

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

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CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING Councillor Alisa Flemming		
CQ059-18	Pelling, A	Stoptober and Young People
PQ036-18	Rob Elliott	Children Services Improvements
CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES, REGENERATION AND PLANNING Councillor Alison Butler		
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CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN GREEN CROYDON Councillor Stuart Collins		
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QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

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CQ060-18	Pelling, A	Suicide Prevention Strategy

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Philip Thomas

Councillor Tony Newman

Question No. CQ070-18

I understand that the Chief Executive is attending the MIPIM's junket [your words in the past] in Cannes.

With all the problems facing this Council like failing services [Children's Services to name 1] a Council in a Financial mess and our streets piled up with litter and fly tipping wouldn't her time be better spent sorting these problems out?

What are the benefits of this junket and give me 3 examples of how the Borough has benefited by staff going to the South of France in the last 4 years?

Reply

Can I wish you a peaceful retirement and good luck in any future role.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Michael Neal

Councillor Hamida Ali

Question No. CQ020-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'We will make spitting and urinating in public places punishable with on-the-spot fixed penalty notices'. How many FPNs have been issued for this?

Reply

Urinating in public – FPNs issued since April 2014 56

Spitting in public – FPNs issued since April 2014 82

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Andrew Pelling

Councillor Alisa Flemming

Question No. CQ059-18

I ask a question on behalf of a mother living in Waddon ward's Duppas Hill locality.

Is there a possibility that the Council could encourage schools to run campaigns during Stoptober to discourage school gate smoking with perhaps children designing posters to limit a behaviour that pollutes young lungs and that presents smoking as a norm?

Reply

The Council, through the Healthy Schools Team in conjunction with Public Health, will be happy to encourage schools to engage with this initiative during Stoptober.

Schools deliver health-related messages about smoking as part of the National Curriculum for science, and PSHE content on things like confidence, resisting peer pressure and making good decisions also supports the topic.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Rob Elliott

Councillor Alisa Flemming

Question No. PQ036-18

Would the Cabinet Member please detail the key improvements that have been achieved in Children's Services since the Ofsted report in September 2017 and would she join me in paying tribute to the hard work by the social workers in achieving these improvements?

Reply

Progress across the Children's Improvement Programme

- A multi-agency Children's Improvement Board, with an experienced independent chair, was established in September 2017 to hold to council to account for delivering improvements. The board meets monthly and has representation from cabinet and opposition members.
- A comprehensive Improvement Plan for was developed in October 2017 and was agreed by cabinet in November 2017 and submitted to Ofsted and the DfE in December 2017. The plan is currently being delivered and progress is reported monthly to the Children's Improvement Board.
- An additional £10.9m has been added to the budget of Children's Services for 2018/19 to consolidate and extend the £3.9m invested on improvement in 17/18. A significant amount of has been invested in more frontline staff.
- A strengths-based social work practice model (Strengthening Families) has been agreed in collaboration with staff, training in the new model rolled out to over 350 staff and will be introduced to partners (e.g. schools an health) in April.
- A single point of contact for referrals into Children's Services was launched on 5th March, bringing together MASH and Early Help to create a single front door.

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- The first phase of work to develop a comprehensive Early Help Offer for children and young people in Croydon has concluded and a Multi-agency Task and Finish Group, Chaired by the Executive Director People (DCS) has been set up to agree a shared definition of Early Help and how it should be delivered across the partnership. The Early Help Strategy is due to be launched in June 2018.
- A programme of performance sessions led by the Executive Director of People (DCS) and Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help to increase challenge and scrutiny of team and service performance and increasing the line of sight to the front line.
- An intensive peer support relationship with 'good' borough Camden has begun, and staff from Camden have started to support us to deliver on key priorities in plan (e.g. Quality Assurance and the Early Help Offer) to improve practice at pace.
- Developing a skilled and stable workforce remains a significant challenge and efforts to attract experienced social workers and team managers have had minimal impact to date and this will be a priority.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Luke Clancy

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. CQ033-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'We will look to establish a not-for-profit lettings agency that works for all Croydon residents'. Did you do that?

Reply

Thank you for your concern about whether Lettings Agencies work for the best benefit of their tenants.

We have been undertaking a detailed feasibility study and modelling for a Social Lettings Agency, learning from the successes and pitfalls of existing Social Letting Agencies. We have just commenced a 12 month pilot to test out a new delivery model; combining procuring accommodation at local housing allowance levels, with providing tenancy training, support with moves into new homes, support with deposits and rent in advance, and tenancy sustainment activities for both tenants and landlords for sustainable outcomes. Initially we will be selecting customers at various points of housing crisis through to homeless customers living in emergency accommodation, who will help us to test our social lettings model. The outcomes from the pilot will then be assessed to confirm if a suitable model should be offered to the wider Croydon community.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Andrew Pelling

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. CQ061-18

The Deputy Leader must take some satisfaction in seeing the government recognising the merits of regulation of the PRS in its taking rather modest steps towards increased HMO landlord registration and regulation.

What have been the top ten successes of the selective landlord licensing scheme in Croydon?

Reply

I am very pleased that the government now seems to be taking steps to increase regulation relating to HMOs, although I do feel that a lot more could be done to ensure that local authorities have adequate powers to regulate all private rented properties and landlords.

Croydon's selective licensing scheme is proving to be very effective and the main reason for this is that it is borough-wide and therefore applies to all our privately rented properties. Our successes include:

- We have been able to increase the number of staff in the housing enforcement team by 15 – unprecedented in this time of financial austerity – which means that we have the resources not only to respond to complaints from tenants but to proactively inspect properties to ensure that private tenants have good living conditions.
- Ensuring that all relevant properties have a current gas safe certificate before an application can be made – it very quickly became apparent that a significant number of landlords did not have the required certificate, despite it being a legal requirement, and this has been addressed by the scheme.

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- We have identified landlords who do not reside in the UK and they have been required to appoint local managing agents, ensuring that their tenants have a local point of contact to report any issues to. Often tenants are not fully aware of who their landlord is or who should be managing their property
- We have identified landlords who are deemed to be 'not fit and proper' to manage properties and again these have been required to appoint managing agents or sell their properties, meaning that the worst 'rogue landlords' cannot operate in Croydon.
- Although HMO licensing has been in operation for many years, despite our best efforts, we were aware that some HMO landlords did not come forward to licence – having a scheme where every privately rented property is required to be licensed has led to a significant number of higher-risk HMOs being identified, inspected, and brought up to the required standards for amenity provision and fire safety.
- The selective licensing database and increased activity in visiting privately rented properties has enabled us to better identify issues and get landlords to take more responsibility for dealing with a variety of things including anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and untidy front gardens, leading to significant improvements to the look and feel of the borough.
- We have served over 660 improvement notices to improve housing conditions for our residents
- We have taken action to prohibit the occupation of unsuitable accommodation by serving 18 prohibition orders.
- We have an extensive data base of information about privately rented properties and landlords which enables us to target proactive work to relevant areas. This has also enabled neighbours, with concerns to contact landlords, managing agents.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

- We have dealt with many cases where landlords have failed to apply for a licence and have the resources to follow these cases through to ensure that rogue landlords who were not prepared to licence have had to comply, and their properties have been inspected and enforcement action taken to ensure they are brought up to standard.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Andrew Pelling

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. CQ062-18

On behalf of a local authority tenant in The Waldrons locality of Waddon ward I pose the following public question:

Please detail the number of households bidding whilst in permanent council housing who have been successful in such bidding under the Croydon Choice choice based lettings system.

Reply

For the current financial year so far, April 17 – February 2018, a total of 224 tenants have been rehoused. A further 105 were assisted to move through exchange of tenancies.

Since go live of Croydon Choice (22 May 17) to end of February 2018, 42 of the 241 successful lets were made to council tenants. This is about 17%

For the same period, 173 tenants are registered as bidding once or more (i.e. actively bidding).

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Andrew Pelling

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. CQ068-18

Tory austerity has hit London Borough planning departments with negative impacts upon economic growth.

Please:

- a) detail the average number of staff employed in the council's planning team in each financial year since 2010-11,
- b) the expenditure for the planning department in each financial year since 2010-11 adjusted to an RPI base of April 2010 prices,
- c) the ever increasing number of applications dealt with by the planning team in each financial year since 2010-11.

Reply

- a) detail the average number of staff employed in the council's planning team in each financial year since 2010-11:
 - 2010-2011 – 68.67 FTE
 - 2011-2012 – 66 FTE
 - 2012-2013 – 64.73 FTE
 - 2013-2014 – 60.67 FTE
 - 2014-2015 – 62.20 FTE
 - 2015-2016 – 62.88 FTE
 - 2016-2017 - 59.93 FTE
 - 2017-2018 – 58.33 FTE
- b) the expenditure for the planning department in each financial year since 2010-11 adjusted to an RPI base of April 2010 prices
 - 2010-2011 – £3.125 m
 - 2011-2012 – £3.118 m
 - 2012-2013 – £2,838 m
 - 2013-2014 – £2.530 m
 - 2014-2015 – £2.572 m

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- 2015-2016 – £2.768 m
- 2016-2017 – £2.917 m
- 2017-2018 – £2.746 m

c) the ever increasing number of applications dealt with by the planning team in each financial year since 2010-11.

- 2010-2011 – 3649
- 2011-2012 – 3193
- 2012-2013 – 3156
- 2013-2014 – 3812
- 2014-2015 – 4317
- 2015-2016 – 4767
- 2016-2017 – 5410
- 2017-2018 – 5214

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Alan Corline

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. PQ019-18

What steps are being taken to stop sub-letting of council properties and does the council have any figures to show the public that these checks are taking place and penalties are being strictly enforced for non-compliance.

Reply

Croydon Council's tenancy team carries out regular occupancy checks of all Council social housing properties. We carry out occupancy checks to an average of over 1,500 tenancies each year. If there are any signs of sub-letting, cases are referred to the Council's Corporate Anti-Fraud team (CAFT) for investigation. This includes multiple home visits, interviews, Experian checks, serving of notices, surveillance and evidence building.

If evidence of sub-letting is found, cases are then referred for enforcement action. This involves legal referral for possession action on the grounds of illegal sub-letting and tenancy fraud. Tenancy and CAFT officers attend court to give evidence and, if an Order of Possession is given by the Judge, an eviction warrant is then requested under the terms of the Order.

We also carry out regular campaigns to raise awareness of tenancy fraud and encourage local residents to report any information regarding illegal sub-letting. There is a dedicated hot-line for reporting and frequent articles in the press and Open House newsletter for our tenants and leaseholders.

We work with other social housing providers as members of the Tenancy Fraud Forum, which brings together the appropriate staff from local authorities and the social housing providers to network and share best practice in dealing with issues such as enforcement and anti-social behaviour.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

In last couple of years the Council has recovered 32 properties that had previously been sub-let and the Council's work has been featured last year in the BBC tv programme Council House Crackdown.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0957x0c/council-house-crackdown-series-3-episode-6>

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Helen Redfern

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. PQ024-18

Will the Council clarify, with documentary evidence, the ownership of the plots of land in Montpelier Road and Kingsdown Avenue that are to be developed by Brick by Brick? If the land is now owned by Brick by Brick, will the Council explain, with documentary evidence, from whom the land was transferred, together with confirmation that this entity had the legal right to transfer ownership?

Reply

The land at Montpelier Road and Kingsdown Avenue to be developed by Brick by Brick is owned by the London Borough of Croydon. The ownership of the development site was substantiated by a set of title reports provided by external lawyers in the course of preparing the land for sale to Brick by Brick. The land has not yet transferred to Brick by Brick but will do so in due course under the terms of a legal agreement under which Brick by Brick has the option to purchase the property (as referred to in the Cabinet Report dated 20 June 2016). A best consideration land valuation was undertaken for the sale, and the Council has a further safeguard in place that ensures that any increase in the value of the land once the development is complete will also be returned to the Council.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Ron West

Councillor Alison Butler

Question No. PQ027-18

In the vicinity of Secondary schools (particularly in PTAL 1b and 2 areas) is it not best to have blocks of apartments with 3 or 4 beds to suit families with full size teenagers instead of blocks of many tiny 1 or 2 bed flats for transient commuters?

Reply

The new Croydon Local Plan recognises the importance of providing a range of housing types to create mixed and sustainable communities. In suburban areas with Ptals of 0-3 there is a policy requirement to seek 70% of new homes on sites of more than 10 dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms. However, this has to be tempered with recognition that the development market will take time to adjust to this policy requirement and over the first three years of the Plan, if a viability assessment demonstrates that the delivery of larger family homes is challenging, then 2 bed four person dwellings will be acceptable. In central areas with Ptals of 4, 5 and 6 the requirement for family homes is much lower, ranging from 5-20% depending on location. Each development though will be determined on its merits and in each case, viability, size and configuration and other site constraints such as trees, flooding, heritage etc. will influence the eventual site proposals.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Donald Ekehomen

Councillor Stuart Collins

Question No. PQ011-18

Why did it take 17 working days after reporting and intervention of the local conservative team via social media ,to remove a dangerous and hazardous trolley bin with two bad wheels filled with refuse at the top of a slope (at Raglan Court) , especially when the council contractor had visited the location twice?

Reply

I would like to thank Donald Ekehomen for his question, I would also like to apologise to Mr Ekehomen for the unacceptable delay in dealing with this bin, someone had put a considerable amount of builders waste in the bin along with the remaining builders bags being dumped around it which meant it could not be lifted and Veolia had to empty it by hand and remove. Officers have since been to this address to check if there is adequate recycling and refuse facilities at this site.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Jeet Bains

Councillor Stuart King

Question No. CQ038-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'We will fight for an extended tram system'. Are there any tram extensions committed to in Labour Mayor Khan's transport plans?

Reply

The Mayor's Transport Strategy commits to upgrading the tram network to extend its capacity by 85 per cent to/from Croydon by 2030. The council is working hard with TfL to deliver the most important of all the tram extensions, namely a second loop line within the Town Centre. Without it, the capacity of the network cannot be grown further to any significant degree. The 'Dingwall Loop' will therefore deliver:

- an increase in tram frequency and reliability as some trams from the east are able to return east more quickly.
- the capacity limitations of the existing loop line being overcome.
- a new stop in Lansdowne Road to support a redeveloped Whitgift Centre and East Croydon interchange.
- greatly improved public realm in Dingwall Road.

The Whitgift Centre still contains a life size picture of ex-Mayor Boris Johnson pointing at a tram showing Crystal Palace as its destination. It serves as a helpful reminder that the former Mayor failed to deliver on either of his two election promises to extend the tram to Crystal Palace. In contrast, this administration has and will continue to work with TfL to greatly improve the connectivity between the Croydon Town Centre and Crystal Palace, including current ongoing work to improve bus and train connections.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Vidhi Mohan

Councillor Stuart King

Question No. CQ058-18

In your 2014 manifesto you promised to “fight for an extended tram system”. Now that Sadiq Khan has been Mayor of London for nearly 2 years, please tell me what progress has been made in taking forward plans to extend the tram system to Crystal Palace and Sutton, as promised by you in your manifesto.

Reply

The Mayor’s Transport Strategy commits to upgrading the tram network to extend its capacity by 85 per cent to/from Croydon by 2030. The council is working hard with TfL to deliver the most important of all the tram extensions, namely a second loop line within the Town Centre. Without it, the capacity of the network cannot be grown further to any significant degree. The ‘Dingwall Loop’ will therefore deliver:

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- the capacity limitations of the existing loop line being overcome.
- a new stop in Lansdowne Road to support a redeveloped Whitgift Centre and East Croydon interchange.
- greatly improved public realm in Dingwall Road.

The Mayor of London’s Transport Strategy confirms the route to Sutton as a proposed tram extension.

The Whitgift Centre still contains a life size picture of ex-Mayor Boris Johnson pointing at a tram showing Crystal Palace as its destination. It serves as a helpful reminder that the former Mayor failed to deliver on either of his two election promises to extend the tram to Crystal Palace. I

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

In contrast, this administration has and will continue to work with TfL to greatly improve the connectivity between the Croydon Town Centre and Crystal Palace, including current ongoing work to improve bus and train connections.

PQ037-18 from Alan Moody

Councillor Stuart King

Can the closure of part of the High Street be reversed as it disadvantages elderly and disabled people using buses which are diverted.

Reply

The closure of part of the High Street was made through an experimental traffic order which permits the closure for twelve months and it is now approximately six months into this period.

The aim of the closure was to reduce through traffic in the High Street and allow for more activities and events to be held in the heart of the town centre. Over the coming months, as the weather improves, the High Street will be used to host a wide range of activities during the day and evening.

The vast majority of services are now unaffected by the closure as new bus stops and stands have been identified and a minor diversion through St. Georges Walk allows services to continue through the area. New locations for bus stands are also being considered which will help to reduce any outstanding issues.

The Council will continue to work with TfL and the mobility and public transport forums to address any issues or concerns that exist whilst considering their views alongside those from local residents and businesses in deciding whether to reverse or make the closure permanent at the end of the experimental phase.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Mario Creatura

Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

Question No. CQ028-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'We will take steps to encourage owners of empty offices to bring the buildings back into productive use'. How many buildings have you brought back into productive use, other than residential use?

Reply

Croydon Council offers a dedicated inward investment and business support service helping companies to establish, relocate or grow in Croydon. The Croydon Urban Edge concierge package provides a dedicated, customer-focused Business Account Manager to facilitate companies to relocate and expand their businesses in Croydon and supports their search for new premises across the borough. Examples of office space brought back into productive use this mechanism include, the Body shop – Knolly's House, Superdrug – Sydenham Road and EDF Energy – Interchange.

Over recent years we have also supported creation of new business space providing funding to bring spaces back into productive use – these include TMRW Tech Hub, Business XChange and Boxpark. We have also brought back into use smaller spaces such as shops in Portland Road South Norwood, and have supported winner of the Good Evening Croydon competition open Croydon's first board game café Ludiquist. We have also worked with organisations such as the Lost Format Society to deliver meanwhile activities activating underused spaces such as the roof-top cinema. Our programme of space activation continues and we are actively working in the district centres to bring back into use spaces for community or business benefit.

We actively encourage businesses to take up underused space in the borough by offering packages of financial support – the Croydon offers the Croydon Enterprise Loan fund (CELF) as well as a broad business support package that supports the growth of businesses in the borough. In 2015 Croydon ran the "Rate Free for a Year Campaign" with funding from the GLA to specifically promote vacant office space in Croydon and

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attract new occupiers to the buildings. Outcomes of the campaign include:

- 32 company starts on the scheme (60% of the 32 companies originated from outside Croydon and the ratio of Office to Retail for the 32 companies is approximately 2:1, respectively)
- 1,140 gross jobs supported (created and safeguarded)
- Over 10% reduction in vacant floor space in the area

As a successor to this programme in December 2016, Croydon introduced a Local Discretionary Business Rates Relief policy designed specifically to reduce the amount of vacant office and commercial space in Croydon. A recent example of the success of this scheme is the arrival of Green Networks who secured 12months of rates relief for 30,000 sq. ft of office space at Renaissance, which has been vacant for nearly 18 months.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Mario Creatura

Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

Question No. CQ031-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'A Labour council will promote Changing Places standard toilets in all new large scale community facilities and seek to introduce a Community Toilet scheme'. How many Changing Places standard toilets have been introduced and where is the Community Toilet scheme operational?

Reply

The Council continues to promote Changing Places standard toilets in large scale community facilities and is taking the lead in including a changing places room in the New Addington Leisure Centre being delivered by the Council and within the Fairfield Halls Refurbishment.

The Council are also looking at community toilet schemes across the borough alongside the public toilets currently in operation.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Jeet Bains

Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

Question No. CQ037-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'We will make Croydon a connected 'Smart City'. Is Croydon now a 'connected Smart City'?

Reply

There are three main elements of progress to date:

1. Formation of a Smart City programme approved by Cabinet in December 2017
2. Dedicated resource and expertise brought in house to develop and deliver the Smart City programme
3. Working with partners and local companies on innovation, health, mobility, adult social care to identify and develop technology-enabled solutions for Croydon's citizens.

Building on the tremendous opportunities and interest generated by the Growth Zone programme, Croydon has embarked on its Smart City journey and in December 2017 an initial programme of actions was approved by Cabinet.

This was the result of a collaborative process, which started with:

- the allocation of resources and bringing in expertise in the field of smart city
- the setting up of a cross-organisational Smart City group in April 2017, which was tasked with the core mission of shaping Croydon's smart city approach and create the necessary step-change in the capacity for joined-up delivery and innovation.

Through engagement with stakeholders, benchmarking national, European and international smart city programmes and initiatives, and

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working closely with Croydon tech ecosystem including Croydon-based tech companies Connected Space, Croydon Tech Hub Tomorrow and members of the Sussex Innovation Centre, the Smart City group has defined a first set of priorities that will contribute to making Croydon a connected 'Smart City'.

Innovation, mobility, health and adult social care are amongst the key sectors that we are working on with our partners and stakeholders to identify the right technology solutions to improve service provisions and quality of life and wellbeing of citizens.

To deliver Croydon's stated ambition to become a world class digital and smart city, the Council's key priority is to improve its digital connectivity infrastructure across the borough:

- in particular the Council has been engaging with the major digital providers to encourage them to upgrade and further roll out of superfast / ultrafast connectivity to businesses and residents alike.

- The Council is also currently working with partners to secure government funding for the deployment of a full fibre network.

- A free public Wi-Fi project has been piloted for the last 2 years on Surrey Street- still live - and free Wi-Fi has been deployed to all libraries and several public buildings across the borough where services to citizens are being delivered (TBC).

The Council has also partnered with leading smart city and innovation organisations such as Government-funded Digital Catapult to deliver internet of things infrastructure and capacity-building for local businesses. The infrastructure was successfully installed in January 2018 and a programme of activities will be delivered in the coming months, in synergy with Croydon's Year of Business events.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Sue Bennett

Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

Question No. CQ050-18

In your 2014 manifesto you said 'Labour will work to rid our borough of payday loan companies which are causing great harm in our communities' how many such companies have you managed to drive from the borough'.

Reply

The Council is taking a two pronged approach to reducing payday lenders in the borough, we are using our Planning and Trading Standards powers to reduce the number of lenders in the borough and we also deliver a range of initiatives that support our residents to become financially independent.

Payday loan shops and betting offices now require planning permission and the Council looks critically at such uses from a town centre vitality and viability point of view as well as in terms of an over-concentration of such uses within a particular area. Trading Standards also work closely with the National Trading Standards Illegal Money Lending Team to combat loan sharks and lenders operating wide of the law. The work is intelligence led, relying on information supplied by members of the public and partner agencies. Since 2014, several illegal loan sharks have been investigated and prosecuted by the Illegal Money Lending Team. However no payday loan companies have been the subject of investigation due to no issues being reported to the team.

In addition to using these powers the Council also offers debt advice, employment support and also carry out work in the community to remove the need and reliance on payday loans. Since April 2017, People's Gateway has supported 227 residents into employment and 224 into work placements and work related training. The Council's job brokerage team, Croydon Works has supported 238 residents into work over the same period by offering them role specific training and one-to-one support.

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Welfare Rights carry out 20 surgeries a week around the Borough where they offer benefit maximisation appointments, appointment around debt and budgeting and also work in close partnership with third sector groups such as Christians against poverty, Citizens Advice Bureau, South West London Law Centre and other debt centres. In total from April 2017 to February 2018, they have seen 7,830 residents and helped maximize resident's benefits by £11,595,363.

The Council works with DWP to ensure access to benefit advances rather than payday loans and Personal Budgeting Officers have assisted 4,056 residents since April 2017 to ensure they receive Universal Credit, again reducing the need for pay day loans, as receiving the benefits they are entitled too. Housing also have 619 APAs (Alternative Payments Arrangements) in place, to ensure these customers rent are paid direct from Universal Credit, ensuring they do not get in rent arrears and again reducing the need for any residents to claim a pay day loan. Dedicated officers work direct with our 1,100 Benefit Cap customers, as these can often struggle to adapt to lower money and our experience shows these can often be the families that apply for loans and advances. We have supported 2,768 residents since April 2017 with discretionary payments, again this is to help with arrears, moving into properties and in crisis situations, again which will reduce residents having to obtain pay day loans.

We also support Croydon Credit Union – a responsible lender that reduces reliance on payday loan lenders, we work very closely side by side and below highlights the numbers around Credit Union take up:

- 5,136 Credit Union accounts of which 160 are jam jar accounts to assist residents with budgeting and paying rent.
- 1,260 loans in payment through Credit Union.
- Total Credit Union members now have savings in excess of £2.7m.
- Total Credit Union members have loans totalling over £2.1m.

The Council has also worked within the business community to reduce our residents' dependence on pay day loans. As a lasting result of the credit crunch, many businesses have still found it difficult to access the finance they need to grow.

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The Council has been actively tackling this market failure through its highly successful Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund (CELF), which provides loans of up to £5,000 for start-ups and up to £50,000 for established small businesses. By providing a loan fund whose objective is to create social value we are proactively addressing the issue of companies providing inadequate loan terms, supporting enterprise and encouraging fair growth for all. To date, the Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund has provided over 300 businesses with over £3.1M of loans in 23 out of 24 Croydon wards and created and/or safeguarded over 120 jobs per annum. Moreover, around one-third of these businesses are sole traders or new start-up businesses, who would be forced to seek alternative finance for pay-day loans due their inability to access mainstream finance.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Andrew Pelling

Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Question No. CQ011-18

With Croydon having been an important source of support for the suffragettes with work by, amongst others, Marion Holmes, Mary Pearson, Mrs. Dempsey and Muriel Matters, is the council marking the centenary of The Representation of People 1918 with both its first step to votes for women and its move away from a property based franchise for men?

Reply

We held workshops in in our Museum in early February with various groups to create banners for Croydon marking the anniversary. The Mayor paid a civic visit to the workshops to meet the volunteers involved.

Croydon will then be represented in March4Women on Sunday 4th March where we have been invited by Helen Pankhurst to feature our banners at this event in central London. We will also be displaying our banners at the Women's Network event at Boxpark on Wednesday 7th March here in Croydon.

We will also be taking part in the 100 Banner Gathering - Royal Albert Hall, 11am Thursday 8th of March where all our project partners, community workshop banner making participants and WI groups are invited for a photographic opportunity on the steps of the Royal Albert Hall (site of the suffrage rallies) followed by a panel discussion, exchange of banner making experiences and lunch!

Women had been campaigning for the vote since 1867 and Croydon was active in holding meetings and the Museum of Croydon Research room has information about many women and also men, including the ones mentioned in the question, who campaigned both peacefully as Suffragists and later as the more militant suffragettes.

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The Museum of Croydon will be holding workshops after Easter to research these and other women associated with the Suffrage movement which can be used to create an educational pack as well as contribute to any work on identifying possible sites for plaques in the borough. The Education packs will be offered to schools in time for any work on UK Parliament week in mid-November.

from Councillor Andy Stranack

Councillor Timothy Godfrey

Question No. CQ042-18

You said in your 2014 manifesto 'A Labour council will showcase the wealth of volunteer-led sports clubs, commercial sports providers and council-provided facilities through co-ordinated "open house" style weekends that encourage people to try out different sports or activities, or to volunteer in the running of them'. How many 'open house' weekends has the council promoted?

Reply

Over the last 4 years the Council have committed significant resources in developing and sustaining a strong Sport, Physical Activity and Leisure Offer in the borough.

The Council have invested £25million in a new leisure centre in New Addington, commissioned and launched a new leisure contract led by Better and continued to support a range of community-led initiatives such as Walking for Health, ping! table tennis and parkrun. Live Well Croydon (a £1.2million integrated behaviour change programme funded by public health) embedded within District Centres & Regeneration, launched in 2017 and is centred on addressing health inequalities via a range of healthy lifestyle behaviours including weight management, mental wellbeing and physical inactivity. The significant investment into district centres, public realm and Croydon parks and green spaces, provides a strong platform for residents to adopt and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

There have been a number of 'give-it-a-go' activities that have been offered to residents, facilitated by the leisure provider, sports clubs and/or community organisations. Activities and 'open house' weekends provided include:

- Open days across all Council-run leisure centres (a minimum 4 times a year), incentives such as 'bring a friend' & 'come try it' sessions, in addition to free swimming for under 17's and over 60's.

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- Monks Hill Sports Centre host Inclusive Open days (3-4 per annum) that provide residents with additional needs / disabilities the opportunity to try numerous different sports in a friendly and inclusive setting, with their carers having the opportunity to network and discover what provision is on offer for this audience in the borough.
- FreeSport initiative summer 2016 which saw 6 weeks' worth of FREE introductory athletics sessions for young people during the summer holidays. In partnership with Croydon Harriers the Council secured funding from the GLA to run introductory athletics sessions across the summer holidays. The club was inundated and increased memberships were the natural exit route.
- Croydon Sports Arena where Wheels for Wellbeing/ TFL have provided support to residents (who have additional needs) and wish to increase their confidence in cycling.
- A range of sporting activities including: Ping table tennis provision across the borough (approximately 22 tables available) and Archery- come and try sessions are available on a Sunday 1-3pm and facilitated by a local club.

QUESTIONS FOR CABINET MEMBERS

from Councillor Andrew Pelling

Councillor Louisa Woodley

Question No. CQ060-18

It is excellent that the Council is drafting a Suicide Prevention Strategy. Suicide is the top cause of death amongst males aged 20 to 49 in the UK.

Please could you advise how this good, important work on the Strategy is progressing?

Reply

The Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan for Croydon was developed in response to a national ambition of reducing by 10% the number of people taking their own lives in the next decade and to provide better support for those bereaved or affected by suicide. This work has been developed within a multi-agency group that includes a range of statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that the plan represents the collective priorities of local agencies and will have the biggest positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the people of Croydon.

During 2017, a Suicide and Self-Harm Data Group comprising partners from the council and other external agencies was established, and several meetings took place (i.e. between March and June) to draw on intelligence and develop data sharing protocols to inform the plan.

In addition, a Strategic Group bringing together partners from council and other external agencies was also established. This multi-agency partnership included officers from Croydon Council (e.g. Public Health, Adult and Children Social care, Gateway) and representatives from Croydon CCG, British Transport Police, National Rail, the Voluntary and Community Sector (including Samaritans, MIND), Croydon University Hospital, SLAM, and Metropolitan Police. Two workshops took place on 20 June and 5 September 2017 at the Croydon Conference Centre with the aim of discussing high level priorities, and developing and agreeing an action plan, thereby assuring the plan was inclusive, and informed and shaped by both professionals and the community.

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In December 2017, as the Cabinet Member for Families, Health and Social Care, I signed off the finalised strategy and action plan. There is now work ongoing with the Strategy, Data, and Implementation Groups to ensure a smooth implementation of the plan, including a strategic meeting in April to discuss next steps. The South West London STP team is also organising a workshop (expected in April) where the Croydon team will take part of to start planning potential SWL-wide work and discuss next steps on the collaborative approach to Suicide Prevention.