

## Cabinet

Meeting of held on Monday, 15 July 2024 at 6.30 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), Yvette Hopley (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care), Ola Kolade (Cabinet Member for Community Safety), Scott Roche (Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment) and Andy Stranack (Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture)

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

### PART A

165/24 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May were agreed as an accurate record..

166/24 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were no disclosures of interests made.

167/24 **Urgent Business (If any)**

The Executive Mayor agreed an additional Appendix that covered the Recommendations and Executive Responses for the Future Options for Maintained Nursery Schools could be added to the Scrutiny Stage 2 report, at item 6 – as Maintained Nursery Schools was being considered at Item 7. It was noted it was published as a supplementary agenda.

## Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations Arising from Scrutiny

The Executive Mayor introduced both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Scrutiny reports – Recommendations and Responses to Recommendations. Both reports were taken together.

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

- The Scrutiny and Overview Committee (the Committee) advised that a number of recommendations submitted were time sensitive as they referred to matters that were to be decided at full Council on Wednesday the 17th July 2024.
- The Committee has requested clarification on how the Asset Management Strategy links with the Housing Revenue Accounts business plan.
- On the Resident Engagement Strategy, Members wanted to hear from the council how they could hear the full range of diverse voices on housing.
- The Committee welcomed item 12 on the agenda. Whilst Scrutiny has raised concerns, the obvious amount of work undergone has been noted. Homes Scrutiny will continue to monitor the transformation of the service to ensure the changes are improving residents experience on a day-to-day basis.
- The Committee unanimously welcomed the news that in regard to item 7, “The Future options for Maintained Nurseries” none were being forced to close. Cabinet was informed that for two reasons the recommendation favoured was to allow Crossfield and Selhurst another 12 months to improve their finances before imposing a soft federation. Parents and staff were keen to avoid the latter option. If their own plans fail to achieve a financial surplus this year then a soft federation may have to go ahead. The Executive Mayor was urged to grant the nurseries a few extra months to return to black as predicted.

The Executive Mayor noted that item 7 would be a substantive item later in the proceedings.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale thanked the committee for its encouragement around the improvements. Clarification was offered on the link between the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy and HRA; in essence the housing stock conditions data will be used to inform the HRA business plan.

The Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, Debbie Jones reinforced the points made in relation to the cumulative deficit. The concerns raised over the funding of maintained nursery

schools has been evidenced over a long period. Cumulatively it is a huge challenge and strongly believe that the work done to bring down the deficit in year needs to be alongside the recommendations made by officers.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Receive the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Homes Sub-Committee on 29 January 2024 (Appendix 1), Children & Young People Sub-Committee on 19 March 2024 (Appendix 2), the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee on 2 April 2024 (Appendix 3), the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 22 April 2024 (Appendix 4).
2. Provide a substantive response to the recommendations (a Scrutiny Stage 2 Report) at the Cabinet meeting on 25 September 2024

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### **Scrutiny Stage 2: Responses to Recommendations: Streets & Environment Sub-Committee, 30th Jan and Homes Sub-Committee 16th April & 9th July 2024**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the responses and action plans attached to this report as Appendix 1, 2, and 3, and
2. Delegate authority to the officers identified in Appendix 1, 2, and 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.

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### **Future Options for Maintained Nursery Schools**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Future Options for Maintained Nursery Schools Report which highlights the significant steps taken, and proposed plans to keep all five of the maintained nurseries in the borough open.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Maria Gatland shared that she was pleased to bring Cabinet positive recommendations which will help to secure long term viability. Cabinet noted that three of the nurseries were already linked to a primary school and have a balanced budget. There is no assurance that the two maintained nursery schools in deficit can come to balance this year on their current plan without the soft federation which would enable them to share operating costs and crucially remain open.

The Director of Education, Shelly Davis was invited to provide advice. The Director of Education advised that the request from the Overview and Scrutiny committee for an additional 12 months is not recommended as

the plans submitted by the maintained nursery school is demand led and predicated on the deficits being cleared fully by 2028/29 although with an in-year surplus in the next academic year. Whilst the plan indicates an in-year balance and surplus budget, regard is needed to the cumulative deficit and the time frame. A soft federation is necessary to secure the financial viability of the maintained nursery schools, further this action is needed urgently within this financial year.

The Executive Mayor brought the part B papers into Part A.

The Shadow Cabinet Minister for Children and Young People, Councillor Amy Foster asked whether there was willingness to explore the long-term impact that the decision has had on Crossfield and Selhurst's funding and the length of time it is taking them to pay off that deficit?

The Director of Education, Shelly Davis responded that budgets received by the maintained nursery schools is through the dedicated schools grants, a budget predicated on pupil numbers and therefore the lowest budgets will be as a result of having the lowest numbers of pupils therefore over a significant number of years various options have been explored in relation to the deficit budget, enough time has been given to enable decisive action to be taken. The recommendations within the report for a soft federation is in order to bring some pace to the work that is ongoing.

The Shadow Cabinet Minister for Children and Young People, Councillor Amy Foster followed by seeking a response around the difference in spaces that are used in the morning and afternoon slots, the number of pupils and the disparity.

The Director of Education, Shelly Davis highlighted the additional funding the nursery schools also received through the supplementary funding, whilst there is funding through the number of pupil's all of the maintained nursery schools have received additional supplementary funding to enable them to meet their budget requirements.

Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings sought confirmation that there is nothing inherently different between the maintained nursery schools in how they are funded it is just due to circumstances which the Director of Education confirmed.

The Shadow Cabinet Minister for Children and Young People, Councillor Amy Foster questioned whether the council should be concerned about any measure that could see schools losing qualified and experienced special educational needs staff who work hard for families in the borough.

The Director of Education, Shelly Davis responded that it is important to note that the three maintained nursery schools that already sit under the federation model are judged by Ofsted to be good, it's also important to note that in developing a soft federation there's an opportunity to actually utilise the skills, knowledge and expertise across a wider staffing network

across both of the schools which should be seen as a positive way of supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings asked if there was any evidence that moving to a soft federation leads to a reduction in standards.

The Director of Education, Shelly Davis confirmed that there is no evidence and provided reassurance to Cabinet that all schools in Croydon including maintained nursery schools are allocated a link advisor, it is the responsibility of the link advisor to provide challenge and support and would intervene if there were any issues in relation to a decline in standards

The Executive Mayor moved the recommendations as per the report and noted that Cabinet agree the response to the Executive recommendations concerning the future options for nursery schools from the Scrutiny Committee as discussed this evening.

Cabinet **RESOLVED:** to

- 2.1 note the findings from the MNS review at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 note that the current model of Croydon's MNS is not financially sustainable to guarantee their future viability as funding is insufficient to cover the costs in some of the MNS, alongside declining birth rate.
- 2.3 approve Croydon's new operating model for its MNS, which is for each MNS to establish, at least, a 'soft' federation - formally collaborate - with the governing body of a primary school, special school, or academy trust through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). This is in line with Model – Aii – referred to in the MNS review at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 note that three of Croydon's MNS – Thornton Heath, Tunstall, and Purley – are already linked successfully to a primary school via an SLA or a federation and have a balanced budget.
- 2.5 note that the other two MNS – Federation of Crosfield and Selhurst – are not linked to a primary school and have a deficit budget.
- 2.6 strongly recommend that the Governing Body of the Federation of Crosfield and Selhurst Nursery Schools accept and support Croydon's new operating model for MNS and start the process immediately to establish a 'soft' federation with a primary school, special school, or academy trust through a Service Level Agreement (SLA), by January 2025.
- 2.7 authorise officers to work with Crosfield and Selhurst (Federation) Nursery schools to broker and identify a suitable primary school,

special school or academy trust to create a 'soft' federation through an agreed Service Level Agreement. If the Federation of Crosfield and Selhurst, does not respond positively, robustly, or rapidly to the recommendation by the Council and the requirement to achieve a balanced budget by the 2025/26 financial year then the Council could intervene by issuing a warning notice to the governing body and appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB) on the grounds of poor financial management.

- 2.8 As a consequence of recommendations 2.6 and 2.7, confirm that, if the MNS follow these proposal the need to reduce the number of Maintained Nursery Schools in Croydon through closures or mergers, will not be pursued, at this stage.

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**Report on Nine Experimental Traffic Management Orders to support Healthy School Streets Schemes (Group 3)**

The Executive Mayor introduced the report on Nine Experimental Traffic Management Orders to support Healthy School Streets.

Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Scott Roache presented Cabinet with feedback from the statutory consultation, the outcome of which has led to eight of the experimental traffic orders, which form the healthy school streets schemes being made permanent. The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.7) Experimental Order 2023 in respect of the Park Hill Junior & Infant School Street in Stanhope Road, The Avenue, Cotelands, Crusader Gardens and Pageant Walk has been withdrawn due to a number of objections and dissatisfaction of the scheme.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment, Councillor Christopher Herman enquired how charges on those who are exempt can be avoided once the schemes are made permanent?

The Corporate Director for Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery, Nick Hibberd acknowledged that initially there were issues with the portal, however the problem has now been resolved and the software has been fixed. Cabinet

**RESOLVED:** to

- 2.1 To make the following eight experimental traffic orders, which form the healthy school streets schemes detailed within this report, permanent:

School	Affected road(s)	Section	ETMO Cited As	Ref
Howard Primary School	a. Dering Place; b. Barham Road	a. Entire length b. Entire length	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.1) Experimental	HOWARDSS/2023

			Order 2023	
South Norwood Primary School	a. Birchanger Road; b. Crowther Road; c. Gresham Road	a. Between Carmichael Road and Merton Road b. Between Balfour Road and Stanger Road c. Entire length	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.2) Experimental Order 2023	SOUTHNORWOODSS/2023
Gonville Academy	Gonville Road	Between Limpsfield Avenue and Gonville Academy	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.3) Experimental Order 2023	GONVILLESS/2023
The Crescent Primary School and The BRIT School	a. The Crescent b. Saracen Close	a. Entire length b. Entire length	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.4) Experimental Order 2023	CRESCENTSS/2023
St Cyprians Greek Orthodox Primary School	a. Ingram Road b. Springfield Road	a. Between Carolina Road and Springfield Road b. Between Carolina Road and Springfield Road	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.5) Experimental Order 2023	CYPRIANSS/2023
Good Shepherd Catholic School	a. Dunley Drive b. Walker Close	a. Between Leigh Crescent and Chesney Crescent b. Entire length	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.6) Experimental Order 2023	GOODSHSS/2023
Kenley Primary School	a. New Barn Lane b. Mosslea Road	a. Between Beverley Road and the railway line b. Between New Barn Lane and Hillcrest Road	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.8) Experimental Order 2023	KENLEYSS/2023
Oasis Shirley Park	a. Stroud Green Way b. Swinburne Crescent	a. Between north-eastern boundary of Oasis Academy, Shirley Park and Coleridge Road b. Entire length	The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.9) Experimental Order 2023	SHIRLEYPARKSS/2023

2.2 To withdraw The Croydon (Traffic Movement) (No.7) Experimental Order 2023 effective as of 23 July 2024 in respect of the Park Hill Junior & Infant School Street in Stanhope Road, The Avenue, Cotelands, Crusader Gardens and Pageant Walk, and not to proceed to make it permanent; and to authorise the Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery to take steps necessary to publicise this withdrawal and remove any associated signage and other measures in place as a result of the experimental order.

2.3 Subject to approval of recommendation 2.1 above, to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery to undertake all measures necessary to make the eight experimental orders permanent Traffic Management Orders, including pursuant to the statutory requirements

of the Road Traffic Management Act 1984 and Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and make arrangements for the enforcement thereof.

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## **REGINA ROAD PROJECT - PROJECT UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Regina Road Project - update and next steps on the redevelopment and regeneration programme.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale updated Cabinet as to why the approved phasing strategy was being replaced with a new phasing strategy.

The new phasing strategy achieves greater alignment of demolition and construction activities at Regina Road with the GLA's Affordable Housing Grant Funding requirements and to deliver more Council homes sooner than previously intended.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Chrishni Reshekaron, asked what plans or procedures had been put in place to ensure that the council will meet the milestone dates and mitigate any risks of losing the grant.

The Executive Mayor reflected that receiving a £54M grant is an amazing achievement. With regard to delays, the programme is being readjusted at this particular point in time to align with the GLA so that those milestones can be reached removing as much of the risk as is possible.

The Corporate Director of Homes, Susmita Sen added that the GLA are working closely with the team and recognise that this is a major step and probably one of the largest awards in London.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings noted what brilliant news it is to see this project progressing.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.1.** To agree an updated approach to phasing to ensure the delivery of 225 grant funded new Council homes in respect of planning, demolition, and construction. The redevelopment will only include 2 phases being:
  - 2.1.1 Phase 1, comprising 225 new Council homes (minimum 200 social rented and up to 25 leaseholder/freeholder products) and kindergarten/ community facility (previously phases 1 & 2).
  - 2.1.2 Phase 2, comprising a minimum 155 private homes.



- 2.2 To note that the procurement of a demolition contractor is being progressed in line with delegations set out in the Annual Procurement Plan

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## **Council Housing Asset Management Strategy 2024/29**

The Executive Mayor introduced the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy 2024/29 which focuses on the long-term management and investment needs of the housing portfolio and rises to the challenge of new regulations to meet the requirements introduced by the housing regulator in 2023.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne informed Cabinet that the strategy supports the Housing Strategy which aligns with other key strategic documents such as the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Resident Engagement Strategy, and stressed that it is capable of adapting to the ever changing regulatory environment and challenging external expectations linked to property conditions.

Cabinet noted that the Housing Regeneration Framework will be provided later this year once there has been an opportunity to analyse the stock condition survey data. Cabinet also noted of the three recommendations made one described work which is already in progress but were pleased to accept the other two recommendations around the importance of cultural change and the use of customer satisfaction data.

The Corporate Director of Homes, Susmita Sen added that this is clearly a pivotal point and a major milestone, going forward it will be data driven and will undoubtedly improve homes that our residents live in.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Chrishni Reshekaron, asked if it was possible for the Corporate Director to offer highlights of what could be expected from the Housing Regeneration Strategy when it comes to cabinet later this year.

The Corporate Director of Homes, Susmita Sen responded that the Regeneration Strategy will be focused on drawing out the data from the stock condition surveys which will inform the level of investment needed and the nature and costs of those works. The main driver is the Asset Management Strategy which will feed into whether regeneration is required or not.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.1 Consider the feedback received on the principles behind the Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 from residents, partners and Members via engagement and consultation briefings; and Equalities Impact Assessment detailed in Appendix 2.

- 2.2 Consider the feedback from the Homes Scrutiny Committee held on 9th July 2024 and executive response (Appendix 3).
- 2.3 Agree the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy 2024 - 2029 (Appendix 1) with any amendment/s to the agreed scrutiny recommendations, and recommend to Full Council for adoption.
- 2.4 Agree to delegated authority to Corporate Director to make minor amendments (i.e., slight wording changes to make more accessible, formatting etc.) in conjunction with Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member but prior to its recommendation and adoption by Full Council.
- 2.5 Note the report will be updated for Council on Wednesday 17th July 2024 with the related Executive responses to the Scrutiny recommendations.

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### **Housing Resident Engagement Strategy for Croydon 2024-29**

The Executive Mayor introduced the strategy which sets out the long term goals to enhance resident engagement and resident influence over service delivery developed in collaboration with residents who took part in an extensive consultation process.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale extended a warm welcome to guest speaker Mr Leslie Parry (Vice-Chair Tenant & Leaseholder Panel). Assurances were provided to Cabinet that the Housing Team will continue to identify and address barriers to engagement and are committed to working with data collected. Cabinet noted that there will be an ongoing focus on developing resident engagement events, improving accessibility and providing flexible opportunities for involvement.

Mr Leslie Parry (Vice-Chair Tenant & Leaseholder Panel) presented Cabinet with the changes needed in the structure for resident engagement, and how the proposed recommendations would be achieved. Mr Leslie Parry shared that a report has been produced for a new structure for resident engagement. The design group are currently conducting impact assessments of every existing panel, do they work? The recommended structure will then include governance and go to Scrutiny and Decision Makers. The intention is to create a board or a group with senior managers and residents. Data will be key. Lastly, Cabinet were advised that communication, the lived experience of residents will be crucial to improving the housing service.

The Executive Mayor thanked Mr Leslie Parry (and other residents) for his time and input.

The Corporate Director of Homes, Susmita Sen added that the Framework Strategy is a major step forward and goes a long way to meeting the new accountability standards as the report is a co-production piece. Additionally, resident engagement is everyone's job and would like to encourage more residents to get involved at any opportunity.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Chrishni Reshekaron, asked what actions were being considered for a specific or tailored approach to target those groups whose voices were not being heard at the moment?

The Director of Housing Management (Housing), Mary Larbie explained that in order to reach out to groups the council need to know what the groups are and where they live. Reaching out, meeting and finding out what is needed is starting to pay dividends. There is still a lot to be done, however, the more outcomes articulated the more people will get involved in shaping the services.

The Executive Mayor noted that Croydon Council are already trying to approach those groups that are harder to reach and will continue to listen to residents.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.1 Consider the feedback received via the engagement and consultation process as detailed in Appendix 2.
- 2.2 Consider the feedback received from the Homes Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd October 2023 and feedback from the Homes Scrutiny Committee held on 9th July 2024 and executive response (Appendix 5).
- 2.3 Consider the Equalities Impact Assessment detailed in Appendix 3 and
- 2.4 Agree the Residents Engagement Strategy 2024- 2029 as detailed in Appendix 1
- 2.5 Agree to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Housing to make minor amendments to the Strategy in consultation with the Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes following agreement by the Executive Mayor but prior to its recommendation and adoption by Full Council.
- 2.6 Agree to recommend to Full Council, the adoption of the Resident Engagement Strategy 2024 to 2029, Appendix 1 to this report, incorporating any amendment/s to the agreed scrutiny recommendations.

## Update on Housing Needs and Homelessness Transformation

The Executive Mayor introduced the progress report on Housing Needs and Homelessness Transformation citing key milestones achieved so far.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale informed Cabinet of the key highlights within the report. Cabinet noted that Housing appreciates the feedback and interactions with partners and are keen to continue working closely with them developing a service which best meets their client's needs. A Homelessness Prevention Partnership board is being established to formalise a framework for constructive engagement with key partners. Thanks was extended to the dedicated housing officers for their fantastic work.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Chrisdni Reshekaron welcomed the report and also thanked the officers for their hard work improving the council housing services remarking that it is good to see the progress made so far. A question was raised on what was being done to ensure that the training provided also enables officers to respond to the specific needs of residents and to improve the culture within the housing services.

The Executive Mayor responded that the amount of work that has gone into rebuilding the service across all the elements of housing has been immense, and the fears raised are understood..

The Corporate Director of Homes, Susmita Sen added expectations had been set and standards raised. Policies and processes were being looked at with an extensive programme around culture change, but it will take time to achieve.

The Director of Housing, Homelessness Prevention & Accommodation, Beatrice Cingtho-Taylor gave reassurance to Cabinet that the training is comprehensive and positive feedback had been received from staff who have taken the training. Cabinet noted that in terms of the culture change there has been a noticeable shift there too.

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- 2.2 To note the progress to date of the delivery of the transformation projects within the Housing Needs and Homelessness division of the Housing directorate.

The meeting ended at 7.56 pm

