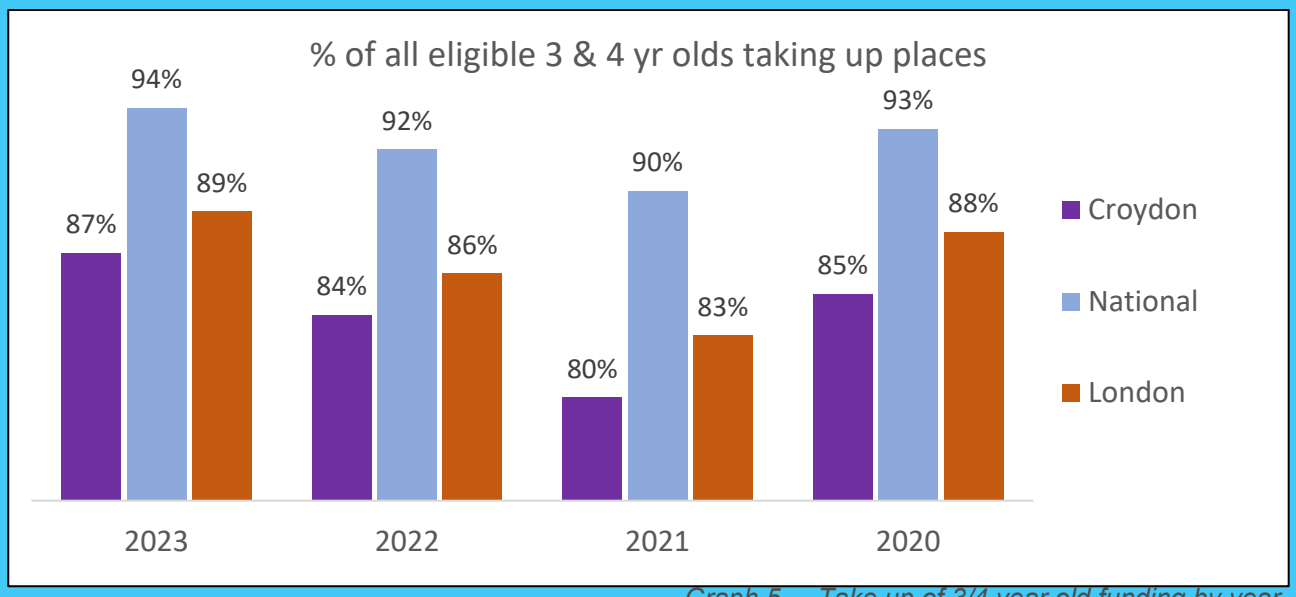


Graph 4.

4.6 Take up of funded early education - 3 and 4 year olds – universal offer (15 hours p.w)

Year	No. of funded 3/4YOs - Croydon	% of all eligible 3/4YOs - Croydon	% of all eligible 3/4YOs - National	% of all eligible 3/4YOs - London
2023	8,819	87%	94%	89%
2022	8,915	84%	92%	86%
2021	8,935	80%	90%	83%
2020	9,624	85%	93%	88%

Table 9. This data is based on Department for Education data released July 2023



Graph 5. Take up of 3/4 year old funding by year.

4.7 **3 and 4-year-old funded entitlement applications (extended hours, 30 hours p.w)**

This funding is for working parents and, if eligible, starts from the beginning of the term after the child's 3rd birthday. Parents who think they are entitled to a 30 hour extended hours place apply for this online through the Government's Childcare Support website. The same website is used to apply for tax free childcare and parents can apply for either or both. If a parent is eligible, the system creates a code which they can use with their chosen childcare provider. If they are ineligible, they will still be entitled to the universal 15 hours of early education and childcare.

Year	*Number of Children Accessing Extended Hours Funding - Croydon*
2023	As at November 2023, 1,697 children are accessing extended hours funding
2022	2,092
2021	2,115
2020	2,248

Table 10. This data is based on Department for Education data released June 2022. Data for 2023 not yet available

4.8 **Providers offering funded early education places**

Providers are paid directly by government for delivering funded early education. They are not required to offer funded places to parents, but of course parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not. Some providers offer a restricted number of funded places.

5 Sufficiency of places

5.1 Places required from April 2024

The Department for Education supplied all local authorities with estimates of the number of places which could be required to fulfil the demand of the expanded funding streams available to children of working families from April 2024. Tables 11-13 below show, by locality, the estimated increase in demand for the wards in Croydon. Please note, figures shown are full time equivalent places (fte) which is assumed as 2 children each receiving the 15 hours funded places.

Central	Additional places (fte) required April 2024	Further Additional places (fte) required Sept 2024	Further Additional places (fte) required April 2024
Addiscombe East	2	1	11
Addiscombe West	6	4	33
Broad Green	7	4	36
Park Hill & Whitgift	2	1	11
Selhurst	3	2	16
Shirley North	2	1	12
Shirley South	4	2	21
Waddon	8	5	43
Woodside	5	3	26
	38	23	210

Table 11

North	Additional places (fte) required April 2024	Further Additional places (fte) required Sept 2024	Further Additional places (fte) required April 2024
Bensham Manor	5	3	26
Crystal Palace & Upper Norwood	4	2	20
Norbury & Pollards Hill	3	2	15
Norbury Park	5	3	29
South Norwood	6	4	33
Thornton Heath	6	3	31
West Thornton	9	6	52
	37	23	206

Table 12

South	Additional places (fte) required April 2024	Further Additional places (fte) required Septl 2024	Further Additional places (fte) required April 2024
Coulsdon Town	3	2	18
Kenley	5	3	27

New Addington North	2	1	11
New Addington South	3	2	17
Old Coulsdon	3	2	14
Purley & Woodcote	5	3	29
Purley Oaks & Riddlesdown	4	2	19
Sanderstead	4	2	19
Selsdon & Addington Village	2	1	10
Selsdon Vale & Forestdale	4	2	23
South Croydon	12	7	64
	46	26	250

Table 13

5.2 Across the Borough, it is estimated that an additional 121 fte places will be required for April 2024; a further 72 fte places in September 2024; and a further 666 places in September 2025 when the funding increases from 15 hours per week to 30 hours per week for all eligible children of working families.

6 Prices

6.1 Prices of early years childcare

The Government funding is paid at an hourly rate. Currently the rates in Croydon are: £9.63 per hour for funded 2 year olds and £5.99 per hour for funded 3 and 4 year olds (both the universal 15 hours and the extended hours are paid at this rate). For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, most settings offer a range of options for families. Table 12 below shows average hourly rates, as reported to us by settings. There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours, or discounts for sibling groups. There may be additional payments for additional services, e.g. lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices.
Generally the charges vary by age group in line with statutory adult:child ratios which are 1:3 for 0-2 year olds; 1:5 for 2-3 year olds and 1:8 for 3-4 year olds (1:13 when a qualified teacher or EY teacher is present).

Setting type	Average Hourly Rate 0-2 year olds			Average Hourly Rate 2-3 year olds			Average Hourly Rate 3-4 year olds		
	South	Central	North	South	Central	North	South	Central	North
Day Nursery	£7.40	£6.80	£7.50	£7.30	£7.00	£6.80	£7.00	£6.70	£6.80
Pre-school	N/A	N/A	N/A	£6.70	£6.60	£8.25	£6.00	£6.40	£7.90
Schools	N/A	N/A	N/A	£6.00	£7.80	£7.30	£5.80	£6.80	£6.70
Childminders	Average £7.30								

Table 14.

6.2 Prices of school age childcare

For school age children, families can access childcare through breakfast clubs (these are usually run by schools); after-school clubs (again, usually run by schools); childminders and holiday clubs (often using schools as venue by run by independent businesses). The average cost per hour for each of these services is detailed below in localities:

Provision type	Average Hourly Rate		
	South	Central	North
Breakfast club	£4.80	£4.30	£4.10
After-school club	£4.80	£4.80	£4.40
School age childminder	Average £7.30		
Holiday club	£4.68	£3.20	£3.90

Table 15

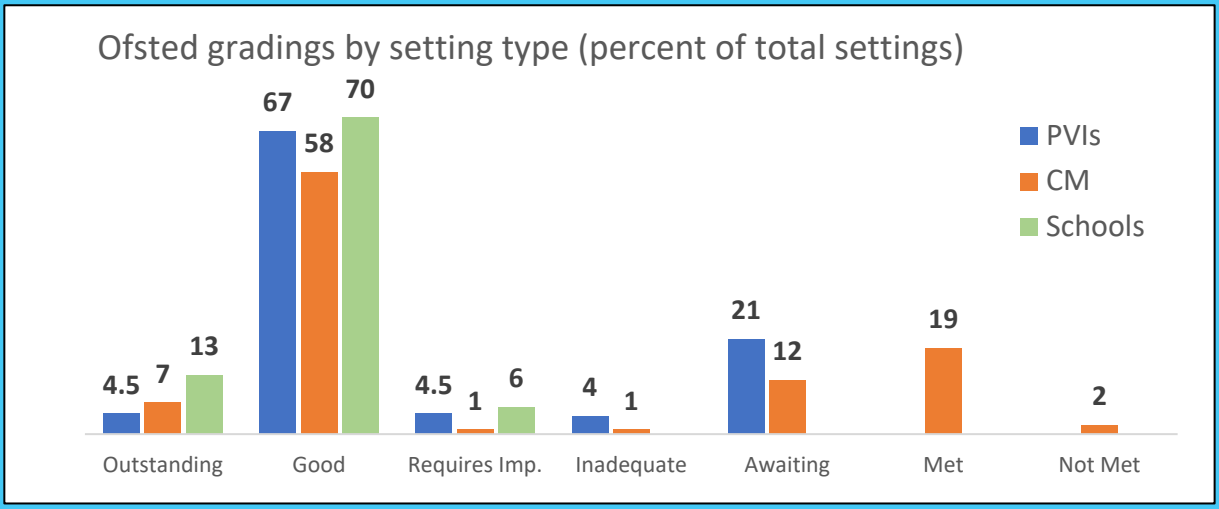
6.3 In addition, a small number of tuition centres offer places for children after school and at the weekends/during holidays. These include academic tuition centres and arts centres. Prices vary from £10-£30 per hour.

7 Quality of childcare in our area

7.1 Ofsted inspection grades

All childcare providers must register with and be inspected by Ofsted, who give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision. Childminders and private and voluntary providers are on the Early Years Register, and schools and standalone maintained nursery schools are on the Schools' register. The grades for both registers are equivalent. Schools with nurseries have an overall inspection grade for the whole school and most also have a separate early years grade.

7.2 Both schools and early years providers have four possible Ofsted grades: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', and 'inadequate'.[5] Some providers are still awaiting their first full inspection.



[5] For more information see https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/about-our-inspection-reports

Graph 6. *Data correct as of November 2023*

7.3 To receive funding from the Local Authority, settings cannot be graded as 'inadequate'; to receive funding for 2 year old places, settings must be judged 'good' or 'outstanding'. Settings are able to offer funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds whilst they are awaiting their first Ofsted grading.

7.4 When providers do not have any children on site at the time of their first inspection, they are given an Ofsted grade of 'met' or 'not met'. This shows whether they are meeting the requirements for Ofsted registration, and usually happens when new providers are being set up. The graph below shows the percent of Ofsted gradings for Croydon settings.

8 Parents/carers and providers views of sufficiency in our local area

(Copy of full responses available on request)

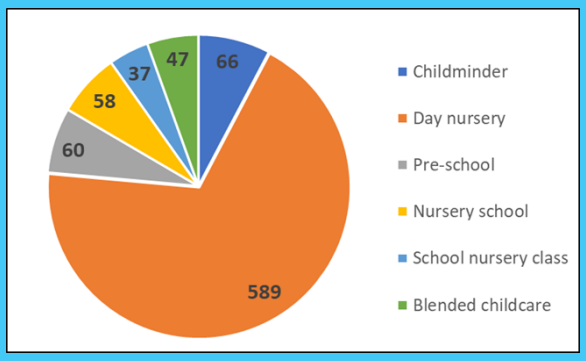
8.1 **Parent/carers survey**

An online questionnaire was sent out to parents/carers of children currently attending early years settings across the Borough to assess the need for places in light of the Childcare Reforms being rolled out from April 2024.. There were a total of 939 responses. 857 respondents said they were currently accessing childcare and 82 said they were not.

8.2 Respondents were asked what type of childcare they used.

Type of Provider	No. of children
Childminder	66
Day nursery	589
Pre-school	60
Nursery school	58
School nursery class	37
Blended childcare	47

Table 16



Graph 7

8.3 Respondents, who are currently accessing places, were asked how those places were paid for.

497 respondents were paying for all of their childcare hours.

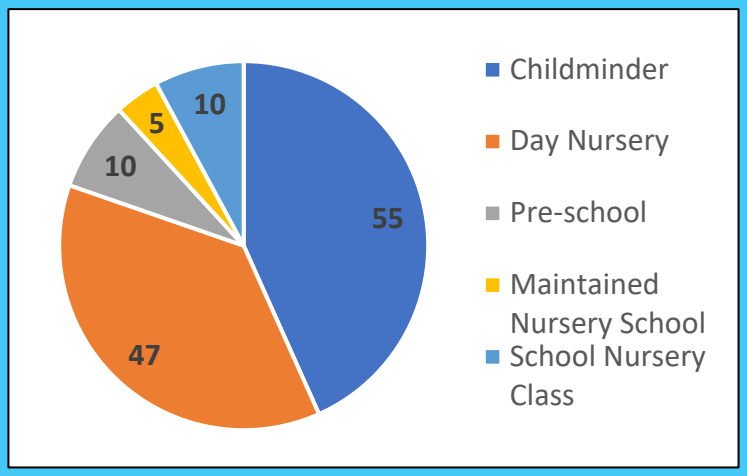
222 respondents were blending both government funded hours with paid for hours.

138 respondents were accessing funded hours only.
Of the 138 respondents who were only accessing funded hours, 87 were accessing 2 yr old funding; 114 were accessing 15 hours of 3/4 yr old funding; and 159 were accessing the 30 hours (extended) 3/4 yr old funding.

8.4 Almost all respondents were interested in accessing funding places.
The majority were keen to access 2 yr old funding for both 15 hours p.w. and 30 hrs p.w. (477 respondents);
266 respondents would access both the 2 yr old funding (15 hrs p.w. and 30 hrs p.w.) *and* the funding available to children from 9 months old (15 hrs p.w. and 30 hrs p.w.);
94 respondents were interested in the funding for 9 months old (15 hrs p.w. and 30 hrs p.w.) only.

8.5 Finally respondents were asked how the funding available under the Childcare Reforms would affect them. There were 829 responses:
346 said that they would use the funding to increase the number of hours their child attended an early years setting.
483 said that they would not increase the number of hours attended but it would reduce their childcare costs.

8.6 **Provider survey**
Providers of early years childcare were sent a questionnaire in relation to their capacity to increase the number of places available when the Childcare Reforms were rolled out from April 2024. A total of 127 responses were received.



The majority of responses were from childminders and day nurseries. All 5 maintained nursery schools responded.

Graph 8

8.7 Settings were asked about numbers of children and funded places. Of the 127 respondents, 100 accepted funded children and 27 only provided for fee-paying children. The majority of settings currently provide for 2 yr olds and of the 27 settings which do not, 12 said they are considering it from April 2024 (it was mostly school settings which are not considering taking 2 yr olds). The main reasons cited for *not* expanding provision for 2 yr olds included lack of accommodation space and concerns over funding rates.

8.8 Settings were then asked about taking babies (from 9 months old). 40 of the 127 settings currently provide for babies and a further 57 settings said they were considering providing for babies from September 204. The main reasons cited for *not* expanding provision for babies included lack of suitable accommodation and availability of staff.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

Undertaking an Equality Analysis helps to determine whether a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or no impact on groups that share a protected characteristic. Conclusions drawn from Equality Analyses helps us to better understand the needs of all our communities, enable us to target services and budgets more effectively and also helps us to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

An equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages of any proposed change to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made.

In practice, the term **'proposed change'** broadly covers the following:-

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service review;
- Budget allocation/analysis;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria.

2. Proposed change

Directorate	**Children, Young People and Education**
Title of proposed change	**Education Estates Strategy / School Admission Arrangements**

Name of Officer carrying out Equality Analysis	Denise Bushay

2.1 Purpose of proposed change (see 1.1 above for examples of proposed changes)

Briefly summarise the proposed change and why it is being considered. Please also state if it is an amendment to an existing arrangement or a new proposal.

The proposed Education Estates Strategy will ensure that the Council is compliant with its statutory requirements relating to school place sufficiency duties across three stages of education: early years, primary, and secondary and in relation to special school provision. The Strategy includes:
School Place Planning - Early Years; Alternative Provision / Pupil Referral Unit (PRU); Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);
School Admissions - proposed Admission Arrangements for Croydon's community schools for the 2025/26 academic year and adoption of the proposed Pan London co-ordination arrangements;
School Maintenance and Compliance - proposed Schools' Maintenance Plan for 2023/24 including asbestos management; and fire safety works in Croydon community schools.

All of the proposed changes are amendments to existing arrangements.

School Place Planning
In accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Council has a statutory duty to "secure that sufficient schools for providing— (a) primary education, and (b) [secondary] education are available for their area" as well as to "secure diversity and increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of school places" in the borough. The strategy aims to ensure that there are sufficient and suitable school places available for all of Croydon's children; admission arrangements and policies are fair and lawful; the education estate is maintained to a good standard and comply with our duties under equalities and health and safety legislation and compliance with statutory safety legislation and mandatory fire safety requirements.

Early Years
Local authorities are required by legislation - Childcare Act 2006 and Children and Families Act 2014 - to secure early education places for three and four year olds, as well as disadvantaged two year olds Early Years, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Croydon has a wide range of provision offering funded places ranging from day nursery, preschool; schools with nursery places and funded childminders. Cabinet has been asked to note the information contained in the Education Estates Strategy report. There are no proposed changes.

Alternative Provision / Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
Under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to arrange suitable education for permanently excluded pupils, and for pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. Education outside of school, when it is arranged by Local Authorities or schools is called alternative provision. There are no immediate proposed changes.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
Nationally and in Croydon, about 97% of children are educated in the state-funded school system without the need for help or support beyond that which a mainstream school can provide. Of these children between 11-12% need some additional support at some stage to address a learning need for varying periods of time. The Council as an education authority has specific duties in relation to provision of education for children with special educational needs

(SEN). The main duties include: to identify whether a child for whom they are responsible has SEN; and to assess a child who in their opinion has SEN. If the assessment shows that it is necessary, to make an EHC Plan: determining the child's needs and the educational provision required and to ensure the specific provision set out in the Plan is provided. The proposed strategy / changes, include change of provider of Rainbow nursery from September 20120 with a related consultation on the extension of the age range for St Giles School. This change will contribute to improved care, and early years educational outcomes and life chances for all children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. Consultation will be undertaken on a proposal to extend the age range of St Giles Special School to provide specialist education for children with learning difficulties from 3 - 4 years old, to enable Croydon's offer of early education to be provided effectively for all children.

The Council is undertaking feasibility studies and suitability/quality survey of a number of special schools (Red Gates; Priory and St Giles Schools) to inform options for the development of the Education Estate, specifically to ensure equality of opportunity to access good or outstanding special education provision in the Borough for children and young people with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities.

School Admissions
In line with the Schools Admission Code, 2014, Admission Authorities, including Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that admission arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code. This includes consulting on proposed changes to admission arrangements annually and at least every 7 years where there have been no changes. Consultation was held for 2018/19 academic year.

Managing surplus places
Falling rolls is a pressing issue for most primary schools across the borough. Currently, there are more places than necessary for pupils at primary schools. The local authority is working in partnership with local school leaders, including Voluntary Aided and Multi Academy Trusts to discuss and agree a collective strategy to manage the high level of surplus school places. This includes reduction of published admission number (PAN). Some schools have already reduced their PAN via consultation in determining their admission arrangements; or their in-year admission number via the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

School Maintenance
The Council is the employer for community schools, community special schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units and is responsible for larger condition and maintenance works. It has a duty to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to monitor and review any preventative and protective measures that have been implemented. The programme of works / maintenance plan will ensure that schools are properly maintenance and remain open and supports educational performance and the health & safety of pupils, staff and school community.

The main aim of the Education Estates Strategy is to ensure that as an education authority the Council fulfils its statutory duties relating to school place planning, school admission and school maintenance. Local authorities are required to meet their statutory duty by providing a school place for every child that requires one, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or disability and the other protected characteristics. Admission arrangements for all Croydon community schools must be determined annually. All schools are required by law to have oversubscription criteria for admissions, which are used to determine the offer of places if a school receives more applications than there are places available. The criteria must be clear, fair, and objective in line with the School Admission Code, Equality Act and other relevant legislations, promoting equality and inclusiveness for residents.

Implications for Equalities

One of the key aims of the Education Estates Strategy is to improve diversity and choice of schools, the right amount of and different types of schools to improve parental choice. This will help to ensure that all pupils have equitable access to school and ensure that the Council's duty to provide sufficient school places for pupils of statutory school age is fulfilled.

The Council is the employer for community schools, community special schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units and is responsible for larger condition and maintenance works ensuring that school buildings meet minimum standards.

As part of the consultation process on any proposed changes, respondents will be asked to complete an equality and diversity questionnaire, looking at Gender, Age, Ethnicity and Disability. The information collected will help to identify any special requirements; promote equality; and improve choice and diversity.

3. Impact of the proposed change

Important Note: It is necessary to determine how each of the protected groups could be impacted by the proposed change. If there is insufficient information or evidence to reach a decision you will need to gather appropriate quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources e.g. Croydon Observatory a useful source of information such as Borough Strategies and Plans, Borough and Ward Profiles, Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessments http://www.croydonobservatory.org/ Other sources include performance monitoring reports, complaints, survey data, audit reports, inspection reports, national research and feedback gained through engagement with service users, voluntary and community organisations and contractors.

3.1 Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

Table 1 – Additional information needed to determine impact of proposed change

If you need to undertake further research and data gathering to help determine the likely impact of the proposed change, outline the information needed in this table.

Additional information needed	Information source	Date for completion

For guidance and support with consultation and engagement visit https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/working-croydon/communications/consultation-and-engagement/starting-engagement-or-consultation

3.2 Deciding whether the potential impact is positive or negative

Table 2 – Positive/Negative impact

For each protected characteristic group show whether the impact of the proposed change on service users and/or staff is positive or negative by briefly outlining the nature of the impact in the appropriate column. If it is decided that analysis is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained. In all circumstances you should list the source of the evidence used to make this judgement where possible.

Protected characteristic group(s)	Positive impact	Negative impact	Source of evidence
Age	In line with the School Admissions Code, school places are allocated using the agreed/published admissions criteria. The proposed criteria relate to children and young people of statutory school age. Admissions to schools are a function that operates within a statutory framework. Croydon is the admission authority for community schools and there are arrangements and criteria for the admission of pupils to nursery, primary and secondary mainstream maintained schools.		School admissions code - GOV.UK https://www.croydonobservatory.org/borough-profile/ Croydon Population Estimates by age bands Age (years) Numbers 0-4 years 27,372 5-10 years 32,451 11-17 years 35,486 https://www.croydonobservatory.org/ons-census-2021-croydon-highlights-from-each-data-release/ Croydon has 23.1% of its residents aged 0-17 years (90,241) Population estimates - Office for National Statistics
Disability	Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability are given priority in the admissions criteria or attend special schools. All schools are required to admit a child if their Education and Health Care Plan names the school.		**https://www.croydonobservatory.org/borough-profile/** **https://www.croydonobservatory.org/ons-census-2021-croydon-highlights-from-each-data-release/** **Disability - Croydon Observatory**

			Disability category — Numbers — Percentage Day-to-day activities limited a lot — 24,380 — 6.7% Day-to-day activities limited a little — 28,733 — 7.9% Day-to-day activities not limited — 310,265 — 85.4% Total of all categories. — 363,378 — 100.0% Source : ONS, Census 2011, Table QS303UK.
Gender Reassignment			https://www.croydonobservatory.org/borough-profile/ **No relevant data available on this for Croydon**
Sex	Children are allocated school place in line with Admissions Code. The proposed changes are not sex specific. The admission arrangements do not contain criteria that impact differently on people with a particular sex. N.B. Croydon also has a 'local' characteristic of 'gender': the same analysis applies.		https://www.croydonobservatory.org/borough-profile/ https://www.croydonobservatory.org/ons-census-2021-croydon-highlights-from-each-data-release/ **Croydon is made up of 52% females and 48% males.** *Source : ONS, Mid Year Estimates 2019, released June 2020.* https://www.croydonobservatory.org/8-gender/ Population estimates - Office for National Statistics
Marriage or Civil Partnership			**This is not applicable as this is for children of statutory school age.**
Pregnancy and Maternity			This is not relevant for children of statutory school age.
Race	The Admission Criteria, based on the Schools Admissions Code, are used to allocate school places and do not include ethnicity or race as criteria.		https://www.croydonobservatory.org/borough-profile/

	The are no proposed changes that will have any negative impact on pupils from different ethnic groups		**https://www.croydonobservatory.org/ons-census-2021-croydon-highlights-from-each-data-release/** **Population estimates - Office for National Statistics**
Religion or belief	The admission arrangements for voluntary aided school could contain a denominational criterion within the policy, to enable priority or children whose parents are active members of their church and who request admission to a church school on denominational grounds. However, all applications, including those with no faith basis for applying, are considered applying the published arrangements. The admission criteria are based on determined admission arrangements compliant with the relevant legislation, Schools Admission Code and is unlikely to discriminate unlawfully.		**https://www.croydonobservatory.org/borough-profile/** **https://www.croydonobservatory.org/ons-census-2021-croydon-highlights-from-each-data-release/** **Population estimates - Office for National Statistics**
Sexual Orientation			This is not relevant for children of statutory school age.

Important note: You must act to eliminate any potential negative impact which, if it occurred would breach the Equality Act 2010. In some situations this could mean abandoning your proposed change as you may not be able to take action to mitigate all negative impacts.

When you act to reduce any negative impact or maximise any positive impact, you must ensure that this does not create a negative impact on service users and/or staff belonging to groups that share protected characteristics.

3.3 Impact scores

Example
If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the Likelihood of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the likelihood of impact score is 2 (likely to impact)
2. Determine the Severity of impact. You can do this by using the key in table 5 as a guide, for the purpose of this example, the Severity of impact score is also 2 (likely to impact)
3. Calculate the equality impact score using table 4 below and the formula **Likelihood x Severity** and record it in table 5, for the purpose of this example - **Likelihood** (2) x **Severity** (2**) = 4**

Table 4 – Equality Impact Score

Severity of Impact				
	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
	Likelihood of Impact			

Key

Risk Index	Risk Magnitude
6 – 9	High
3 – 5	Medium
1 – 3	Low

Equality Analysis

Table 5 – Impact scores

Column 1 PROTECTED GROUP	Column 2 LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **likelihood** of the proposed change impacting each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 3 SEVERITY OF IMPACT SCORE Use the key below to **score** the **severity** of impact of the proposed change on each of the protected groups, by inserting either 1, 2, or 3 against each protected group. **1 = Unlikely to impact** **2 = Likely to impact** **3 = Certain to impact**	Column 4 EQUALITY IMPACT SCORE Calculate the **equality impact score** for each protected group by multiplying scores in column 2 by scores in column 3. Enter the results below against each protected group. **Equality impact score = likelihood of impact score x severity of impact score.**
Age	**2**	**2**	**4**
Disability	**2**	**2**	**4**
Gender reassignment	**2**	**2**	**4**
Sex	**3**	**3**	**9**
Marriage / Civil Partnership	**1**	**1**	**1**
Pregnancy or Maternity	**1**	**1**	**1**
Race	**3**	**2**	**6**
Religion or belief	**2**	**2**	**4**
Sexual Orientation	**2**	**2**	**4**

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4. Statutory duties

4.1 Public Sector Duties

Tick the relevant box(es) to indicate whether the proposed change will adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010 set out below.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups ☐

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation ☐

Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups ☐

Important note: If the proposed change adversely impacts the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out above, mitigating actions must be outlined in the Action Plan in section 5 below.

5. Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts of proposed change

Table 5 – Action Plan to mitigate negative impacts

Complete this table to show any negative impacts identified for service users and/or staff from protected groups, and planned actions mitigate them.

Protected characteristic	Negative impact	Mitigating action(s)	Action owner	Date for completion
Disability				
Race				
Sex				
Gender reassignment				
Sexual orientation				
Age				
Religion or belief				

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Pregnancy and maternity				
Marriage/civil partnership				

6. Decision on the proposed change

Based on the information outlined in this Equality Analysis enter **X** in column 3 (**Conclusion**) alongside the relevant statement to show your conclusion.

Decision	Definition	Conclusion - Mark 'X' below
No major change	Our analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and we have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review. **If you reach this conclusion, state your reasons and briefly outline the evidence used to support your decision**. The Education Estates Strategy is designed to be inclusive. The EQIA process did not identify any direct or indirect discrimination through the Education Estates Strategy and identified some groups where opportunities for children and young people with protected characteristics might be advanced. The School Admissions Code sets out what schools and the local authority must do to comply with the law. The Strategy is also in line with the Public Sector duty to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.	**X**
Adjust the proposed change	We will take steps to lessen the impact of the proposed change should it adversely impact the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties set out under section 4 above, remove barriers or better promote equality. We are going to take action to ensure these opportunities are realised. **If you reach this conclusion, you must outline the actions you will take in Action Plan in section 5 of the Equality Analysis form**	
Continue the proposed change	We will adopt or continue with the change, despite potential for adverse impact or opportunities to lessen the impact of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and better advance equality and foster good relations between groups through the change. However, we are not planning to implement them as we are satisfied that our project will not lead to unlawful discrimination and there are justifiable reasons to continue as planned. **If you reach this conclusion, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard and how you reached this decision.**	
Stop or amend the	Our change would have adverse effects on one or more protected groups that are not justified and cannot be mitigated. Our proposed change must be stopped or amended.	

Equality Analysis

proposed change		
Will this decision be considered at a scheduled meeting? e.g. Contracts and Commissioning Board (CCB) / Cabinet	Meeting title: Cabinet Date: January 2024	

7. Sign-Off

Officers that must approve this decision	
Equality lead	**Name: Helen Reeves** **Date: 03/01/2024** **Position: (Interim) Head of Strategy and Policy**
Director	**Name:** **Date:** **Position:**

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REPORT:		**CABINET**
DATE OF DECISION		**31 January 2024**
REPORT TITLE:		**Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) School Funding 2024/25 Formula Factors**
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:		**Debbie Jones, Interim Corporate Director of Children, Young People & Education**
LEAD OFFICER:		**Shelley Davies, Director of Education**
LEAD MEMBER:		**Cllr Gatland – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning**
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:		**Cabinet as required in line with the DSG grant conditions. Ref. ESFA Operational Guide published on the 11th of October 2023**
KEY DECISION?	**Yes**	**REF. NO: 8723EM This is a statutory requirement under the DfE governance process in setting and allocating the annual Schools Block funding allocation of £319.1m for 2024/25**
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**No**	**Public**
WARDS AFFECTED:		**All**

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT:

1.1 Dedicated School Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant of which the Schools Block element is used to fund individual school's budgets for both Croydon maintained schools and academies.

1.2 This report provides the basis for the final funding allocation across Croydon individual school budgets approved by Schools Forum on 6 November 2023. This paper is to inform cabinet about how the budget was set and to seek cabinet approval before the final submission of the completed DfE Authority Proforma Tool (APT), which is a model used in setting the school's budget, to the DfE by the January 2024 deadline. Cabinet approval is the final governance process embedded in the steps outlined by the DfE in setting the annual School's Budget Setting.

1.3 The key budget change for 2024/25 includes:

- The introduction of a formulaic approach to allocating split sites funding to schools,
- Primary Schools current basic funding is much closer to the maximum allowable national funding rate (see table 3, Appendix A) which means that the growth in their budget is restricted,

- Finally, Schools voted to allow the local authority to transfer £1.2m from the school's

block to the High Needs through the disapplication process in support of the DfE High Needs Safety Valve Deficit Recovery Strategy. The DfE rule allows Local authorities continue to be able to transfer up to 0.5% of their school's block to other blocks of the DSG, with school's forum approval. A formal disapplication request from the local authority to the Secretary of State is required for any transfers above 0.5% of the total schools block budget. The £1.2m request is, however, only 0.39% hence below the 0.5% threshold.

1.4 The local authority is responsible for setting the £319.1m 2024-25 school's budget for Croydon. There are currently 109 schools with a total pupil population of 50,476 as reported in the most recent DfE National Funding Formulae data. The 109 schools comprise 86 Primary schools and 22 secondary schools. There is only one all-through (combined primary and secondary) school making a total of 109 schools.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is recommended:

2.1 To approve the statutory spend of £319.1m of DSG funding for the period 2024-25,

2.2 to approve the provisional funding formula for Croydon schools for the financial year 2024/25 for both maintained schools and academies in line with the recommendations voted by Schools Forum on 6 November 2023,

2.3 to support the local authority strategic decision to transfer £1.2m from the school's block to the High Needs through the disapplication process as part of DfE High Needs Safety Valve DSG Deficit Recovery Strategy,

2.4 to note the DfE optional factors values reported in appendix D and E. Appendix E provides additional insight into the how Schools Forum evaluated the three main DfE options for each factor shown appendix D before selecting the final factor which forms the bases underlying the draft budget for 2024/25,

2.5 to finally note the three key changes required in setting the 2024/25 school's budget.

3 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The DSG governance arrangements referred to in section 40.5 of the 2024/25 ESFA operational guide published on 11 October 2023 clearly states that the local authority needs to seek political approval for the formula factors prior to submitting the final budget to the DfE by mid-January 2024 or latest 22 February 2024 if a disapplication request forms part of your budget setting process.

3.2 Schools Forum has already discussed and considered all the optional factor values and the £1.2m disapplication request and its implications and thereafter voted for the options which best support the needs of our school community. Their recommendations are all in line with the DfE strategic approach of further aligning schools' budget closer to the DfE National Funding Formula.

3.3 The DfE has additionally introduced a new methodology for calculating and allocating split sites funding in the NFF in 2024 to 2025, replacing the previous locally determined split sites factor. The new factor is made up of a basic rate of £58,185 and an additional rate of £29,147 per 100 metres based on distance.

The distance-based funding must be paid out in addition to the basic rate (lump sum) for schools whose eligible sites are separated by more than 100 metres up to a maximum limit of 500 metres (see Appendix B).

3.4 The removal of the restriction that disqualifies certain schools from being awarded a fall in roll funds is a new rule. This new guideline is being introduced for the first time from 2024-25. The restriction that schools were previously only eligible for falling rolls funding if they were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted is now removed from 2024 to 2025. This new rule is not applicable to Croydon because Croydon School's Forum no longer uses that factor in allocating funding.

3.5 Local Authorities must follow the new local formula requirements for growth funding, whereby additional classes (driven by basic need) must be funded by at least the minimum funding level set out in the funding model.

4. BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 Local Authorities receive annual notification of funding as well as funding methodology from the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the School's Annual Budget Setting process. The DfE provides this data via their information sharing portal as well as published in the DfE Annual Schools Block Operational Guide. The guide provides useful updates from the DfE regarding the National Funding Formula for the following year and how local authorities are required to calculate their individual schools' budgets.

4.2 The report outlines the factors agreed at Schools Forum on 6 November 2023, which were proposed by the Schools Block Working Group for setting up the schools' budget for 2024/25 through the Authority Proforma Tool (APT). These factors were consulted on, discussed, and finally voted on at Schools Forum meeting held on 6 November 2023.

4.3 The next stage is to seek political approval of the formula factors listed in appendix E, table 2. This paper highlights the voting results by the members of the school's forum regarding the chosen optional factor value assigned.

4.4 **Important information** – Schools Forum was asked to note that primary schools are already close to the maximum allowable Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) of £4,008.64 based on the national funding formula, therefore any real increase in their budget will come from the other factors. For example, the expected AWPU increase per pupil for Croydon primary schools is only £9.50 per pupil (£3,859.50 less £3,850) compared to £316.16 minimum rise per pupil for Key Stage 3 (KS3).

4.5 **Schools Forum Voting Results** The number of qualified Schools Forum members who were able to vote on that day were 12. The results regarding which options were chosen by Schools Forum have been underlined. (See Appendix E).

4.6 The school's block DSG is a ring-fenced grant, but local authorities can transfer up to 0.5% of their school's block funding into another block, with the approval of their school's forum. The NFF provisional allocation for 2024/25 is below in Table 1. The funding is an indicative allocation and subject to change. The latest allocation was published on 19th December. The movement shows an indicative increase of £5.700m

from the 2023/24 final allocation. The overall net growth is therefore £4.500m after the £1.2m disapplication request deducted.

Table 1. Schools Block provisional allocation 2024/25

	Total 2023/24 final allocation	Provisional funding in 2024/25	Movement
Schools block allocation	£313,433,377	£319,133,852*	£5,700,475

*ESFA 19th December 2023 Published data**

5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Given the provisional allocations there is no requirement for additional action at this time.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 The rigorous process and careful consideration of the individual National Funding Formula factors used in setting the 2024/25 schools' budget as well as the successful approval of the DfE disapplication by Schools Forum to support the High Needs strategy and final submitted to the DfE to support the Safety Valve (Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit) ensures that the council is on target in delivering against the Executive Mayor's priorities in the following areas:

(a) Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential,

(b) Ensure children and young people have opportunities to learn, develop and fulfil their potential.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1.1 Whilst acknowledging the financial position of the council in respect of the General Fund, the approval of the recommendations in this paper for the school's block have no direct bearing on the council's finances.

7.1.2 Primary Schools current AWPU is much closer than secondary schools to the maximum allowable national funding rate (Reference Table 3) which means that their budget can only increase significantly through the other factors listed in appendix E.

7.1.3 Schools Forum voted to allow the local authority to transfer £1.2m from the school's block to the High Needs through the disapplication process. This leaves less to distribute via the formula.

7.1.4 The local authority is seeking cabinet approval as part of the governance process outlined by the DfE operational guide.

7.1.5 All the £319.1m Schools Block grant will be paid to the schools and it's a ring-

fenced Dedicated Schools Grant used for the purposes of providing education to pupils in the London borough of Croydon in accordance with The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations and DfE guidance.

Approved by: Allister Bannin, Director of Finance (Deputy s151 Officer). (27/11/2023)

7.2 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.2.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Council 's Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer.

7.2.2 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is paid to the Council by the Secretary of State under Section 14 of the Education Act 2002, and Section 16 of the Act provides that financial assistance under Section 14 may be given on such terms as the Secretary of State considers appropriate. Under Section 45 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA), every maintained school must have, for each funding period, a budget share which is allocated to it by the authority which maintains it. Under Section 47 of the SSFA, a maintained school's budget share for a funding period is such amount as the local authority may determine, in accordance with regulations, to allocate to the school out of the authority's individual schools' budget for that period, (which budget includes DSG paid to the authority under Section 14 of the Education Act 2002). Regulations have been made annually under Section 47 of the SSFA, entitled The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations, but there are currently no regulations for the funding period starting on 1 April 2024.

7.2.3 However, the Council must have regard to the Education and Skills Funding

7.2.4 Agency Guidance "Schools Operational Guide: 2024 to 2025" updated on 1 October 2023. Section 6 of the Guidance provides as follows.

> "Local authorities must engage in open and transparent consultation with all maintained schools and academies in their area, as well as with their schools' forums, about any proposed changes to their local funding formulae, including the principles adopted and any movement of funds between blocks.
>
> Any consultation should include a demonstration of the effect of modelling such changes on individual maintained schools and academies.
>
> Local authorities also need to set out how their proposals meet the requirements to move the local formulae towards the NFF.
>
> Local authorities should communicate proposed formula changes to all bodies affected by the changes.
>
> The local authority is responsible for making the final decisions on their formula; each local authority's process should ensure that there is sufficient time to gain political approval before the APT deadline in January 2024.
>
> Political approval means approval in line with the local authority's local scheme of delegation, so this may be decisions made by the council cabinet, cabinet member or full council. The school's forum does not decide on the formula".

7.2.5 The decisions recommended in this report are in respect of executive functions, and therefore approval is sought in accordance with the Executive Mayor's scheme of delegation.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Council's Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer ((28/11/2023)

7.3 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.3.1 There are no direct Human Resources considerations arising from this report. If there are subsequent proposals that affect the workforce as a result of the budget limit set, consultation and planning must be in line with the relevant HR policies and procedures and HR advice must be sought from the assigned provider.

Approved by: Deborah Calliste, Head of HR CYPE, on behalf of the Chief People Officer. (24/11/2023)

7.4 EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.4.1 The Council has a statutory duty, when exercising its functions, to comply with the provisions set out in the Sec 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council must, in the performance of its functions, therefore, have due regard to:

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

7.4.2 The funding allocations and formulae are set nationally and are therefore already subject to an equality assessment. The Council is also committed to the government's vision - an education system that works for everyone. No matter where they live, whatever their background, ability or need, children should have access to an excellent education that unlocks talent and creates opportunity. We want all children to reach their full potential and to succeed in adult life.

7.4.3 In setting the Education Budget 2023/24 the Council has taken into account the need to ensure targeted funding is available for work on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils who are likely to share a "protected characteristic" (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and close the gap between them and their peers.

7.4.4 The Council will ensure that the system for distributing funding is fair in order to support the life chances of our most vulnerable children and young people; a fairer funding system will help provide all schools and all areas with the resources needed to provide an excellent education for all pupils irrespective of their background, ability, need, or where in the country they live.

7.4.5 This will help the Council meet its equality objective "to improve attainment levels for white working class and Black Caribbean heritages, those in receipt of Free School Meals and Looked after Children.

Approved by: Naseer Ahmad for the Equalities Manager. (23/11/2023)

7.5 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

7.5.1 There are no direct implications contained in this report.

7.6 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

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

NO

8 APPENDICES

Appendix A - Explanation to key factors
Appendix B - DfE new guideline of Split Site funding
Appendix C - Other key changes to the schools NFF
Appendix D - DfE NFF table for Croydon for 2024/25
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Appendix A Explanation to key factors

FSM6 - Pupils who are identified as FSM6 eligible (pupils who have been entitled to FSM at any time in the last 6 years) as taken from the previous January census.

IDACI - The IDACI element of the deprivation factor is based on the IDACI dataset for 2019, which is published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). IDACI is a relative measure of socio-economic deprivation—an IDACI score is calculated for an LSOA (an area with typically about 1,500 residents) based on the characteristics of households in that area. The IDACI score of a given area does not mean that every child living in that area has particular deprivation characteristics—it is a measure of the likelihood that a child is in a household experiencing relative socio-economic deprivation. LSOAs are ranked by score, from the most deprived LSOA, with the highest score, to the least deprived LSOA.

The IDACI measure uses 7 bands (A to G where A is the most deprived) and different values can be attached to each of the 6 bands A to F. Different unit values can also be used for primary and secondary schools in each band.

Low Prior Attainment - The LPA factor acts as a proxy indicator for low level, high incidence, special educational needs and is measured as such for primary and secondary pupils:

1. primary pupils identified as not achieving the expected level of development in the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP).
2. secondary pupils not reaching the expected standard in KS2 at either reading, writing or math's—an individual weighting is applied to each year group from years 7 to 10 when calculating secondary LPA to reflect the higher levels of low attainment under the new testing regime

Mobility - This factor pertains to pupils who first appeared in either the January or May census return at their current school (the one they are on roll within the October census) in 2017 or later. This is for pupils in reception only, those first appearing at their current school in the May census are classed as mobile.

With this factor, there is a 6% threshold and funding is allocated based on the proportion above the threshold (for example, a school with 8% of pupils classed as mobile will attract pupil mobility funding for 2% of pupils).

How PFI is calculated in the NFF - Premises funding will continue to be allocated at local authority level based on actual spend in the 2020-21 APT, with the PFI factor increasing in line with the RPIX measure of inflation (1.56%) to reflect PFI contracts.

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Appendix B - DfE new guideline of Split Site funding

Split Site funding – DfE guidelines for 2024/25 - In 2024 to 2025 we are introducing a national formulaic approach to split sites funding, which replaces the previous local authority-led approach. The new split sites factor is compulsory for all local authorities, ensuring that split sites funding will be allocated consistently and fairly across the country. Local authorities are required to set their split sites factor values within the 2.5% mirroring threshold for the NFF.
The factor is made up of 2 parts, both of which are compulsory:

- basic eligibility funding: schools must be allocated a lump sum payment for each of their additional eligible sites.
- distance funding: additional funding must be paid out on top of the basic eligibility lump sum for schools whose eligible sites are separated by more than 100 metres (by road distance) from the main site.

The basic eligibility criteria for split sites funding requires additional sites to:

- be part of the main school, that is, to share the same unique reference number (URN) with the school's main site.
- be separated from the school's main site by a public road or railway.
- have a building on them which is maintained by the school, and which is primarily used for the education of 5 to 16- year-old pupils in mainstream education. This excludes playing fields, 'ancillary buildings' and buildings leased out full time by the school to another entity

Illustration of split site distance factor from 500 to 100 metres.

Distance from Main site in Metres	Distance Weighting	24-25 NFF including ACA	Amount Payable
500.00	1.00	29,146.69	29,146.69
400.00	0.75	29,146.69	21,860.02
300.00	0.50	29,146.69	14,573.34
200.00	0.25	29,146.69	7,286.67
100.00	0.00	29,146.69	0.00

Appendix C - Other key changes to the schools NFF in 2023 to 2024

Other key changes to the schools NFF in 2023 to 2024 are:

- increasing the 2022/23 NFF factor values (on top of the amounts we have added for the school's supplementary grant) by:
- 4.3% to free school meals at any time in the last 6 years (FSM6) and income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI)
- 2.4% to the basic entitlement, low prior attainment (LPA), FSM, English as an additional language (EAL), mobility, and sparsity factors, and the lump sum.
- 0.5% to the floor and the minimum per pupil levels (MPPL)
- 0% on the premises factors, except for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) which has increased by Retail Prices Index excluding mortgage interest payments.
- local authorities with a falling rolls fund must also follow the new **requirements for falling rolls funding**, The restriction, that schools were previously only eligible for falling rolls funding if they were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, is also being removed from 2024 to 2025.
- local authorities with a falling rolls fund must also follow the new **requirements for falling rolls funding**, whereby local authorities can only provide falling rolls funding to schools where school capacity survey (SCAP) 2022 data shows that school places will be required in the subsequent 3 to 5 years. The restriction, that schools were previously only eligible for falling rolls funding if they were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, is also being removed from 2024 to 2025.

Appendix D DfE NFF table for Croydon for 2024/25

National Funding Formula. DfE Table on Croydon

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary basic entitlement	£3,850.00	£165.71	£3,763.01	£3,859.50	£4,008.64
KS3 basic entitlement	£5,088.00	-£106.26	£5,305.40	£5,441.44	£5,577.47
KS4 basic entitlement	£5,488.24	-£366.02	£5,804.39	£6,133.81	£6,287.15
Primary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20
Secondary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20
Primary FSM6	£765.30	£0.00	£866.27	£888.49	£910.70
Secondary FSM6	£1,118.10	£0.00	£1,267.72	£1,300.22	£1,332.73
Primary IDACI F	£249.67	£0.00	£248.26	£254.63	£260.99
Primary IDACI E	£303.95	£0.00	£301.08	£308.80	£316.52
Primary IDACI D	£477.63	£0.00	£470.11	£482.17	£494.22
Primary IDACI C	£521.05	£0.00	£512.37	£525.51	£538.64
Primary IDACI B	£553.62	£0.00	£544.06	£558.01	£571.96
Primary IDACI A	£748.16	£20.85	£718.37	£736.79	£755.56
Secondary IDACI F	£363.65	£0.00	£359.19	£368.40	£377.61
Secondary IDACI E	£483.06	£0.00	£475.39	£487.58	£499.77
Secondary IDACI D	£673.03	£0.00	£665.55	£682.62	£699.68
Secondary IDACI C	£738.16	£0.00	£728.94	£747.63	£766.32
Secondary IDACI B	£792.44	£0.00	£781.76	£801.80	£821.85
Secondary IDACI A	£1,054.68	£45.14	£998.33	£1,023.93	£1,064.55
Primary EAL	£629.61	£0.00	£623.29	£639.28	£655.26
Secondary EAL	£1,698.85	£0.00	£1,674.44	£1,717.38	£1,760.31
Primary LPA	£1,253.79	£0.00	£1,236.03	£1,267.72	£1,299.41
Secondary LPA	£1,899.68	£0.00	£1,875.17	£1,923.25	£1,971.33
Primary mobility	£1,025.83	£0.00	£1,014.17	£1,040.18	£1,066.18
Secondary mobility	£1,476.32	£0.00	£1,457.88	£1,495.26	£1,532.64
Primary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72
Secondary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72
Split sites basic eligibility funding			£56,730.40	£58,185.02	£59,639.65
Split sites distance funding			£28,418.02	£29,146.69	£29,875.36

Appendix E **Formula factors used in setting the 2024/25 Budget**

The formula factors to be used for next year's funding are summarised here in Table 2.

Table 2. Formula factors used in Croydon 2024-25. Rule changes noted in green below.

Para No.	Formula factor	Approval type -2023/24
E.1	Minimum per pupil funding	To note (compulsory factor)
5.3	Age weighted pupil unit (Basic Entitlement)	To note (compulsory factor)
5.4	Deprivation - IDACI	BAND B to F - NFF was applied last year (NFF) BAND A – Above NFF rate was applied.
5.5	Deprivation – FSM & FSM6	NFF was applied last year.
5.6	Low prior attainment	NFF was applied last year
5.7	English as an additional language	NFF was applied last year
5.8	Lump Sum	To agree (local factor of £142,000 used last year) which is close to NFF)
5.9	Mobility	NFF was applied last year.
5.10	Private Finance Initiative – base rate increase	To agree but optional factor. The agreed amount paid for the last three years was £547k.
5.11	Minimum Funding Guarantee	To agree (compulsory) and part of the DfE Model
5.12	Growth (*Primary growth factor value* New DfE minimum funding level / value payable per pupil to schools*)	Criteria for growth and no change expected on agreed rate for 2024/25. Primary growth factor value* (£1,550 × number of pupils × ACA)
5.13	Split Site	Now compulsory Factor (local factor last year) – The new factor is made of basic rate of £58,185 and additional rate of £29,147 per 100 metres based on distance up to maximum of 500 metres (Minimum, NFF, maximum to be selected)
5.14	Sparsity and London Fringe	To agree (Sparsity is compulsory but none of Croydon schools falls within the eligibility criteria on distance and pupil numbers. Croydon is not London Fringe) but not applicable to Croydon)
5.15	Looked after children	The DfE has removed this factor. School Forum agreed to fund these services last year. LA distributed £167k through this factor in previous years.

Minimum per pupil level funding. Minimum per pupil funding level is set by the NFF to ensure that each pupil attracts a basic level of funding thus ensure that if no other factor is relevant that there is a minimum level each pupil at each school phase should be funded for. Reference Authority Proforma Tool.

Age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) The funding formulae will calculate our rate of AWPU after all the other factors amounts have been allocated. The AWPU rates applied last year as well as the new funding limits set by the DfE after completion of the model with agreed factors is as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3 AWPU rates with DfE recommendations

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary basic entitlement	£3,850.00	£165.71	£3,763.01	£3,859.50	£4,008.64
KS3 basic entitlement	£5,088.00	-£106.26	£5,305.40	£5,441.44	£5,577.47
KS4 basic entitlement	£5,488.24	-£366.02	£5,804.39	£6,133.81	£6,287.15

Area Cost Adjustment - The Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) is a tool used to measure this variation in costs for local authorities in England.

Cabinet to note the final AWPU for 2023/24. The 2024/25 AWPU will be determined after the LA receives the final allocation from the DfE and after all other factors have been distributed.

Deprivation IDACI. Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0-15 living within income-deprived families. It is a useful indicator of the level of deprivation in an area. IDACI funding is based on the IDACI 2019 area-based index measuring the relative deprivation of Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). This is a compulsory factor and is made up of 3 elements: free school meals (FSM), free school meals 6 (FSM6) and the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI). Schools Forum can choose to use free school meals (FSM and FSM6) and/or IDACI.

The DfE has set revised IDACI banding rate amounts. The intention is for this factor to be moved to a 'hard formula' to introduce nationally consistent factor values. See Appendix A for the definition of FSM6 and the IDACI amounts.

Table 4c highlights the cost /funding implications for each factor value selected. The total value for primary school and secondary IDACI last year were £6.065m and £5,944m respectively. Keeping the NFF factors used last year means the overall cost will increase to £6.147m and £6,016m for primary and secondary schools respectively.

Table 4a IDACI rates Primary Schools

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary IDACI A	**£748.16**	**£20.85**	**£718.37**	**£736.79**	**£755.56**
Primary IDACI B	**£553.62**	**£0.00**	**£544.06**	**£558.01**	**£571.96**
Primary IDACI C	**£521.05**	**£0.00**	**£512.37**	**£525.51**	**£538.64**
Primary IDACI D	**£477.63**	**£0.00**	**£470.11**	**£482.17**	**£494.22**
Primary IDACI E	**£303.95**	**£0.00**	**£301.08**	**£308.80**	**£316.52**
Primary IDACI F	**£249.67**	**£0.00**	**£248.26**	**£254.63**	**£260.99**

Table 4b IDACI rates Secondary Schools

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Secondary IDACI A	£1,054.68	£45.14	£998.33	£1,023.93	£1,064.55
Secondary IDACI B	£792.44	£0.00	£781.76	£801.80	£821.85
Secondary IDACI C	£738.16	£0.00	£728.94	£747.63	£766.32
Secondary IDACI D	£673.03	£0.00	£665.55	£682.62	£699.68
Secondary IDACI E	£483.06	£0.00	£475.39	£487.58	£499.77
Secondary IDACI F	£363.65	£0.00	£359.19	£368.40	£377.61

Table 4c – IDACI Options and cost.

Options	Cost implications	
Primary and Secondary school	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
(a) Keeping to the last years NFF (band B TO F) and A on maximum.	£6,147m	£6,016m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£5,991m	£5,861m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % above the NFF rate.	£6,298m	£6,163m

IDACI as a method of calculating deprivation for Primary and Secondary:

(a) Keeping to the NFF rates used last year highlighted in green in table 4b –
(b) Move to 2.5 % below the average national NFF rate.
(c) Moving to the 2.5% above NFF or maximum rate.

Deprivation Free School Meals (FSM) and (FSM6).
Schools receive funding for all FSM eligible pupils through this factor. In 2023/24 Croydon followed the NFF rates and distributed £23,590m. The rates per school phase vary for each of the two elements (FSM rates and FSM6).

Table 5a FSM rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20
Secondary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20

Table 5b FSM6 rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary FSM6	£765.30	£0.00	£866.27	£888.49	£910.70
Secondary FSM6	£1,118.10	£0.00	£1,267.72	£1300.22	£1,332.73

Table 5c – FSM & FSM6 Options and cost

Options	Cost implications FSM		Cost implications FSM6	
Primary and Secondary school	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
(a) Keeping to the last years or NFF	£4,894m	£3,259m	£8,482m	£9,632m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£4,771m	£3,177m	£8,270m	£9,391m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % above the NFF rate.	£5,016m	£3,340m	£8,694m	£9,872m

Use FSM & FSM6 as a method of calculating deprivation for Primary and secondary:

3.1.1 Keeping to the NFF rate used last year as highlighted in green in table 5a and 5b.
3.1.2 Moving to the minimum NFF rate per pupil or
3.1.3 Moving to the maximum rate above NFF

Low Prior Attainment Primary school pupils who have not achieved the expected level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile assessment (EYFSP) and secondary pupils who have not achieved the expected standard in Key Stage 2 at either reading, writing or maths. LPA funding has been allocated to all pupils identified as not

reaching the expected standard at the previous phase, regardless of their year group. It does not only apply to those pupils in their first year of schooling.

This is now a compulsory factor which Croydon will use again this year. It is a rate per pupil per school phase and is set locally. In the 2023/24 allocation Croydon distributed £18.330m through this factor. The APT tool automatically provides the number of pupils who are eligible (based on the prior year census data). See Appendix A for definition of Low Prior Attainment and the pupils in this category.

The DfE uses a weighting system to identify the number of pupils that qualify. The weightings will operate in the same way as in 2023: the number of pupils identified as having LPA in the data will be multiplied by the relevant weighting to determine the number of pupils eligible for the factor for funding purposes.

Table 6a Low Prior Attainment rates

School phase	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary LPA	£1,253.79	£0.00	£1,236.03	£1,267.72	£1,299.41
Secondary LPA	£1,899.68	£0.00	£1,875.17	£1,923.25	£1,971.33

Table 6b Low Prior Attainment Options Appraisal & cost

Options Primary and Secondary school	Cost implications LPA	
	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
(a) Keeping to the last years or NFF	£10,378m	£8,256m
(b) Moving to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£10,119m	£8,049m
(b) Moving 2.5% above the NFF rate.	£10,637m	£8,463m

The Low Prior Attainment rates to be decided on are:

(a) Keep to the NFF rate as selected last year and highlighted in green in table 6b,
(b) Move to the minimum NFF rate per pupil,
(c) Move above the NFF rate.

English as an additional language (EAL) This is a compulsory factor. According to the DfE methodology, pupils identified in the October census with a first language other than English attract funding for 3 years after they enter the statutory school system. The rate per pupil per phase has been set locally. In the 2023/24 allocation, Croydon distributed £4.829m through this factor.

Table 7a EAL rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary EAL	£629.61	£0.00	£623.29	£639.28	£655.26
Secondary EAL	£1,698.85	£0.00	£1,674.44	£1,717.38	£1,760.31

Table 7b EAL Options Appraisal and Cost

Options Primary and Secondary school	Cost implications EAL	
	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools

(a) Keeping to the last years or NFF	£4,344m	£1,429m
(b) Moving to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£4,235m	£1,393m
(b) Moving 2.5% above the NFF rate.	£4,452m	£1,465m

The English as an additional language factor rate should:

(a) Keeping to the NFF rate as highlighted in green in table 7a.
(b) Moving to the minimum NFF rate per pupil* or
(c) Move above the average national NFF rate.

Lump Sum. Each school receives a lump sum payment. All-through schools will receive the secondary lump sum value and middle schools (none in Croydon) will receive a weighted average lump sum value based on the number of primary and secondary year groups in the school. A different DfE payment methodology would be used for all-through schools. In 2023/24, the local lump sum per school was £142,000 and resulted in a distribution of £15. 336m.The published NFF rate is £145,625.09 for Primary schools and Secondary schools. The cost implication of move towards the NFF is approximately (£3,625 x 108 schools) £391k.

Table 8 Lump sum rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72
Secondary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72

The lump sum factor should:

(a) Moving to the minimum NFF rate per school* or
(b) Moving to the NFF (£145k). An additional cost is £391k overall.
(c) Move above the NFF rate.

Mobility. The mobility factor allocates funding to schools with a high proportion of pupils who first join on a non-standard date. Mobility funding was previously allocated on the basis of historic spend. However, in 2020/21, the DfE developed a new methodology that enabled calculation of allocations of this funding on a formulaic basis. Rather than relying on a single census, the methodology involved tracking individual pupils using their unique pupil ID through censuses from the past 3 years. If the first census when the pupil was in the school was a spring or summer census, they are considered a 'mobile pupil'.

To be eligible for mobility funding, the proportion of mobile pupils a school has must be above the threshold of 6%. A per pupil amount will then be allocated to all mobile pupils above that threshold. See Appendix A for definition of Mobility and the schools and school phases impacted. The total amount paid last year on this factor was £624k. Whichever option is chosen is very insignificant on the overall impact of the budget as the average number attracting this funding is approximately 54 pupils. Choosing the maximum rate will add £24k extra budget to fund this growth.

Table 9 Mobility rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary mobility	£1,025.83	£0.00	£1,014.17	£1,040.18	£1,066.18
Secondary mobility	£1,476.32	£0.00	£1,457.88	£1,495.26	£1,532.64

The Mobility factor should:

(a) Move to the minimum NFF rate per pupil* or
(b) Move to the national NFF rate as highlighted in green in table 10 or
(c) Move above the average national NFF rate.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Croydon has one PFI school and therefore uses this factor. The purpose of the factor is to fund the additional costs to a school of being in a PFI contract. The agreed amount paid for the last two years was £547k per annum.

The PFI factor options are:

a) Inflationary increase to be applied to last year's rate,
b) Stay the same as last year's rate,
c) Reduce last year's rate by £100k**.**

Minimum funding Guarantee (MFG). MFG protects schools' budgets from large changes in funding based on factor changes. It protects on £/per pupil basis but does not protect against a fall in pupil numbers. Local authorities have the freedom to set the MFG in their local formulae between +0.0% and +0.5% per pupil. All of Croydon schools have reached and exceeded these increases using the NFF rates. It is proposed to keep the limit of +0.5% in 2024/25.

Table 10 MFG rates

Year	MFG
2016/17	£11,425,730
2017/18	£3,861,329
2018/19	£2,362,522
2019/20	£1,143,179
2020/21	£670,987
2021/22	£87,337
2022/23	£101,196
2023/24	£146,450

Schools Forum agreed MFG at +0.5%

Growth. The criteria for growth funding for schools was reviewed and approved by Schools Forum on 5 October 2020. The rates for various parts of the growth fund will be applied to the schools that meet the growth criteria and have been confirmed by the schools Admissions Team. The new DfE required minimum funding payable to schools from 2024/25 is: (Primary growth factor value (£1,550 × number of pupils × ACA).

Table 11 Growth funding

Year	Growth
2019/20	£2,279,811
2020/21	£1,708,617
2021/22	£1,914,299
2022/23	£1,369,581
2023/24	£1,718,478

2024/25	Not supplied by DfE to date

The distribution of this factor will be considered in a future Schools' Forum once the 2024-25 funding is notified by DfE.

Split Site Factor

The DfE has introduced a National Funding formula (national approach) in criteria and amount payable. The total amount paid in 2023/24 was £200k. This new methodology now replaces the previous locally determined split sites factor. The new factor is made of basic rate of £55,700 and additional rate of £26,900 per 100 metres based on distance. Schools' forum had the choice to select one of the three options (a minimum rate, the national rate, or the maximum) presented in table 13 below. Schools' forum decided on the minimum rate.

Table 12(a) Split Site DfE national funding formula rates (Basic Rate)

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Split sites basic eligibility funding			£57,364.26	£58,835.14	£60,306.01
Split sites distance funding			£28,629.31	£29,363.39	£30,097.48

Table 12(b) Split Site DfE national funding formula rates (Distance Rate)

Croydon Spilt Site Schools	DfE Recorded Distance (Metres)	24-25 APT minimum 2.5% lower	Total Amount Payable under NFF 2024/25	24-25 APT maximum 2.5% higher
School 1	1,421.42	£85,148.42	£87,331.71	£89,515.01
School 2	0	£56,730.40	£58,185.02	£59,639.65
School 3	883.76	£85,148.42	£87,331.71	£89,515.01
School 4 (two sites at 706m and 531m)	706.28	£170,296.84	£174,663.42	£179,030.02
Total		£397,324.08	£407,511.86	£417,699.69

The Split Site factor for lump sum and distance:

The new DfE methodology increases the monetary value of the factor due to lump sum and distance award.

Cost Implications and options are as follows:

(a) Moving to the minimum NFF rate per school - additional cost of £197.3k
(b) Moving to the NFF rate – additional cost of £207.5k
(c) Move above the average national NFF rate - additional cost of £217.6k

Sparsity and London Fringe. These factors are not applicable to Croydon.

Looked After Children (LAC). This has been an optional factor for years where Local authorities apply a single unit value for any child who has been looked after for one day or more, as recorded on the LA SSDA903 returns. The DfE does not allow the LAC factor in the NFF model anymore and local authorities currently using this factor can no longer fund it though the factors. Schools Forum once again agreed to fund the £167k LAC funding from the growth budget which forms part of the schools' block.

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Appendix B - DfE new guideline of Split Site funding

Split Site funding – DfE guidelines for 2024/25 - In 2024 to 2025 we are introducing a national formulaic approach to split sites funding, which replaces the previous local authority-led approach. The new split sites factor is compulsory for all local authorities, ensuring that split sites funding will be allocated consistently and fairly across the country. Local authorities are required to set their split sites factor values within the 2.5% mirroring threshold for the NFF.
The factor is made up of 2 parts, both of which are compulsory:

- basic eligibility funding: schools must be allocated a lump sum payment for each of their additional eligible sites.
- distance funding: additional funding must be paid out on top of the basic eligibility lump sum for schools whose eligible sites are separated by more than 100 metres (by road distance) from the main site.

The basic eligibility criteria for split sites funding requires additional sites to:

- be part of the main school, that is, to share the same unique reference number (URN) with the school's main site.
- be separated from the school's main site by a public road or railway.
- have a building on them which is maintained by the school, and which is primarily used for the education of 5 to 16- year-old pupils in mainstream education. This excludes playing fields, 'ancillary buildings' and buildings leased out full time by the school to another entity

Illustration of split site distance factor from 500 to 100 metres.

Distance from Main site in Metres	Distance Weighting	24-25 NFF including ACA	Amount Payable
500.00	1.00	29,146.69	29,146.69
400.00	0.75	29,146.69	21,860.02
300.00	0.50	29,146.69	14,573.34
200.00	0.25	29,146.69	7,286.67
100.00	0.00	29,146.69	0.00

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Appendix C - Other key changes to the schools NFF in 2023 to 2024

Other key changes to the schools NFF in 2023 to 2024 are:

- increasing the 2022/23 NFF factor values (on top of the amounts we have added for the school's supplementary grant) by:
- 4.3% to free school meals at any time in the last 6 years (FSM6) and income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI)
- 2.4% to the basic entitlement, low prior attainment (LPA), FSM, English as an additional language (EAL), mobility, and sparsity factors, and the lump sum.
- 0.5% to the floor and the minimum per pupil levels (MPPL)
- 0% on the premises factors, except for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) which has increased by Retail Prices Index excluding mortgage interest payments.
- local authorities with a falling rolls fund must also follow the new **requirements for falling rolls funding**, The restriction, that schools were previously only eligible for falling rolls funding if they were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, is also being removed from 2024 to 2025.
- local authorities with a falling rolls fund must also follow the new **requirements for falling rolls funding**, whereby local authorities can only provide falling rolls funding to schools where school capacity survey (SCAP) 2022 data shows that school places will be required in the subsequent 3 to 5 years. The restriction, that schools were previously only eligible for falling rolls funding if they were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, is also being removed from 2024 to 2025.

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Appendix D DfE NFF table for Croydon for 2024/25

National Funding Formula. DfE Table on Croydon

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary basic entitlement	£3,850.00	£165.71	£3,763.01	£3,859.50	£4,008.64
KS3 basic entitlement	£5,088.00	-£106.26	£5,305.40	£5,441.44	£5,577.47
KS4 basic entitlement	£5,488.24	-£366.02	£5,804.39	£6,133.81	£6,287.15
Primary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20
Secondary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20
Primary FSM6	£765.30	£0.00	£866.27	£888.49	£910.70
Secondary FSM6	£1,118.10	£0.00	£1,267.72	£1,300.22	£1,332.73
Primary IDACI F	£249.67	£0.00	£248.26	£254.63	£260.99
Primary IDACI E	£303.95	£0.00	£301.08	£308.80	£316.52
Primary IDACI D	£477.63	£0.00	£470.11	£482.17	£494.22
Primary IDACI C	£521.05	£0.00	£512.37	£525.51	£538.64
Primary IDACI B	£553.62	£0.00	£544.06	£558.01	£571.96
Primary IDACI A	£748.16	£20.85	£718.37	£736.79	£755.56
Secondary IDACI F	£363.65	£0.00	£359.19	£368.40	£377.61
Secondary IDACI E	£483.06	£0.00	£475.39	£487.58	£499.77
Secondary IDACI D	£673.03	£0.00	£665.55	£682.62	£699.68
Secondary IDACI C	£738.16	£0.00	£728.94	£747.63	£766.32
Secondary IDACI B	£792.44	£0.00	£781.76	£801.80	£821.85
Secondary IDACI A	£1,054.68	£45.14	£998.33	£1,023.93	£1,064.55
Primary EAL	£629.61	£0.00	£623.29	£639.28	£655.26
Secondary EAL	£1,698.85	£0.00	£1,674.44	£1,717.38	£1,760.31
Primary LPA	£1,253.79	£0.00	£1,236.03	£1,267.72	£1,299.41
Secondary LPA	£1,899.68	£0.00	£1,875.17	£1,923.25	£1,971.33
Primary mobility	£1,025.83	£0.00	£1,014.17	£1,040.18	£1,066.18
Secondary mobility	£1,476.32	£0.00	£1,457.88	£1,495.26	£1,532.64
Primary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72
Secondary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72
Split sites basic eligibility funding			£56,730.40	£58,185.02	£59,639.65
Split sites distance funding			£28,418.02	£29,146.69	£29,875.36

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Appendix E Formula factors used in setting the 2024/25 Budget.

The formula factors to be used for next year's funding are summarised here in Table 2.

Table 2. Formula factors used in Croydon 2024-25. Rule changes noted in green below.

Para No.	Formula factor	Approval type -2023/24
E.1	Minimum per pupil funding	To note (compulsory factor)
5.3	Age weighted pupil unit (Basic Entitlement)	To note (compulsory factor)
5.4	Deprivation - IDACI	BAND B to F - NFF was applied last year (NFF) BAND A – Above NFF rate was applied.
5.5	Deprivation – FSM & FSM6	NFF was applied last year.
5.6	Low prior attainment	NFF was applied last year
5.7	English as an additional language	NFF was applied last year
5.8	Lump Sum	To agree (local factor of £142,000 used last year) which is close to NFF)
5.9	Mobility	NFF was applied last year.
5.10	Private Finance Initiative – base rate increase	To agree but optional factor. The agreed amount paid for the last three years was £547k.
5.11	Minimum Funding Guarantee	To agree (compulsory) and part of the DfE Model
5.12	Growth (*Primary growth factor value* New DfE minimum funding level / value payable per pupil to schools*)	Criteria for growth and no change expected on agreed rate for 2024/25. Primary growth factor value* (£1,550 × number of pupils × ACA)
5.13	Split Site	Now compulsory Factor (local factor last year) – The new factor is made of basic rate of £58,185 and additional rate of £29,147 per 100 metres based on distance up to maximum of 500 metres (Minimum, NFF, maximum to be selected)
5.14	Sparsity and London Fringe	To agree (Sparsity is compulsory but none of Croydon schools falls within the eligibility criteria on distance and pupil numbers. Croydon is not London Fringe) but not applicable to Croydon)
5.15	Looked after children	The DfE has removed this factor. School Forum agreed to fund these services last year. LA distributed £167k through this factor in previous years.

Minimum per pupil level funding. Minimum per pupil funding level is set by the NFF to ensure that each pupil attracts a basic level of funding thus ensure that if no other factor is relevant that there is a minimum level each pupil at each school phase should be funded for. Reference Authority Proforma Tool.

Age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) The funding formulae will calculate our rate of AWPU after all the other factors amounts have been allocated. The AWPU rates applied last year as well as the new funding limits set by the DfE after completion of the model with agreed factors is as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3 AWPU rates with DfE recommendations

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary basic entitlement	£3,850.00	£165.71	£3,763.01	£3,859.50	£4,008.64
KS3 basic entitlement	£5,088.00	-£106.26	£5,305.40	£5,441.44	£5,577.47
KS4 basic entitlement	£5,488.24	-£366.02	£5,804.39	£6,133.81	£6,287.15

Area Cost Adjustment - The Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) is a tool used to measure this variation in costs for local authorities in England.

Cabinet to note the final AWPU for 2023/24. The 2024/25 AWPU will be determined after the LA receives the final allocation from the DfE and after all other factors have been distributed.

Deprivation IDACI. Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0-15 living within income-deprived families. It is a useful indicator of the level of deprivation in an area. IDACI funding is based on the IDACI 2019 area-based index measuring the relative deprivation of Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). This is a compulsory factor and is made up of 3 elements: free school meals (FSM), free school meals 6 (FSM6) and the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI). Schools Forum can choose to use free school meals (FSM and FSM6) and/or IDACI.

The DfE has set revised IDACI banding rate amounts. The intention is for this factor to be moved to a 'hard formula' to introduce nationally consistent factor values. See Appendix A for the definition of FSM6 and the IDACI amounts.

Table 4c highlights the cost /funding implications for each factor value selected. The total value for primary school and secondary IDACI last year were £6.065m and £5,944m respectively. Keeping the NFF factors used last year means the overall cost will increase to £6.147m and £6,016m for primary and secondary schools respectively.

Table 4a IDACI rates Primary Schools

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary IDACI A	**£748.16**	**£20.85**	**£718.37**	**£736.79**	**£755.56**
Primary IDACI B	**£553.62**	**£0.00**	**£544.06**	**£558.01**	**£571.96**
Primary IDACI C	**£521.05**	**£0.00**	**£512.37**	**£525.51**	**£538.64**
Primary IDACI D	**£477.63**	**£0.00**	**£470.11**	**£482.17**	**£494.22**
Primary IDACI E	**£303.95**	**£0.00**	**£301.08**	**£308.80**	**£316.52**
Primary IDACI F	**£249.67**	**£0.00**	**£248.26**	**£254.63**	**£260.99**

Table 4b IDACI rates Secondary Schools

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Secondary IDACI A	£1,054.68	£45.14	£998.33	£1,023.93	£1,064.55
Secondary IDACI B	£792.44	£0.00	£781.76	£801.80	£821.85
Secondary IDACI C	£738.16	£0.00	£728.94	£747.63	£766.32
Secondary IDACI D	£673.03	£0.00	£665.55	£682.62	£699.68
Secondary IDACI E	£483.06	£0.00	£475.39	£487.58	£499.77
Secondary IDACI F	£363.65	£0.00	£359.19	£368.40	£377.61

Table 4c – IDACI Options and cost.

Options	Cost implications	
Primary and Secondary school	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
(a) Keeping to the last years NFF (band B TO F) and A on maximum.	£6,147m	£6,016m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£5,991m	£5,861m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % above the NFF rate.	£6,298m	£6,163m

IDACI as a method of calculating deprivation for Primary and Secondary:

(a) Keeping to the NFF rates used last year highlighted in green in table 4b –
(b) Move to 2.5 % below the average national NFF rate.
(c) Moving to the 2.5% above NFF or maximum rate.

Deprivation Free School Meals (FSM) and (FSM6).
Schools receive funding for all FSM eligible pupils through this factor. In 2023/24 Croydon followed the NFF rates and distributed £23,590m. The rates per school phase vary for each of the two elements (FSM rates and FSM6).

Table 5a FSM rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20
Secondary FSM	£521.05	£0.00	£517.65	£530.92	£544.20

Table 5b FSM6 rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary FSM6	£765.30	£0.00	£866.27	£888.49	£910.70
Secondary FSM6	£1,118.10	£0.00	£1,267.72	£1300.22	£1,332.73

Table 5c – FSM & FSM6 Options and cost

Options	Cost implications FSM		Cost implications FSM6	
Primary and Secondary school	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
(a) Keeping to the last years or NFF	£4,894m	£3,259m	£8,482m	£9,632m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£4,771m	£3,177m	£8,270m	£9,391m
(b) Moving all bandings to 2.5 % above the NFF rate.	£5,016m	£3,340m	£8,694m	£9,872m

Use FSM & FSM6 as a method of calculating deprivation for Primary and secondary:

3.1.1 Keeping to the NFF rate used last year as highlighted in green in table 5a and 5b.
3.1.2 Moving to the minimum NFF rate per pupil or
3.1.3 Moving to the maximum rate above NFF

Low Prior Attainment Primary school pupils who have not achieved the expected level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile assessment (EYFSP) and

secondary pupils who have not achieved the expected standard in Key Stage 2 at either reading, writing or maths. LPA funding has been allocated to all pupils identified as not reaching the expected standard at the previous phase, regardless of their year group. It does not only apply to those pupils in their first year of schooling.

This is now a compulsory factor which Croydon will use again this year. It is a rate per pupil per school phase and is set locally. In the 2023/24 allocation Croydon distributed £18.330m through this factor. The APT tool automatically provides the number of pupils who are eligible (based on the prior year census data). See Appendix A for definition of Low Prior Attainment and the pupils in this category.

The DfE uses a weighting system to identify the number of pupils that qualify. The weightings will operate in the same way as in 2023: the number of pupils identified as having LPA in the data will be multiplied by the relevant weighting to determine the number of pupils eligible for the factor for funding purposes.

Table 6a Low Prior Attainment rates

School phase	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary LPA	£1,253.79	£0.00	£1,236.03	£1,267.72	£1,299.41
Secondary LPA	£1,899.68	£0.00	£1,875.17	£1,923.25	£1,971.33

Table 6b Low Prior Attainment Options Appraisal & cost

Options Primary and Secondary school	Cost implications LPA	
	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
(a) Keeping to the last years or NFF	£10,378m	£8,256m
(b) Moving to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£10,119m	£8,049m
(b) Moving 2.5% above the NFF rate.	£10,637m	£8,463m

The Low Prior Attainment rates to be decided on are:

(a) Keep to the NFF rate as selected last year and highlighted in green in table 6b,
(b) Move to the minimum NFF rate per pupil,
(c) Move above the NFF rate.

English as an additional language (EAL) This is a compulsory factor. According to the DfE methodology, pupils identified in the October census with a first language other than English attract funding for 3 years after they enter the statutory school system. The rate per pupil per phase has been set locally. In the 2023/24 allocation, Croydon distributed £4.829m through this factor.

Table 7a EAL rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary EAL	£629.61	£0.00	£623.29	£639.28	£655.26
Secondary EAL	£1,698.85	£0.00	£1,674.44	£1,717.38	£1,760.31

Table 7b EAL Options Appraisal and Cost

Options Primary and Secondary school	Cost implications EAL	
	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
(a) Keeping to the last years or NFF	£4,344m	£1,429m
(b) Moving to 2.5 % below the NFF rate.	£4,235m	£1,393m
(b) Moving 2.5% above the NFF rate.	£4,452m	£1,465m

The English as an additional language factor rate should:

(a) Keeping to the NFF rate as highlighted in green in table 7a.
(b) Moving to the minimum NFF rate per pupil* or
(c) Move above the average national NFF rate.

Lump Sum. Each school receives a lump sum payment. All-through schools will receive the secondary lump sum value and middle schools (none in Croydon) will receive a weighted average lump sum value based on the number of primary and secondary year groups in the school. A different DfE payment methodology would be used for all-through schools. In 2023/24, the local lump sum per school was £142,000 and resulted in a distribution of £15. 336m.The published NFF rate is £145,625.09 for Primary schools and Secondary schools. The cost implication of move towards the NFF is approximately (£3,625 x 108 schools) £391k.

Table 8 Lump sum rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72
Secondary lump sum	£142,000.00	£3,052.16	£141,984.46	£145,625.09	£149,265.72

The lump sum factor should:

(a) Moving to the minimum NFF rate per school* or
(b) Moving to the NFF (£145k). An additional cost is £391k overall.
(c) Move above the NFF rate.

Mobility. The mobility factor allocates funding to schools with a high proportion of pupils who first join on a non-standard date. Mobility funding was previously allocated on the basis of historic spend. However, in 2020/21, the DfE developed a new methodology that enabled calculation of allocations of this funding on a formulaic basis. Rather than relying on a single census, the methodology involved tracking individual pupils using their unique pupil ID through censuses from the past 3 years. If the first census when the pupil was in the school was a spring or summer census, they are considered a 'mobile pupil'.

To be eligible for mobility funding, the proportion of mobile pupils a school has must be above the threshold of 6%. A per pupil amount will then be allocated to all mobile pupils above that threshold. See Appendix A for definition of Mobility and the schools and school phases impacted. The total amount paid last year on this factor was £624k. Whichever option is chosen is very insignificant on the overall impact of the budget as the average number attracting this funding is approximately 54 pupils. Choosing the maximum rate will add £24k extra budget to fund this growth.

Table 9 Mobility rates

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Primary mobility	£1,025.83	£0.00	£1,014.17	£1,040.18	£1,066.18
Secondary mobility	£1,476.32	£0.00	£1,457.88	£1,495.26	£1,532.64

The Mobility factor should:

(a) Move to the minimum NFF rate per pupil* or
(b) Move to the national NFF rate as highlighted in green in table 10 or
(c) Move above the average national NFF rate.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Croydon has one PFI school and therefore uses this factor. The purpose of the factor is to fund the additional costs to a school of being in a PFI contract. The agreed amount paid for the last two years was £547k per annum.

The PFI factor options are:

a) Inflationary increase to be applied to last year's rate,
b) Stay the same as last year's rate,
c) Reduce last year's rate by £100k**.**

Minimum funding Guarantee (MFG). MFG protects schools' budgets from large changes in funding based on factor changes. It protects on £/per pupil basis but does not protect against a fall in pupil numbers. Local authorities have the freedom to set the MFG in their local formulae between +0.0% and +0.5% per pupil. All of Croydon schools have reached and exceeded these increases using the NFF rates. It is proposed to keep the limit of +0.5% in 2024/25.

Table 10 MFG rates

Year	MFG
2016/17	£11,425,730
2017/18	£3,861,329
2018/19	£2,362,522
2019/20	£1,143,179
2020/21	£670,987
2021/22	£87,337
2022/23	£101,196
2023/24	£146,450

Schools Forum agreed MFG at +0.5%

Growth. The criteria for growth funding for schools was reviewed and approved by Schools Forum on 5 October 2020. The rates for various parts of the growth fund will be applied to the schools that meet the growth criteria and have been confirmed by the schools Admissions Team. The new DfE required minimum funding payable to schools from 2024/25 is: (Primary growth factor value (£1,550 × number of pupils × ACA).

Table 11 Growth funding

Year	Growth
2019/20	£2,279,811
2020/21	£1,708,617
2021/22	£1,914,299
2022/23	£1,369,581
2023/24	£1,718,478

2024/25	Not supplied by DfE to date

The distribution of this factor will be considered in a future Schools' Forum once the 2024-25 funding is notified by DfE.

Split Site Factor

The DfE has introduced a National Funding formula (national approach) in criteria and amount payable. The total amount paid in 2023/24 was £200k. This new methodology now replaces the previous locally determined split sites factor. The new factor is made of basic rate of £55,700 and additional rate of £26,900 per 100 metres based on distance. Schools' forum had the choice to select one of the three options (a minimum rate, the national rate, or the maximum) presented in table 13 below. Schools' forum decided on the minimum rate.

Table 12(a) Split Site DfE national funding formula rates (Basic Rate)

Factor	23-24 APT	Difference between 23-24 APT and 23-24 NFF	24-25 APT minimum	24-25 NFF including ACA	24-25 APT maximum
Split sites basic eligibility funding			£57,364.26	£58,835.14	£60,306.01
Split sites distance funding			£28,629.31	£29,363.39	£30,097.48

Table 12(b) Split Site DfE national funding formula rates (Distance Rate)

Croydon Spilt Site Schools	DfE Recorded Distance (Metres)	24-25 APT minimum 2.5% lower	Total Amount Payable under NFF 2024/25	24-25 APT maximum 2.5% higher
School 1	1,421.42	£85,148.42	£87,331.71	£89,515.01
School 2	0	£56,730.40	£58,185.02	£59,639.65
School 3	883.76	£85,148.42	£87,331.71	£89,515.01
School 4 (two sites at 706m and 531m)	706.28	£170,296.84	£174,663.42	£179,030.02
Total		£397,324.08	£407,511.86	£417,699.69

The Split Site factor for lump sum and distance:

The new DfE methodology increases the monetary value of the factor due to lump sum and distance award.

Cost Implications and options are as follows:

(a) Moving to the minimum NFF rate per school - additional cost of £197.3k
(b) Moving to the NFF rate – additional cost of £207.5k
(c) Move above the average national NFF rate - additional cost of £217.6k

Sparsity and London Fringe. These factors are not applicable to Croydon.

Looked After Children (LAC). This has been an optional factor for years where Local authorities apply a single unit value for any child who has been looked after for one day or more, as recorded on the LA SSDA903 returns. The DfE does not allow the LAC factor in the NFF model anymore and local authorities currently using this factor can no longer fund it though the factors. Schools Forum once again agreed to fund the £167k LAC funding from the growth budget which forms part of the schools' block.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:		**CABINET**
DATE OF DECISION		**31 January 2024**
REPORT TITLE:		**2023-24 Period 7 Financial Performance Report**
CORPORATE DIRECTOR		**Jane West** **Corporate Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)**
LEAD OFFICER:		**Allister Bannin, Director of Finance (Deputy S151)**
LEAD MEMBER:		**Cllr Jason Cummings, Cabinet Member for Finance**
KEY DECISION?	**Yes**	**Reference number: 8623EM** **Reason: Key Decision – Decision incurs expenditure, or makes savings, of more than £1,000,000 or such smaller sum which the decision-taker considers is significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates**
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	**No**	**Public** **Grounds for the exemption: N/A**
WARDS AFFECTED:		**All**

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides the Council's financial performance as at Period 7 (October 2023) for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Capital Programme. The report forms part of the Council's financial management process for publicly reporting financial performance on a monthly basis.

Financial Performance Summary Table

Financial Performance Area	2023-24 Revised Budget (£m)	2023-24 Forecast (£m)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (£m)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (%)
Revenue Forecast (General Fund)	340.9	340.9	-	-
Revenue Forecast (Housing Revenue Account)	-	12.0	12.0	N/A
Capital Forecast (General Fund)	144.7	126.7	(18.0)	(12.4%)
Capital Forecast (Housing Revenue Account)	33.2	38.9	5.7	17.2%

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet is recommended:

2.1 to note the General Fund revenue budget outturn is forecast to breakeven at Period 7, after the forecast utilisation of £63m capitalisation directions requested from DLUHC and £1.5m of the corporate risk contingency budget. It is not planned to utilise the risk contingency budget and directorates will work to bring the service directorate positions within budget.

2.2 to approve the budget movements between directorates to match the movement of teams between directorates as set out in paragraph 4.13.

2.3 to approve within budget inter-directorate virements from Corporate to service directorates for pay inflation (£10.270m) (para 4.95).

2.4 to approve within budget inter-directorate virement of £0.698m from the Corporate economic demand pressures budget to the Children, Young People and Education directorate as set out in paragraph 4.97.

2.5 to approve within budget inter-directorate virements from Corporate to service directorates to correct General Fund recharge budgets relating to the HRA, Public Health, capitalisation of salaries and corporate support (overhead) recharges, and staffing and income budget corrections (£5.802m) (para 4.99).

2.6 to note the progress in MTFS savings achievement as set out in paragraph 4.107.

2.7 to note the work that has commenced on the Council's Transformation Programme as set out from paragraph 4.102.

2.8 to note the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget outturn is forecast to overspend by £12.0m.

2.9 to note the General Fund capital programme 2023-24 forecast underspend of £18.0m against the revised capital budget of £144.7m.

2.10 to note the HRA capital programme 2023-24 forecast overspend of £5.7m against the revised capital budget of £33.2m.

2.11 to note the Council's historic borrowing and debt burden continues to be critical to the sustainability of the Council's revenue budget. Dialogue with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) continues, and the Council is seeking further financial support from Government in regards to its level of indebtedness and balancing the budget to ensure it can deliver sustainable local government services.

2.12 to note that the Council continues to operate Spend Control Panels to ensure that tight financial control and assurance oversight are maintained.

2.13 to note that current forecasts are based on the best available information at the time and will be subject to review and change during the financial year.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Financial Performance Report is presented monthly to Cabinet and provides a detailed breakdown of the Council's financial position and the in-year challenges it faces. It covers the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme. The Financial Performance Report ensures there is transparency in the financial position, and enables scrutiny by the Executive Mayor, Cabinet, Scrutiny & Overview Committee and the public. It offers reassurance regarding the commitment by Chief Officers to more effective financial management and discipline.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 The 2023-24 budget approved by Council in March 2023 set a net revenue budget of £340.9m. This required capitalisation directions from government of £63m to balance, owing to resolving historical inaccurate accounting treatments and to fund the ongoing annual servicing of debt.

4.2 The Council's historic legacy borrowing and debt burden continues to be critical to the sustainability of the Council's revenue budget.

4.3 The current forecast is that the Council will breakeven against the 2023-24 General Fund revenue budget, however this is following the forecast utilisation of the £63m capitalisation directions requested from DLUHC and £1.5m of the corporate risk contingency budget. It is not planned to utilise the risk contingency budget and directorates will work to bring the service directorate positions within budget.

Cost of Living Considerations

4.4 There are a number of inflationary pressures that the Council, like all local authorities, is managing. The UK's Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation rate was 4.6% in the 12 months to October 2023, remaining high albeit lower than the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reporting in November 2022 that the CPI hit 11.1% in October 2022. This impact goes beyond the Council as the cost of living is affecting all households and businesses.

4.5 These macro-economic factors are impacted by international events and, therefore, well beyond the control of Croydon Council. Despite the limitations, the Council is seeking to support households wherever possible.

4.6 A dedicated cost of living information hub has been established on the Council's website. This provides a single source of information, informing residents of the financial support available and signposting to further support, advice and guidance.

4.7 The Council provides a wide range of support for residents that may be struggling owing to cost of living pressures. These include:

- Discretionary support for residents in financial hardship, including the Household Support Fund
- Council Tax support – for residents on a low income or in receipt of benefits, Council Tax bills could be reduced by up to 100%
- Council Tax Hardship Fund (supporting low income households that cannot afford to pay their full increase in Council Tax)
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) discretionary fund targeted for tenants that are not in receipt of housing benefit
- Benefits calculator, to ensure residents receive the support to which they are entitled
- Energy advice, including heating and money saving options, through our Croydon Healthy Homes service
- Free holiday activity clubs with healthy meals for children
- Croydon Works to help residents into employment or to receive training to support them into work and funding of the voluntary sector to provide advice and guidance

4.8 The cost of living information hub also signposts residents to a range of support provided by other organisations in Croydon, including:

- NHS Healthy Start vouchers for families
- Free school meals
- Support from voluntary, community and faith sector organisations
- Support for businesses through the London Business Hub and the British Business Bank
- CroydonPlus credit union which offers affordable ways to manage money, including savings accounts and loans

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY

4.9 The General Fund revenue forecast outturn shows an overall balanced position following the forecast utilisation of the £63m capitalisation directions requested from DLUHC. The service directorates show a forecast overspend of £1.5m which is offset by utilisation of the corporate risk contingency budget (£1.5m). It is not planned to utilise the risk contingency budget and directorates will work to bring the service directorate positions within budget.

Table showing the revenue forecasts by Directorate

Directorate	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)	Prior Month Forecast Variance (£m)	Change in Forecast Variance (£m)
Adult Social Care and Health	141.0	91.7	140.0	**(1.0)**	0.2	(1.2)
Assistant Chief Executive	40.8	22.1	39.9	**(0.9)**	(0.5)	(0.4)
Children, Young People and Education	96.2	44.0	101.6	**5.4**	5.8	(0.4)
Housing	21.5	19.1	21.5	**-**	2.2	(2.2)
Resources	35.2	91.6	33.2	**(2.0)**	(2.0)	-
Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery	70.6	37.5	70.6	**-**	-	-
Subtotal Service Directorates	**405.3**	**306.0**	**406.8**	**1.5**	**5.7**	**(4.2)**
Corporate Items and Funding	(64.4)	(26.4)	(65.9)	**(1.5)**	(5.7)	4.2
Total Net Expenditure Budget	**340.9**	**279.6**	**340.9**	**-**	**-**	**-**

4.10 Work will continue through to the end of the year to manage those areas with forecast overspends to ensure the Council remains within budget.

4.11 The Council continues to build on the improvements in financial management that were made last financial year. However, there is a considerable amount yet to do, which is fully recognised within the organisation.

4.12 A monthly budget assurance process and independent challenge of expenditure takes place. This is in addition to Cabinet and Scrutiny & Overview Committee review. The assurance meetings provide the Corporate Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the Chief Executive with an opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the forecast outturn, review risks and opportunities, and ensure that savings are delivered and income targets are met. The meetings ensure the Council is doing all it can to reduce overspends and deliver a balanced budget.

Budget virements to match new directorate structures

4.13 The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is requested to approve the following budget movements to match the movement of teams from one directorate to a different directorate. Please note that this is just a transfer of budget between directorates and does not change the total net expenditure budget of the Council or the usage of the budgets as agreed by full Council in March 2023.

Table showing budget virements between directorates

Team	Current Directorate	New Directorate	Net Expenditure Budget (£000's)
Education Capital Delivery Team	Housing	Resources	108
Support Exempt Accommodation (Housing Benefits) Team	Housing	Resources	433

DIRECTORATE VARIANCES

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH (ASCH)

Division	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Adult Social Care Operations	122.3	89.2	122.4	0.1
Adult Strategic Commissioning, Policy & Improvement	16.8	1.3	15.8	(1.0)
Central ASCH	1.9	1.2	1.8	(0.1)
Total ASCH	**141.0**	**91.7**	**140.0**	**(1.0)**

4.14 At period 7 the ASCH directorate has a forecast underspend of £1.0m (0.7%) against a budget of £141.0m which is an improvement of £1.2m from period 6.

4.15 The ASCH Directorate has challenging savings targets totalling circa £10m to deliver in 2023-24 on placements and care packages through demand management, commissioning and review of care packages.

Adult Social Care Operations - Forecast overspend of £0.1m

4.16 Staffing across this division demonstrates a forecast underspend (broken down by area below) owing to periods of vacancy above the £1m MTFS 5% vacancy factor saving applied to staffing budgets in 2023-24. There is a national shortage of both social workers and occupational therapists and recruitment to many roles is proving challenging. The periods of vacancy are a barrier to achieving savings as staff are focused on statutory delivery rather than delivering transformation to improve performance, data management and reduce operational risks across the directorate.

4.17 Localities & LIFE have an underspend of (£1.8m) owing to a net underspending on care and staffing costs. This is a net improvement of (£0.3m) from Period 6 comprising £0.1m pressure owing to the transfer of the equipment service from Policy and Improvement, and a reduction in the care forecast owing to lower than anticipated demand (£0.4m).

4.18 Working Age Adults and Transitions has an overspend of £3.7m, an improvement of (£0.4m) from period 6. This comprises a reduced overspend on care of £3.8m (owing to clients with increased care needs) which is partly mitigated by an underspend in staffing of (£0.1m). Work to calculate a managing demand positive impact on the forecast has been undertaken, the figure is estimated to be circa £2.0m and this will be reviewed monthly going forward. The managing demand work

reduces pressures coming into the service. The service is now on target to achieve savings of £5.3m. It should also be noted that this area was overspent by £2.3m in 2022-23. The service area has committed to achieving further savings to offset the budget pressure.

4.19 Provider Services has a (£1.1m) forecast underspend on staffing owing to vacancies.

4.20 Safeguarding service has a (£0.1m) forecast underspend on staffing owing to vacancies across the service.

4.21 Business Compliance and Early Intervention has a (£0.1m) forecast underspend on staffing owing to vacancies.

4.22 Mental health services have a (£0.5m) forecast underspend owing to the application of external discharge funding.

Adult Social Care Policy and Improvement – Forecast underspend of (£1.0m)

4.23 The Policy and Improvement division is forecasting an underspend of (£1.0m) owing to staffing vacancies and minor contract underspends. This is an improvement of (£0.5m) owing to the transfer of the Equipment Service to Localities of (£0.1m), delay in commissioning contracts including those supporting service reviews (£0.3m) and minor works in PFI being less than expected (£0.1m).

Central ASCH – Forecast underspend of (£0.1m)

4.24 The underspend is a result of the delays in recruitment to fixed term and temporary positions to provide additional capacity to improve performance, data management and reduce operational risks across the directorate.

4.25 Risks

- Risks continue in the provider market from inflation including higher fuel, labour and property costs which may result in claims for increased fees and/or financial instability with the potential for 'handing back' contracts. The potential reprovisioning costs if providers exit the market could be significant. It should be noted that this risk is already materialising. Providers are requesting increases in costs for existing care packages and new placements are increasing in costs. These are included in the forecast and are hardest felt in the working age adult cohort.

4.26 Opportunities

- Savings achievement is improving and will support the forecast going forward for the ASCH directorate.

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ACE)

Division	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Policy, Programmes and Performance	4.7	2.8	4.3	(0.4)
Elections Service	0.3	0.1	0.3	-
Croydon Digital and Resident Access	32.2	16.6	31.7	(0.5)
Chief People Officer	3.5	2.0	3.5	-
Central ACE	0.1	0.5	0.1	-
Covid Grants	-	0.1	-	-
Total ACE (General Fund)	**40.8**	**22.1**	**39.9**	**(0.9)**
Public Health Grant Ringfenced Services	**-**	**5.0**	**-**	**-**

4.27 At period 7, the Assistant Chief Executive directorate has a General Fund forecast underspend of £0.9m (2.2%) against a budget of £40.8m.

Policy, Programmes & Performance Division - £0.4m forecast underspend

4.28 Recruitment is continuing into the new staffing structure for the Policy, Programmes and Performance Division. The forecast underspend is owing to periods of vacancy of some posts in the new structure. The budget has reduced by £1.2m from Period 5 owing to the movement of the Coroner's Service and Resilience Team to the SCRER directorate.

Elections Service - breakeven position

4.29 There is a breakeven forecast against budget for the Council's core Elections Service.

Croydon Digital and Resident Access Division - £0.5m forecast underspend

4.30 Underspends in Concessionary Travel are forecast owing to staff vacancies and a favourable final concessionary travel settlement for the year.

4.31 The Digital and Resident Access Division is undergoing a review to assess the achievability of in-year MTFS savings for staffing and IT contracts.

Chief People Officer Division - breakeven position

4.32 There is a breakeven forecast against budget for the Chief People Officer Division.

Central Assistant Chief Executive – breakeven position

4.33 There is a breakeven forecast against budget for Central Assistant Chief Executive.

Public Health Division – breakeven position in ringfenced grant after movement in reserves

4.34 It is currently forecast that Public Health will contribute £3.7m to ring fenced Public Health reserves at the end of 2023-24.

4.35 A Council wide task and finish group has been set up to address underspends in the Public Health Grant (for the current year and the accumulated balance on the balance sheet as an earmarked Public Health reserve from underspends in previous years) by identifying appropriate commissioning opportunities. The movement from the previous period (£1.3m) is a direct result of the work of the group, as it reviews and identifies new funding opportunities and reshapes delivery opportunities.

4.36 Risks

Elections

The majority of the costs of administering the London Assembly, Mayor of London, and a potential General Election, in 2024 will be reclaimed from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the UK Government's Consolidated Fund. As the criteria for reclaiming costs have not yet been set, there is a risk that the Council may incur costs which cannot be reclaimed which would need to be funded corporately. It is likely that any such costs will fall in the 2024-25 financial year.

Croydon Digital & Resident Access – Digital Operations

Savings relating to the End User Service transformation (£0.5m) and the workforce review (£0.55m) are likely to slip into the 2024-25 financial year. This has already been reflected in the forecast.

4.37 Opportunities

There are no opportunities to report on at this time for the ACE directorate.

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION (CYPE)

Division	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Children's Social Care	72.4	36.4	77.1	4.7
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and UASC Care Leavers	(0.3)	5.7	-	0.3
Asylum Seekers and Homes for Ukraine	-	(6.5)	-	-
Quality, Commissioning and Performance Improvement	6.8	1.7	7.3	0.5
Non-DSG Education Services	16.8	6.4	16.7	(0.1)
Central CYPE	0.5	0.3	0.5	-
Total CYPE (General Fund)	**96.2**	**44.0**	**101.6**	**5.4**
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Education Services	**82.0**	**50.0**	**82.7**	**0.7**
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Early Years Block	**31.1**	**22.8**	**31.1**	**-**

4.38 At period 7, the CYPE directorate has a General Fund forecast overspend of £5.4m (5.6%) against a budget of £96.2m. This is a favourable movement of £0.4m since period 6.

If the budget adjustments are agreed as per this report, the forecast overspend will reduce to £4.2m.

Children's Social Care Division – forecast overspend of £5.0m (including UASC and UASC Care Leavers)

£2.8m placements overspend owing to five active high-cost placements including residential, semi-independent and one secure. Three of these high-cost placements are new in 2023-24.

Analysis is being undertaken on a continuous basis to review all high-cost placements with the aim to reduce spend where possible. Senior officers are engaging robustly with neighbouring councils who have placed children and families with complex needs in the borough in temporary accommodation. Where this provision does not meet the family's specialist needs, Croydon's placement costs can be up to £1m per annum.

£1.5m staffing overspend, which includes a pension budget shortfall of £0.8m since 2020-21. This was previously fully offset by underspends owing to vacancies and delays in recruitment however this cannot be accommodated in 2023-24.

£0.3m under-achievement in income (including £0.5m unachieved 2022-23 MTFS NHS Funding savings which have been partially offset through other income).

£0.1m potential overspend on Adopt London South, over and above the agreed budget owing to interagency fees and staffing costs across the consortium calculated at year end.

£0.3m overspend in the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) budget because of the disproportionate number of care experienced young people who were formerly unaccompanied children. At 18 years old the grant provided by the Home Office to the Council for young people's care and support reduces significantly.

Quality, Commissioning and Performance Improvement Division – forecast overspend of £0.5m

4.39 The division is forecasting a staffing overspend of £0.3m from the 5% vacancy factor MTFS saving of £0.3m applied to the 2023-24 budget (as several teams are fully staffed) plus the impact of increased quality assurance activity to track the impact of the pandemic on outcomes for children. The pressure may reduce during the year if there are periods of vacancy.

4.40 An anticipated Public Health contribution income budget of £0.4m, which relates to a 2022-23 MTFS saving, has been reviewed to rectify as part of the budget correction exercise in this report.

Non-DSG Education services – forecast underspend of £0.1m

4.41 Non-DSG Education services are still forecasting an underspend of £0.1m at Period 7, with staffing vacancies offsetting income pressures in other parts of the service.

4.42 £0.3m unachieved 2022-23 MTFS NHS Funding savings are being mitigated by underspends in other areas of the service.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs education services – forecast overspend of £0.678m

4.43 The SEND High Needs forecast at period 7 is an overspend of £0.678m against the budget of £82.059m. There is no movement from the period 6 position after the September intake of pupils was agreed with schools.

4.44 The overall variance at Period 7 represents £0.047m favourable variance from the expected overspend of £0.725m submitted to the Department of Education (DfE) Safety Valve Team as part of the approved Deficit Recovery Plan. The service is delivering all the savings strategies as set out in the Safety Valve (SV) agreement including the use of the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) to help deliver more local schools places as well as improve existing provisions to meet the increasing placement demands for complex needs pupils. The service will be submitting the 2023-24 Quarter 3 High Needs monitoring reports to the DfE Safety Valve team by the set deadline.

4.45 See below the key areas:

£2.199m Out of Borough and Independent – Forecast overspend due to an increase in complex cases above that expected, requiring out of borough placements to meet needs. The service is in discussions with some local providers to set up Enhanced Learning Provision during the Autumn Term.

£1.110m overspend due to increased placements in Mainstream Education provision exceeding the budgeted allocation. This forms part of the invest to save SEND strategy in year 2.

(£0.406m) underspend in Early Years provision.

(£0.250m) underspend in top up funding related to delayed implementation of the proposed expansion of Enhanced Learning Provision across a few schools.

(£0.953m) underspend in the Service Transformation budget set up to support the DSG Deficit Recovery strategy.

(£0.400m) underspend in funding related to staffing cost in therapies and support services owing to service re-alignment to maximise savings.

(£0.622m) expected clawback from specific Resource Provision (academies) for extra funding received from DfE.

4.46 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs education services will continue to closely monitor the demands pressures in Independent and Out of Borough placements owing to cost implications. Addington Valley Academy, St Nicholas, Coulsdon College Croydon, and Waddon Youth Disability Services are increasing placement numbers, which is reducing high-cost placements out of borough.

4.47 The 2023-24 period 7 High Needs forecast outturn variance of £0.678m leads to an overall DSG deficit projection of £16.062m at the end of 2023-24 compared to the Safety Valve target of £16.080m prior to the £3.290m Deficit Recovery payment from the DfE as per the Safety Valve agreement. This demonstrates that the Council is still ahead of the DfE target.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Early Years Block – forecast breakeven position

4.48 The Department for Education (DfE) provides six key funding streams for the Early Years Block. The budget allocation for 2023-24 is £31.088m and a breakeven position is forecast. The government recently announced an additional grant (Supplementary funding) of £2.507m for Croydon covering the period from September 2023 to March 2024. The DfE operational guide directs local authorities to "pass-through" 100% of the allocation to the sector and the Council is on target to meet the DfE requirements. Schools Forum was recently provided with updates on the payment to date.

4.49 Risks

- The Children's Social Care Division is monitoring placement and care package expenditure during the year. Pressure on placement spend is due to the sufficiency challenges both locally and nationally. The introduction of regulation for supported accommodation is predicted to increase charges as providers seek to pass on costs to Local Authorities. "Costs of new Ofsted regulation and inspection regime for semi-independent placement provision could be nine times higher than government funding, whilst one in five care beds could be withdrawn", report warns – London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA).
- Services previously funded by the HRA have been reviewed for eligibility which may result in a General Fund pressure of £0.9m.
- The service is also reviewing the housing accommodation charges from the Housing General Fund for Care Experienced Young People.
- The £0.3m unachieved income budget within the High Needs General Fund budget poses an indirect financial risk to the Safety Valve target should there be a need to offset the £0.3m potential shortfall to support activities or resources (EHCP Coordinators) within the SEND service. The service is exploring all mitigating options available.
- The service is monitoring all of the risks associated with the Safety Valve target which includes increasing complexity of needs requiring additional funding for special schools, increasing placement costs and extra out of borough placements to meet the local needs of some CYP pupils with complex needs.

4.50 Opportunities:

- There could be some staffing underspends from periods of vacancy.
- Potential underspend of £0.3m in legal costs, if the lower numbers of care proceedings and UASC age assessment challenges continue.

HOUSING

Division	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Resident Engagement and Allocations	21.4	18.9	21.4	-
Housing Estates and Improvement	0.1	0.2	0.1	-
Total Housing	**21.5**	**19.1**	**21.5**	**-**

4.51 At period 7, the Housing directorate has a General Fund breakeven forecast against the budget of £21.5m. At period 6 it was agreed that £2.2m budget would be transferred to the Housing directorate from the Corporate economic demand pressures budget to cover emergency accommodation pressures resulting from evictions and accelerated Home Office decision making which is increasing the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees requiring housing in the borough.

4.52 An allocation of £1.234m has been agreed from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) grant, with £1m supporting homelessness costs and £0.234m supporting the clearing of the homelessness casework backlog.

4.53 There is a crisis within the London housing market that is creating significant demand for services, and it is difficult to predict how far or fast demand will continue to grow. The data available following the changeover of rent account systems to the new NEC IT system is now improving although further improvements to forecasting accuracy can be expected as data quality is addressed, reporting is developed further, and more data analysis is performed.

4.54 Current financial modelling of a worst case scenario for emergency and temporary accommodation indicates that the 2023-24 overspend could increase up to circa £4m and this will be monitored closely over the remaining months of the financial year to check whether levels of new temporary accommodation placements continue at the current higher level or return to being in line with longer term historical trends. The pressures experienced by Croydon are also being experienced across London and nationally and therefore central government may provide in-year funding such as through a potential winter pressure top up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant (which has not been announced to date, but was provided in recent years).

4.55 The emergency and temporary accommodation budgets were increased by £4.8m in 2023-24 from the corporate non-pay inflationary pressures budget to mitigate inflation pressures, however demand pressures remain above this.

4.56 A top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) of £1.9m has been announced by DLUHC to cover homelessness pressures relating to Ukrainian refugees. This funding may also be used to fund wider homelessness pressures and reporting requirements are in line with the existing HPG requirements. The grant top-up could also help offset any potential detriment to income collection resulting in the bad debt provision being increased at year end.

Emergency Accommodation

4.57 There are a number of factors that impact expenditure against this budget. Firstly, there has been a demand rise in the number of households that have been placed into Emergency Accommodation. The factors that have pushed up demand include:

- The large number of bailiffs warrants from the private sector being issued as the courts are catching up with the backlog of cases since the Covid amnesty. Restrictions were lifted in 2021 but there has been a long backlog through the courts for these cases hence the delayed impact on the homelessness service.
- The number of asylum-seeking households which is adding a pressure on available affordable accommodation. There are over 1,000 asylum seekers currently in hotel accommodation and government have pledged to close around 100 hotels this year and bring in a streamlined assessment process. As a result, from August 2023 the Home Office accelerated their decision making for asylum claims and give very short notice when people are to be evicted from their accommodation, this could be as short as 7 days. This is an additional pressure as the Council does not receive any financial assistance for these households.
- Family evictions are also increasing, potentially linked to the decrease in availability of affordable housing in the private rented sector (PRS) and the increase in evictions detailed above and subsequent short-term arrangements breaking down.

4.58 Additional to the increase in demand the service discovered a backlog of circa 2,000 cases and appointments following the implementation of the Housing Needs Service structure. As the backlog team deal with these cases there are now additional placements in EA.

4.59 There is a shortage of suitable Emergency Accommodation to meet the increasing demand, so the Council is relying on expensive commercial hotels and the cost can be expected to increase.

Temporary Accommodation

4.60 Numbers of households in temporary accommodation are expected to fall slightly and steadily across the year (in contrast to nightly paid accommodation) and is adding to the pressure on emergency accommodation as properties are being moved away from Council access in the private rental sector by landlords who are impacted by the economic situation.

Risks

4.61 The implementation of the new NEC IT system experienced a delay in setting up the interfaces between NEC and the Oracle finance system. The income interface is now posting income from the NEC system into the Oracle finance system, however there are reconciliations still being carried out. There may be a requirement to increase the loss allowance (bad debt provision) at the end of 2023-24 depending on the level of income collection achieved in year.

4.62 The Housing Directorate continues to be impacted by the rapidly worsening housing market within London as private sector landlords are increasing rents or leaving the market, and tenants are struggling with cost of living pressures. The challenge for Croydon in dealing with such rapid inflation has multiple strands. There are forecasting difficulties in predicting how much prices are expected to move and at what pace.

4.63 There are difficulties in negotiating and approving price rises without losing properties or fuelling the rises further. Regular meetings with neighbouring boroughs are being held to ensure collective agreements are being made with the larger providers of emergency accommodation.

4.64 There has been a concerted effort to hold homelessness accommodation costs down across London through partnerships with organisations like Capital Letters and via the agreed Pan-London temporary accommodation rates. The rates can no longer be contained though as demand outweighs available affordable supply. At a Pan London meeting, all boroughs confirmed that they are no longer paying the agreed Pan London rates to ensure they meet their demand challenges. A combination of all these factors has led to an increase in both the average cost of emergency and temporary accommodation that Croydon can secure to meet demand, as well as an increase in the use of nightly paid emergency accommodation to compensate for the loss of some longer-term leased accommodation because of landlords leaving the market.

4.65 There is a potential financial risk from the fire at Sycamore House in Thornton Heath depending on the insurance claim settlement not yet finalised. This risk was considered in closing the 2022-23 accounts and so any difference in the estimated income of 70% of costs from the insurers will either be a charge or a benefit in the 2023-24 accounts.

4.66 There is a potential budget pressure, above the currently estimated £1.2m for 2023-24 which has been funded through the economic demand pressures budget transfer agreed in Period 3, in relation to housing benefit subsidies for the Guaranteed Rent Scheme for Care Experienced Young People. The pressure impacts the Housing Directorate as it forms part of the cost of temporary accommodation. The housing benefit subsidy pressure will be monitored throughout the year and mitigated where possible.

4.67 There is another potential pressure on the housing budget due to temporary accommodation management fees of £40/week/unit paid through Housing Benefit and not recoverable through subsidy from DWP. From 1 April 2017, in line with the

government announcement in the 2015 spending review, funding was devolved to Local Authorities through the Homelessness Prevention Grant with the aim of allowing Councils to better manage their temporary accommodation pressures. Following the government change, this cost was not allocated to the Housing Service and has been a pressure within the Resources directorate but in 2023-24 could be a pressure on the Housing budget. This will depend on the outcome of the ongoing Housing Benefit review project work.

Opportunities

4.68 Housing will continue to ensure that the use of ringfenced Household Support Fund and Rough Sleeping initiative grants is used both within the grant terms and to maximise the mitigating effect on the general fund spend, e.g. by targeting households in rent arrears for support.

4.69 DLUHC have in the prior two financial years issued a winter pressures top-up grant amount to the Homelessness Prevention Grant. This has not been confirmed or ruled-out for 2023-24.

4.70 The Council is reviewing asylum seeker and refugee grant funding for allocation to related homelessness costs.

4.71 There are opportunities from accommodation that is coming on stream for placing homelessness clients, which will provide alternative temporary accommodation and reduce the use of expensive nightly paid accommodation.

4.72 The restructure for Housing Needs has been implemented and will form the bedrock for process change and a more cohesive journey for a homeless household. The financial benefits are expected to be realised in the longer term from better practice resulting in reduced spend on homelessness.

RESOURCES

Division	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Commercial Investment	18.5	7.0	16.4	(2.1)
Finance *(refer note 1)*	15.5	78.4	15.5	-
Legal Services and Monitoring Officer	2.3	3.0	2.4	0.1
Insurance, Anti-Fraud and Risk	0.6	1.9	0.5	(0.1)
Internal Audit Service	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.1
Pensions and Treasury	0.3	0.9	0.3	-
Central Resources	(2.4)	0.2	(2.4)	-
Total Resources	**35.2**	**91.6**	**33.2**	**(2.0)**

Note 1: The actuals to date are high in the Finance Division owing to Housing Benefits expenditure which will be reimbursed through DWP funding.

4.73 At period 7, the Resources directorate has a General Fund forecast underspend of £2.0m (5.7%) against a budget of £35.2m.

Commercial Investment Division – £2.1m forecast underspend

4.74 The division continues to forecast decreased utilities costs and improved recharging to external bodies. There are also £0.5m of staffing underspends across the division, mainly in Facilities Management owing to periods of staffing vacancy, which are being offset by a forecast decrease in recharges to capital.

Finance Division – breakeven forecast position

4.75 There is a breakeven forecast position for the Finance Division. The Payments, Revenues, Benefits and Debt Service is forecasting a staffing underspend owing to staffing vacancies and increased court costs income, but these are being offset by decreased Land Charges income and temporarily increased agency staffing in strategic finance to work through historic accounting issues including the prior years' accounts.

4.76 A cross Council working group is currently operating to mitigate Housing Benefit (HB) subsidy risks by maximising HB subsidy income claims, increasing collection of HB overpayments and reducing costs. The actuals to date are high in the Division owing to HB expenditure which will be reimbursed through DWP funding.

4.77 The Finance Division has undergone a restructure of the strategic finance service and will now commence recruitment into roles which are currently covered by agency staffing. The capacity and skills levels required in the strategic finance service have been reviewed and extra funding from growth and/or reserves has been requested for 2024-25.

Legal Services and Monitoring Officer Division – £0.1m forecast overspend

4.78 There is a £0.1m forecast underspend in the Monitoring Officer service owing to staff vacancies and an underspend against the members allowances budget.

4.79 There is a forecast overspend in Legal Services of £0.2m mainly owing to high levels of agency staffing.

4.80 The Legal Services and Monitoring Officer Division is reviewing usage of external legal advice, with a view to increasing the inhouse staffing structure (moving budget from external legal expenditure in directorates) to provide more legal services internally and therefore reduce overall legal expenditure for the Council.

Other Service Areas and Central Resources - breakeven forecast position

4.81 There is a £0.1m forecast overspend in Internal Audit expenditure. This is offset by small underspends across Insurance, Anti-Fraud and Risk, Pensions and Treasury, and Central Resources.

Risks

4.82 There is a risk in the Commercial Investment Division as work continues to identify the net impact of asset disposals including the full cost of property related expenditure and loss of income streams.

4.83 There is a risk in the Finance Division in relation to Housing Benefit subsidies including the potential impact of the roll out of universal credit on the collection of overpayments.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES, REGENERATION & ECONOMIC RECOVERY (SCRER)

Division	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Sustainable Communities	54.1	37.5	54.3	0.2
Culture and Community Safety	9.8	0.4	9.0	(0.8)
Planning & Sustainable Regeneration	6.7	0.7	7.3	0.6
Central SCRER	-	(1.1)	-	-
Total SCRER	**70.6**	**37.5**	**70.6**	**-**

4.84 At period 7, the SCRER directorate has a General Fund forecast of a breakeven position against a budget of £70.6m. The main potential risk areas relate to income in the areas of parking, parking enforcement, moving traffic offence and planning.

Sustainable Communities Division - forecast overspend of £0.2m

4.85 There is a forecast £1.0m pressure for SEND home to school transport due to increased demand and a forecast £0.8m income pressure in New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) coring inspections. The pressures are being partially offset through a forecast underspend of £1.3m in staffing owing to periods of vacancy and £0.3m forecast underspend in waste services owing to reduced level of green and food waste.

Culture and Community Safety Division – forecast underspend of £0.8m

4.86 The division is forecasting an underspend of £0.8m owing to reduced utility costs in contracts (£0.3m), periods of staffing vacancy (£0.4m) and underspends across the libraries service while the service is under redesign (£0.1m). The Coroners service is projected to underspend by (£0.1m), this will be transferred to reserves to support the service in future years.

4.87 The Culture and Community Safety Division leads on the London Borough of Culture 2023 activities, funded through external funding sources. This is a year-long celebration of Croydon's unique identity, diverse communities and rich heritage, culture and creativity. The programme for "This is Croydon" showcases Croydon to the world.

It includes major events with international headliners performing alongside emerging home-grown talent, plus hundreds of cultural activities from our communities.

Planning and Sustainable Regeneration Division – forecast overspend of £0.6m

4.88 The division is forecasting an income under-achievement of £0.8m owing to lower activity levels to date in planning major applications and planning performance agreements. This is being partially offset by a forecast staffing underspend of £0.2m owing to periods of vacancy in the Growth and Regeneration Team.

4.89 The reduction in planning major applications is being experienced across the country and the GLA is reporting the reduction across London. It is these applications which bring in the most significant fees. The reduction in major applications can be attributed to several factors, which include:

- Economic factors such as increased building and material costs and increased interest rates.
- Uncertainty relating to the emerging Building Safety Bill – impacts on design and when a second staircase is required.
- Uncertainty in relation to emerging planning legislation. Implementation details are unknown and could be impacted by when the next general election will take place.

4.90 Risks

- Demand for parking services has not returned to pre-pandemic levels and this is affecting all areas of parking which includes Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), pay and display and on-street parking.

- Parking Services have had delays in connection with the roll out of new ANPR cameras which affect the income levels within the service.

- The Environment Act 2021 operates as the UK's new framework of environmental protection. Given that the UK has left the EU, new laws that relate to nature protection, water quality, clean air, as well as additional environmental protections that originally came from Brussels, needed to be established. The Act is a vehicle for a number of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) different environmental policies and sets out the legal framework for significant reforms to local authority waste and recycling services, as well as creating new statutory duties for local authorities on nature recovery. The government has stated that additional burdens funding will be provided to local authorities for the new requirements as they come into force, however the Council will need to monitor closely the extra costs involved.

- Waste services are demand led which represents a potential risk to the current forecast. Levels of tonnage are monitored on a monthly basis and the forecast will be updated throughout the year.

- The previously stated risk to New Roads and Street Works Act income owing to delays and disputes with utility companies has now been realised as a pressure. Further work is being undertaken to mitigate these pressures where possible.

- Within the Violence Reduction Network a further Domestic Homicide Review has been initiated.

4.91 Opportunities

- The SCRER directorate is actively pursuing several grant applications to further improve the financial position:
  - The Culture and Community Safety division have successfully secured grant funding from Sport England for swimming pool costs.
  - Further communications are being held with public health regarding enhancing the borough's community safety offer with direct funding.
  - Within Development Management a bid is in progress for the Planning Skills Delivery Fund which will assist the service in clearing the backlog of planning applications.

- There are several major schemes that are in development that should generate large fees - however these should not be submitted prematurely as this could result in significant costs.

- There could be further staffing underspends across the directorate depending on the timing, and success, of recruitment into posts.

CORPORATE ITEMS AND FUNDING

Area of Spend	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Inflation and Economic Demand Pressures	12.0	-	12.0	-
Risk Contingency Budget	5.0	-	3.5	(1.5)
Transformation Programme	10.0	-	10.0	-
Other corporate items	(91.4)	(26.4)	(91.4)	-
Total Corporate Items and Funding	**(64.4)**	**(26.4)**	**(65.9)**	**(1.5)**

4.92 At period 7, the Corporate directorate has a General Fund forecast underspend of £1.5m (2.3%) against a net budget of (£64.4m). The underspend relates to the risk contingency budget offsetting £1.5m of the pressures across the other directorates.

4.93 The corporate area holds funding streams such as Council Tax, retained share of Business Rates and Core Grants. The corporate budget also holds the Council-wide risk contingency budget (£5m) and the budgets for borrowing and interest received.

4.94 The corporate area funds redundancy, severance and pension strain costs which contribute to achieving General Fund MTFS savings. There may be a pressure in 2023-24 from this area of costs owing to the implementation of staffing savings.

4.95 The NJC national negotiations on the 2023-24 pay award for staff have concluded. The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is requested to approve the inter-directorate virement to transfer the related pay inflation budget currently held in corporate to the service directorates as detailed in the table below. Please note that the pay award has been agreed on very similar terms to 2022-23 and is within the £11.2m pay inflation budget allowed for in the 2023-24 budget agreed by full Council in March 2023.

Table showing allocations to directorates for 2023-24 pay inflation

Directorate	Pay inflation budget (£m)
Adult Social Care and Health	1.820
Assistant Chief Executive	1.040
Children, Young People and Education	3.037
Housing	0.737
Resources	1.271
Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery	2.365
Total	**10.270**

4.96 There is currently budget of £1.6m held centrally (of the original £5.5m agreed by full Council) for the potential impact of economic demand pressures on Croydon after the allocation of £1.7m budget in Period 3 (Housing Benefit subsidy pressures) and £2.2m budget in Period 6 (emergency accommodation pressures).

4.97 This report is requesting the transfer of £0.698m budget from the Corporate economic demand pressures budget to the Children, Young People and Education directorate to take account of increased contact demand which is creating high social worker caseloads in the Family Assessment Service. This is just a budget transfer within directorates, not a change to overall budget, and is in line with the intended purpose of the budget agreed at full Council in March 2023.

4.98 The corporate area also holds the 2023-24 Transformation budget of £10m, which will fund work carried out in directorates and cross-Council to achieve MTFS savings and improve services for local residents and businesses. The Transformation budget reduces to £5m from 2024-25.

4.99 There is £7.276m budget held in Corporate for adjustments to correct General Fund recharge budgets relating to the HRA, Public Health, capitalisation of salaries and corporate support (overhead) recharges, and salary and income budget corrections. The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is requested to approve the inter-directorate virement to transfer £5.802m of the budget currently held in corporate to the service directorates as detailed in the table below. Please note that this is a transfer within directorates (not a change to total budget) and is in line with the purposes of the budget agreed by full Council in March 2023. This virement removes service recharge income budgets where these duplicate with corporate support (SERCOP) charges, however further work is continuing to calculate up to date recharges to non-General Fund areas and

the remaining budget of £1.474m is being held in corporate to align these once finalised.

Table showing allocations to directorates for budget corrections

Directorate	HRA recharge related (£m)	PH recharge related (£m)	Capitalisation related (£m)	Staffing & on-costs related (£m)	Income related (£m)	Overhead (SERCOP) recharge related (£m)	Total (£m)
ASCH	-	0.065	-	-	-	-	**0.065**
ACE	1.007	-	-	0.150	0.362	0.439	**1.958**
CYPE	0.210	0.400	-	0.842	-	-	**1.452**
Housing	-	-	-	-	0.041	-	**0.041**
Resources	0.245	-	0.268	0.093	0.063	0.538	**1.207**
SCRER	0.893	-	-	0.095	0.091	-	**1.079**
Total	**2.355**	**0.465**	**0.268**	**1.180**	**0.557**	**0.977**	**5.802**

4.100 There is a funding risk in the Collection Fund if cost of living pressures impact the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates income. The impact of the Council Tax increase is partially mitigated through the Council Tax Hardship Fund (supporting low income households that cannot afford to pay their full increase in Council Tax).

4.101 There is borrowing cost uncertainty from interest rates and the timing of capital receipts from asset disposals (assumed in the MTFS at circa £50m per annum).

Transformation Programme

4.102 The Transformation Programme has £14m of resources allocated to it, consisting of £10m base revenue budget and £4m earmarked reserve.

4.103 In total there is currently £10.7m of the Transformation Programme budget allocated with £3.3m unallocated to date. The Transformation Programme will provide a return on investment through service improvement benefits and the identification and delivery of savings for the medium term financial strategy, providing a significant level of savings towards the £20m per annum savings required from 2025-26 onwards.

Transformation Programme Allocations

Project	2023-24 Draft Budget Allocation (£m)
Transformation Revenue Budget	10.000
Transformation Reserve Funding	4.000
Total Transformation Funding	**14.000**
Approach to Strategic Planning and Commissioning	0.290
Parking Policy Review	0.200
Community Hubs Programme	0.250
HR Transformation	0.093
Digital & Resident Access Review/Digital Workforce	0.080
SEND Review	0.240
Passenger/SEND Transport Transformation	0.100

Project	2023-24 Draft Budget Allocation (£m)
Family Justice Service Review	0.000
S117 Project	0.178
Joint Funding Arrangements	0.110
Sustaining Demand at the Front Door	0.190
Corporate Parenting Transformation	0.743
Dynamic Purchasing System	0.092
Callydown Transformation	0.134
Income & Debt Review	0.050
Outcomes Based Domiciliary Care Model	0.110
Transition Commissioning Care Model	0.082
Croydon Campus	0.250
Customer Access Review	0.200
Building Control Transformation	0.696
Planning& CIL Transformation	0.450
CALAT	0.050
Housing Needs Restructure	0.060
Temporary Accommodation Case Review	0.291
Housing Occupancy Checks	0.291
Rent Accounts and Data Cleanse	0.026
Housing Association Recharges	0.059
Supported Housing Review	0.080
Adult Social Care Transformation	1.100
Review of Social Care Placements	0.461
Reablement & Hospital Discharge	0.000
Strategic Operating Model Design Partner for Adult Social Care and Health	1.194
Housing Benefit Subsidy SEA & EA/TA	0.000
PFI Contract Manager	0.000
VCS Review	0.000
Asset Rationalisation	0.124
Business Intelligence Review	0.025
Commercial & Income Opportunities	0.000
Community Equipment Service	0.090
Croydon Museum	0.270
Oracle Improvement Programme	0.915
Transformation PMO	1.100
Total Revenue Budget and Reserves Allocated to Date	**10.674**
Unallocated To Date	3.326

4.104 The Transformation Programme published in November 2022 set out £5.9m of project commitments with recognition that further sums were still to be confirmed. Please note that project plans are under development and following review of these project plans the draft budget allocations to projects as listed above could change through the year.

4.105 The Transformation Board has agreed additional project allocations totalling £4.239m through to September 2023, with no further allocations made in October 2023. The allocations are set out in the table below.

Project Allocations	£m
Business Intelligence Review	0.025
Sustaining demand at the front door	0.080
Callydown transformation	0.134
Review of Social Care Placements	0.456
CALAT (New)	0.050
Strategic operating model design partner for ASCH	1.194
HR Transformation	0.015
Planning & Building Control projects – project delivery support	0.396
Corporate Parenting Transformation (New and subsumes Fostering Transformation Project)	0.650
Community Equipment Service	0.090
Museum Transformation	0.270
Oracle Cloud Improvement (New)	0.915
Asset Rationalisation	0.124
Reablement & Hospital Discharge - transfer to Strategic operating model design partner for ASCH	-0.060
Family Justice Service Review	-0.100
Total of Allocations	**4.239**

4.106 The 'Review of Social Care Placements' project has secured £600,000 alternative funding from the Market Sustainability Grant thereby reducing the funding required from the Transformation budget. The revenue budget also funds the costs of the transformation Programme Management Office currently estimated at £1.1m.

Savings

4.107 The 2023-24 budgets include a challenging new savings target of £33.1m. Progress in achieving savings is being monitored throughout the year. Directorates are identifying any risks to achievement of individual savings and making plans to mitigate these risks where possible or identify alternative savings as required.

Table showing 2023-24 forecast savings achievement by directorate

	2023-24					
Directorate	**Savings target £'000**	**Slippage from previous year £'000**	**Revised Savings target £'000**	**Forecast savings achievable £'000**	**Savings slippage £'000**	**Not yet evidenced or (over delivery) £'000**
Adult Social Care & Health	12,243	-	12,243	12,972	-	(729)
Assistant Chief Executive	2,924	-	2,924	1,521	1,403	-
Children, Young People & Education	6,920	490	7,410	5,148	-	2,262
Housing	2,305	-	2,305	1,309	1,099	(103)
Resources	6,347	-	6,347	6,347	-	-
Sustainable Communities (SCRER)	1,859	2,490	4,349	4,124	225	-
Cross-Directorate / Corporate	500	-	500	-	500	-
Total	**33,098**	**2,980**	**36,078**	**31,421**	**3,227**	**1,430**

Reserves

4.108 There are no budgeted contributions to, or drawdowns from, the General Fund balances of £27.5m in 2023-24. The current breakeven forecast for 2023-24 maintains this reserve.

General Fund Balances	Forecast (£m)
Balance at 1 April 2023	**27.5**
Forecast Contribution to/(Drawdown from) Reserves	-
Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024	**27.5**

4.109 The General Fund balances serve as a cushion should any overspend materialise by the end of 2023-24. The use of reserves to support the budget is not a permanent solution and reserves must be replenished back to a prudent level in subsequent years if used.

Unresolved Issues

4.110 The Council's overall financial position is still subject to a number of unresolved historic legacy issues. The latest position on these was set out in the 22 February 2023 Cabinet report titled 'Revenue Budget and Council Tax Levels 2023-24' which incorporated the findings of the 'Opening the Books' review undertaken in 2022-23. The report stated that a request has also been made of government to provide the Council with a Capitalisation Direction of £161.6m to cover the historic finance issues that have been revealed through the 'Opening the Books' programme.

4.111 The Council needs to correct a range of misstatements in its legacy accounts from 2019-20 which are currently still not fully closed. This was more than the £74.6m previously identified in the MTFS Update report to Cabinet in November 2022.

4.112 The Council's Provision for Bad Debt was found to be understated by £46m rather than the £20m previously assumed and a prudent decision was made to include the potential £70m gap in the accounts caused by incorrect accounting for Croydon Affordable Homes and Tenures, instead of the £9m previously assumed.

4.113 With four years of accounts still open, there remains a risk that further legacy issues will be uncovered. The Capital Programme for 2022-23 included the £161.6m Capitalisation Direction requested, which was in addition to the £25m capitalisation direction previously approved.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

4.114 At period 7, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) forecast remains at a revenue overspend of £12.0m owing to resolving a backlog of historic legacy repair work, reducing voids and resolving issues experienced nationally including damp and mould and fire safety. The HRA has a reserve of circa £50m as at the end of 2022-23 and this reserve will fund the 2023-24 overspend, however the HRA budget for 2024-25 will need to take account of ongoing pressures and priorities.

4.115 At Period 5 we set out how the legacy of repairs, disrepair works and the commissioned works on damp and mould accounts for £8.6m of the pressure against the existing budget. This pressure is a direct result of the significant under-investment over decades in our housing stock which has resulted in the backlogs the teams are now tackling. The implementation of the three new repairs contracts and the commitment to ensuring we are meeting our requirements as a landlord are driving this ongoing pressure. As a result, we will seek to rebase our responsive repairs budget at this mid-point of the budget year to reflect the position. Where underspends in other areas are insufficient to cover the pressures outlined above, we will be required to draw down from the HRA reserves into the revenue budgets.

4.116 The 2024-25 budget will require significant work to ensure that we are capturing and managing ongoing pressure areas within the repairs service. Stock conditions surveys have been commissioned to identify the level of major repairs and maintenance to be programmed into the future years' budgets and these capital improvements should reduce the level of responsive repairs over the medium term.

4.117 The remaining £3.4m pressure is attributed to disrepair and reflects the volume of historic legacy disrepair cases being cleared and the legal costs and settlements that have been the outcome.

Repairs

4.118 The Period 7 position of £12.0m overspend is made up of £8.6m responsive repairs costs pressure and £3.4m on disrepair costs, legal fees and settlements.

4.119 The overspend on responsive repairs is a result of the significant increase in volumes of repairs that have been received from tenants as a consequence of the historical under-investment in the stock including insufficient growth in responsive repair budgets as well as historic legacy issues identified since the implementation of the new contracts in August 2023.

4.120 In addition, there has been significant work done to tackle our response to reports of damp and mould, treating the appearances of spores and carrying out works to address the issues.

4.121 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 will enable a rigorous new regime that holds all landlords to account for the decency of their homes and the service they provide. This includes changes from 'Awaab's Law' which follows the death of 2 year old Awaab Ishak in 2020 due to damp and mould exposure in his Rochdale home following repair requests and complaints having been repeatedly ignored. Legislation includes provisions which will require the Council to investigate hazards and fix repairs including damp and mould in their properties within strict new time limits or rehouse residents where a home cannot be made safe. The new rules will form part of the tenancy agreement, so residents can hold landlords to account if they fail to provide a 'decent' home.

4.122 The tackling of the legacy voids has had a significant impact due to the state of disrepair in these properties and the subsequent lack of asset renewal. 599 voids have been completed so far this year. The backlog and managing the ongoing weekly voids is contributing to the cost pressures.

4.123 Legal disrepair historic legacy demand continues to be a pressure. Work is ongoing to tackle the circa 550 disrepair cases in our backlog. The service has set a plan to clear the backlog in 18 months. This financial year the team have progressed circa 283 cases to completion, however there are typically 7 new cases per week logged. The latest government £2m advertising campaign directed at residents to encourage the reporting of issues is likely to increase the pressure on this budget.

4.124 The service has introduced controls to manage, monitor and provide assurance on ongoing responsive repairs costs:

- The NEC system allows us to manage the budget per individual line of activity with a budget set on NEC that cannot be exceeded and no payments can be made without any increase to the budget prior to any new orders being raised. Manager approval is required to increase a budget.
- A Review Panel has been established since September. Any quotes for works over a value of £5,000 must be presented to the panel and approval sought prior to the works order being raised.
- A review and approval from the Housing Directorate Management Team (DMT) will be sought for works on an individual property in excess of £40,000 to allow consideration of value for money and to ensure that there is a link being made to regeneration projects and any other cross-Council projects.

<u>Tenancy and Income</u>

4.125 A breakeven forecast position at period 7 as we continue to work with the NEC implementation team to validate the rent and rent loss through voids data, we expect this to be completed for period 8 reporting.

Staffing and other

4.126 A breakeven forecast position at period 7 reflects that additional budget was allocated in 2023-24 to meet known pressures while structural changes are being implemented.

Table showing the 2023-24 HRA forecast

Description	Net Budget (£m)	Actuals to Date (£m)	Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Rental Income	(82.1)	(50.2)	(82.1)	-
Service Charge Income	(4.6)	(2.8)	(4.6)	-
Concorde, Sycamore & Windsor (rental income for Temporary Accommodation provision)	(3.4)	(1.2)	(3.4)	-
Other Income	(6.0)	(2.0)	(6.0)	-
Subtotal Income	**(96.1)**	**(56.2)**	**(96.1)**	**-**
Housing Capital Charges	40.9	-	40.9	-
Responsive Repairs & Safety	20.4	15.3	32.4	12.0
Centralised Directorate expenditure	11.3	0.9	11.3	-
Tenancy & Resident Engagement	10.3	3.3	10.3	-
Tenant Support Services	6.7	3.2	6.7	-
Concorde, Sycamore & Windsor expenditure	3.4	2.0	3.4	-
Asset Planning	1.6	0.9	1.6	-
Capital Delivery (Homes & Schools)	1.5	0.7	1.5	-
Subtotal Expenditure	**96.1**	**26.3**	**108.1**	**12.0**
Total HRA Net Expenditure	**-**	**(29.9)***	**12.0**	**12.0**

** Note that no actuals for Housing Capital Charges have been posted as these journals are carried out at financial year end.*

4.127 The main risks within the Housing Revenue Account are:

- NEC system functionality delays:
  - Although the system went live in June 2023, we are yet to use the system to its full capacity including full reporting functionality. The repairs and income forecasting may yet be impacted once the full integration and functionality is available.

- Repairs and maintenance:
  - pressures from the exit of the Axis repairs contract that ended in August 2023.
  - extra expenditure to deal with the backlog of repairs and maintenance.
  - void and disrepair costs carried out by specialist contractors to reduce void losses and minimise future disrepair claims.
  - settlement of disrepair cases and related legal fees, including those relating to Regina Road.

- Tenancy and income:
    - the impact of cost of living pressures on rent collection (including a potential increase in bad debt cost).
    - loss of income owing to void (empty) residential properties.
    - loss of income owing to voids including void garages.

- Recharge review:
    - General Fund services are producing service level agreements (SLA's) to evidence recharges of costs to the HRA, which could result in increased charges to the HRA.

Capital Programme and Financial Sustainability

4.128 The Capital strategy and programme was approved by Council in March 2023. This recognised the complex and challenging financial and operational circumstances in which the Council continues to operate. It showed a 2023-24 Capital Programme that is reduced in scale and cost compared to previous years. With circa £1.3bn of General Fund debt and an environment of rising interest rates, the delivery of an effective Asset Management Plan and an ambitious Asset Disposal Strategy, including reducing the number of buildings used by the Council, will be essential to mitigate rising cost pressures, reduce the overall debt burden and help the Council balance its books.

4.129 The strategy reflected the progress made to date by the Council to improve the governance and financial management of the Capital Programme following recommendations from the two Reports in the Public Interest (RIPI). The Council understands that the initial improvements put in place are the foundations of good practice and is focused on building upon these over the coming months and years.

4.130 Concerns were highlighted regarding value for money and investment decisions as the Council has incurred debt in investing in assets which have not retained their value and, therefore, the level of debt exceeds the value of the investment assets. In the three years between 2017-20 the Council borrowed £545m with no focused debt management plan in place. The majority of this debt comprises short-term borrowings which has left the Council exposed to current higher interest rates. The debt is anticipated to be refinanced from 2023 onwards and therefore likely to drive significant increases in annual repayment levels.

4.131 An estimated circa £66m is required to service this debt from the General Fund which represents around 19% of the Council's net budget. The Council's historic legacy borrowing and debt burden has, therefore, become critical to the sustainability of the Council's revenue budget.

4.132 The Council has concluded that the expenditure it is anticipated to incur in each year of the period of 2023-27 is likely to exceed the financial resources available and that reaching financial and operational sustainability without further government assistance will not be possible. The Council's 2023-24 budget required capitalisation

directions from government of £63m to balance and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) demonstrated an ongoing estimated budget gap of £38m per annum from 2024-25.

4.133 Dialogue with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) continues, and the Council is seeking further financial support from Government in regards to its level of historic legacy indebtedness and balancing the budget to ensure it can deliver sustainable local government services. It must be noted that annual capitalisation directions (transferring revenue cost into capital cost which must be funded over 20 years) increases the Council's debt burden. Also capital receipts from the Asset Disposal Strategy are being used to fund the ongoing capitalisation directions and therefore the Council is not able to reduce its existing historic debt (a situation of "treading water").

4.134 Therefore, debt write-off is the Council's preferred option and a request was made to DLUHC in January 2023 for government funding to write-off £540m of the Council's General Fund debt. DLUHC has subsequently asked the Council to propose a wider range of options, and these are currently being worked on.

General Fund Capital Programme

4.135 At period 7, the General Fund capital programme has a forecast underspend of £18.0m (12.4%) against the budget of £144.7m.

Table showing 2023-24 General Fund Capital Programme budget and forecast

General Fund Capital Scheme	2023-24 Budget (£000's)	2023-24 Actuals to Date (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (£000's)
Bereavement Services	127	(23)	127	-
My Resources Interface Enhancement	252	58	169	(83)
ICT	-	1	-	-
Network Refresh	348	11	152	(196)
Tech Refresh	132	637	285	153
Geographical Information Systems	312	-	312	-
Laptop Refresh	3,371	-	1030	(2,341)
Cloud and DR	331	26	174	(157)
People ICT	-	3	-	-
Synergy Education System	1,045	11	746	(299)
NEC Housing System	2,725	8	2,280	(445)
Uniform ICT Upgrade	56	-	56	-
Subtotal Assistant Chief Executive	**8,699**	**732**	**5,331**	**(3,368)**
Children Home DFE	329	-	329	-
Subtotal CYPE	**329**	**-**	**329**	**-**

General Fund Capital Scheme	2023-24 Budget (£000's)	2023-24 Actuals to Date (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (£000's)
Disabled Facilities Grant	4,710	1,054	3,000	(1,710)
Empty Homes Grants	400	39	200	(200)
Subtotal Housing	**5,110**	**1,093**	**3,200**	**(1,910)**
Asset Strategy - Stubbs Mead	500	-	500	-
Asset Strategy Programme	240	-	240	-
Clocktower Chillers	382	-	10	(372)
Corporate Property Maintenance Programme	2,780	1,181	2,664	(116)
Fairfield Halls - Council	625	3	625	-
Former New Addington Leisure Centre	600	-	600	-
Fieldway Cluster (Timebridge Community Centre)	248	-	248	-
Contingency	1,000	-	1,000	-
Education - Fire Safety	924	4	450	(474)
Education - Fixed Term Expansions	2,865	180	225	(2,640)
Education - Major Maintenance	5,866	3,237	3,321	(2,545)
Education - Miscellaneous	100	143	100	-
Education - Permanent Expansion	297	-	297	-
Education - SEN	6,289	584	6,289	-
Subtotal Resources	**22,716**	**5,332**	**16,569**	**(6,147)**
Allotments	-	3	3	3
Growth Zone	15,844	274	15,844	-
Grounds Maintenance Insourced Equipment	1,200	-	1,200	-
Highways	8,260	4,431	8,260	-
Highways - flood water management	404	388	404	-
Highways - bridges and highways structures	1,641	1,292	1,641	-
Highways - Tree works	50	6	50	-
Local Authority Tree Fund	83	136	83	-
Trees Sponsorship	42	10	42	-
Leisure centres equipment contractual agreement	139	(410)	139	-
Tennis Court Upgrade	75	-	75	-
Leisure Equipment Upgrade	148	-	148	-
Libraries Investment - General	1,031	1	224	(807)
Central Library Digital Discovery Zone	175	-	-	(175)
New Investment to South Norwood Library	520	-	-	(520)
Parking	1,843	772	1,843	-
Cashless Pay & Display	1,463	-	485	(978)
Play Equipment	17	236	219	202
Safety - digital upgrade of CCTV	1,540	(11)	1,540	-
Highway Road Markings/Signs (Refresh)	137	-	137	-
South Norwood Good Growth	773	11	168	(605)
Kenley Good Growth	394	(147)	306	(88)

General Fund Capital Scheme	2023-24 Budget (£000's)	2023-24 Actuals to Date (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (£000's)
Sustainability Programme	1,100	-	300	(800)
LIP	4,568	686	1,735	(2,833)
Cycle Parking	106	-	135	29
Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP)	3	-	43	40
Park Asset Management	700	-	700	-
Waste and Recycling Investment	2,558	-	2,558	-
Subtotal SCRER	**44,814**	**7,678**	**38,282**	**(6,532)**
Capitalisation Direction	63,000	-	63,000	-
Subtotal Corporate Items and Funding	**63,000**	**-**	**63,000**	**-**
TOTAL GENERAL FUND CAPITAL	**144,668**	**14,835**	**126,711**	**(17,957)**

Table showing General Fund Capital Programme Financing

General Fund Capital Financing	2023-24 Budget (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (£000's)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	6,600	6,600	-
CIL Local Meaningful Proportion (LMP)	3,084	1,477	(1,607)
Section 106	1,190	242	(948)
Grants & Other Contributions	25,430	16,302	(9,128)
Growth Zone	16,744	15,844	(900)
HRA Contributions	1,772	1,459	(313)
Capital Receipts	45,000	45,000	-
Borrowing	44,849	39,787	(5,062)
Total General Fund Financing	**144,668**	**126,711**	**(17,957)**

4.136 The extra forecast cost of the play equipment, cycle parking projects and electric vehicle charging points are expected to be funded through the application of Section 106 funding.

HRA Capital Programme

4.137 At period 7, the HRA capital programme has a forecast overspend of £5.7m (17.2%) against the budget of £33.2m. The HRA has a reserve of circa £50m as at the end of 2022-23 and this reserve will likely be the source of financing the 2023-24 capital overspend.

The HRA budget for 2024-25 and the HRA business plan will need to take account of ongoing pressures and priorities. Stock conditions surveys have been commissioned to identify the level of historic legacy major repairs and maintenance to be

programmed into the future years' budgets and these capital improvements should reduce the level of responsive repairs over the medium to long term.

Spend on damp and mould related repairs are in the early stages and are unbudgeted and will largely appear as a pressure in the capital budget as many of the works are for substantial amounts that relate to significant property improvements.

Similarly, there are works underway due to historic legacy legal disrepair and void cases where significant updating to properties is resulting in unbudgeted capitalisation of repairs spend.

Table showing 2023-24 HRA Capital Programme budget and forecast

HRA Capital Scheme	2023-24 Budget (£000's)	2023-24 Actuals to Date (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (£000's)
Major Repairs and Improvements Programme	31,476	5,847	37,180	5,704
NEC Housing System	1,772	-	1,772	-
Total HRA Capital	**33,248**	**5,847**	**38,952**	**5,704**

HRA Capital Programme Financing

HRA Capital Financing	2023-24 Budget (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast (£000's)	2023-24 Forecast Variance (£000's)
Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)	16,082	16,082	-
Revenue	13,900	13,900	-
Other Reserves	1,148	6,852	5,704
Right To Buy (RTB) Receipts	2,118	2,118	-
Total HRA Capital Financing	**33,248**	**38,952**	**5,704**

4.138 It is currently assumed that the forecast overspend in the Major Repairs and Improvements Programme will be financed through HRA reserves, however the source of HRA financing is still to be finalised.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 The monthly financial performance report supports the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026 objective one "The council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services".

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 Finance comments have been provided throughout this report.

8.1.2 The Council continues to operate with internal spending controls to ensure that tight financial control and assurance oversight are maintained. A new financial management culture is being implemented across the organisation through increased communication on financial issues and training for budget managers.

8.1.3 The Council currently has a General Fund Reserve of £27.5m which serves as a cushion should any overspend materialise by the end of 2023-24. The use of reserves to support the budget is not a permanent solution and reserves must be replenished back to a prudent level in subsequent years if used.

8.1.4 The Council's historic legacy borrowing and debt burden continues to be critical to the sustainability of the Council's revenue budget. Dialogue with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) continues, and the Council is seeking further financial support from Government in regard to its level of indebtedness and balancing the budget to ensure it can deliver sustainable local government services.

Comments approved by Allister Bannin, Director of Finance (Deputy s151 Officer).

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to ensure that it maintains a balanced budget and to take any remedial action as required in year.

8.2.2 Section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003 provides that the Council is under a statutory duty to periodically conduct a budget monitoring exercise of its expenditure and income against the budget calculations during the financial year. If the monitoring establishes that the budgetary situation has deteriorated, the Council must take such remedial action as it considers necessary to deal with any projected overspends. This could include action to reduce spending, income generation or other measures to bring budget pressures under control for the rest of the year. The Council must act reasonably and in accordance with its statutory

duties and responsibilities when taking the necessary action to reduce the overspend.

8.2.3 In addition, the Council is required by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The Council's Chief Finance Officer has established financial procedures to ensure the Council's proper financial administration. These include procedures for budgetary control. It is consistent with these arrangements for Cabinet to receive information about the revenue and capital budgets as set out in this report.

8.2.4 The monitoring of financial information is also a significant contributor to meeting the Council's Best Value legal duty. The Council as a best value authority "must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness" (Section 3 Local Government Act (LGA) 1999). The Best Value Duty applies to all functions of the Council including delivering and setting a balanced budget, providing statutory services such as adult social care and children's services and securing value for money in all spending decisions.

8.2.5 The Council is the subject of Directions from the Secretary of State requiring the Council to, amongst others, improve on the management of its finances. This report serves to ensure the Council is effectively monitoring and managing its budgetary allocations in accordance with its Best Value Duty.

Comments approved by Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer, 28/11/2023.

8.3 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 There are no immediate workforce implications arising from the content of this report, albeit there is potential for a number of the proposals to have an impact on staffing. Any mitigation of budget implications that may have direct effect on staffing will be managed in accordance with relevant human resources policies and, where necessary, consultation with the recognised trade unions.

8.3.2 The Council is aware that many staff may also be impacted by the increase in cost of living. Many staff are also Croydon residents and may seek support from the Council including via the cost of living hub on the intranet. The Council offers support through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and staff may seek help via and be signposted to the EAP, the Guardians' programme, and other appropriate sources of assistance and advice on the Council's intranet, including the trade unions.

Comments approved by: Dean Shoesmith, Chief People Officer, 27/11/2023.

8.4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council must therefore have due regard to the need to:

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

8.4.2 In setting the Council's budget for 2023-2024, all savings proposals must complete an Equality Impact Assessment. As Officers deliver against the approved budget, including the savings within it, they will continue to monitor for any unanticipated equality impacts. If any impacts arise, officers will offer mitigation to minimise any unintended impact.

8.4.3 This report sets out a number of proposals that will change the services and provisions we provide for residents across Croydon. These proposals are subject to further work decisions.

8.4.4 The Council must, therefore, ensure that we have considered any equality implications. The Council has an established Equality Impact Assessment [EqIA] process, with clear guidance, templates and training for managers to use whenever new policies or services changes are being considered. This approach ensures that proposals are checked in relation to the impact on people with protected characteristics under Equality Act 2010.

8.4.5 Assessing the impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures, services and organisational change is not just something the law requires; it is a positive opportunity for the council to ensure it makes better decisions, based on robust evidence.

8.4.6 Our approach is to ensure the equality impact assessments are data led, using user information, demographic data and forecasts, as well as service specific data and national evidence to fully understand the impact of each savings proposal. This enables the Council to have proper regard to its statutory equality duties.

8.4.7 We have a large number of vulnerable children and asylum seekers who are in need of our services. We have also been faced with the rise of costs of the provision of adult social care, which has been exasperated following the pandemic. Alongside this our residents are dealing with the increased cost of living. We have supported residents by providing mitigation for changes where possible and signposting to other support organisations in the borough who can provide support.

We will continue to seek mitigation during the equality analysis process where possible.

8.4.8 Our initial data suggests that residents across all equality characterises may be affected by changes. National and local data highlights that this may have a greater impact on race, disabilities, sex, pregnancy and maternity and age. We will continue to assess the impact and strive to improve our evidence and data collection, to enable us to make informed decisions.

8.4.9 Where consultations take place, we will ensure that we make it accessible for all characteristics including those with disabilities including neurodiversity by ensuring that we adopt Disability standards in our consultation platform. Notwithstanding those residents who are digitally excluded. We will also consult using plain English to support our residents who do not have English as a first language.

8.4.10 With regard to potential staff redundancies, as a diverse borough we will undertake equality analysis and seek mitigation for staff by offering redeployment and employability support. We will also assess the impact of job losses on protected characteristics. We will also ensure that disabled staff are treated more favourably during restructure in that they will be required to meet the minimum standard prior to being offered an interview.

8.4.11 Research from existing EQIAs identifies that rising costs impact on some Disabled groups, communities from the Global Majority, African, Asian, African Caribbean households, young people, some people aged 15 – 64 and some people in the pregnancy/maternity characteristic. Research also indicates that there is an intersectional impact on young people from the Global Majority and both Disabled and Dual Heritage communities. Deprivation in borough is largely focused in the north and the east where the Global Majority of residents from the African, African Caribbean and Asian communities reside.

Comments approved by Naseer Ahmed for Equalities Programme Manager, 28/11/2023.

9. APPENDICES

9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 None.

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