

For general release

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| REPORT TO: | Scrutiny and Overview Committee 30th April 2019 |
| SUBJECT: | Cabinet Member Question Time – Economy & Jobs |
| LEAD OFFICER: | Emma Lindsell – Director of Economic Growth |
| CABINET MEMBER: | Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed, Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs |
| PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING: | Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed, Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs |

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| ORIGIN OF ITEM: | This item has been identified by the Scrutiny Committee as an area of scrutiny. |
| BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE: | <p>To examine the health of the borough economy and to investigate the work being undertaken to further develop the borough's economy</p> <p>To provide an update on all areas of the Cabinet Member's portfolio, and map the progress made against our priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.</p> |

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

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

- **Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career**
This portfolio has a strong focus on supporting residents to prepare for, find and keep good jobs.
- **Business moves here and invests, our existing businesses grow**
The aim of this portfolio is to support sustainable economic growth that increases economic prosperity across Croydon. To increase the number of successful businesses and “good” jobs in the borough.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This document has been produced to support the Scrutiny & Overview Committee to explore the work being undertaken through the Economy & Jobs portfolio the central aim of which is to further develop the borough's economy, specifically focusing on:

- Skills and employment
- Business investment
- The Growth Zone
- Digital infrastructure

It is recognised that the areas listed above do not describe all of the efforts being made by the council or partners to make Croydon a good place for people to work, invest and innovate. Without success of other portfolio areas such as education; housing; community safety; public health and so on, new good jobs will not be generated and residents may struggle to benefit from the borough's economic growth.

1.2 Croydon's economy is experiencing strong growth in many sectors, such as transportation and storage (55%), construction (33%), education (29%) and information and communications (19%) both in terms of employment and business starts. However, worklessness, particularly among the young and the slow growth of household incomes remains a challenge.

1.3 The success of borough's economic strategy is threatened by a number of ongoing external challenges: uncertainty caused by Brexit; cuts in public spending; and structural changes in the economy caused by changes in spending habits which have impacted on Croydon's retail-dominated high streets.

1.4 Despite the challenging context we continue to pursue an extensive and ambitious programme of regeneration and investment in the metropolitan centre and across the borough. This is a large and varied brief which meets two areas of the **Corporate Plan Priorities 2018-2022:**

- Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career
- Business moves here and invests, our existing businesses grow

1.5 Policy in this area is also strongly influenced by policies and strategies produced by the two local LEPs: Coast 2 Capital (C2C) and the London LEP (LEAP) and by GLA policies such as 'Skills for Londoners'. Despite Croydon's gradual withdrawal from C2C, the borough remains a key influence on the success of that region's Local Industrial Strategy (Gatwick 360). London is currently developing a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and Croydon is playing a strong role in its development both directly and through the South London Partnership. The three key priorities Croydon can expect to see reflected in the final London LIS are the Brighton Mainline, A23 and the university proposition; these priorities read across from Croydon Economic Growth Strategy.

1.6 This report will give an overview of the economic context, explain how the council has worked on these priorities this year and intends to work on them next year.

2 Economic Context

- 2.1 According to the most recent data (2015 – 17) Croydon demonstrates positive growth in all sectors. Most notable is the growth in specialised construction and civil engineering which experienced 65% and 41% growth respectively in Gross Value Added. Much of this growth has been driven by both the increases in developments in the borough and also the growth of modular construction which increases efficiency and profit for developers.
- 2.2 There are a total of 14,675 VAT PAYE registered businesses in the borough and available data demonstrates an overall increase of 5.46% since 2015. Sectors which have grown include: transportation and storage (55%), construction (33%), education (29%) and information and communications (19%).
- 2.3 Specialised construction and information communications are demonstrating strong growth both in terms of employment and business starts. This is positive as it shows Croydon is steadily moving towards some of the higher growth / higher productivity sectors.
- 2.4 However, the borough is facing a number of challenges. The average gross weekly pay is increasing, but is not keeping pace with London and the UK, suggesting an ongoing issue with in-work poverty.
- 2.5 In addition, although the economic activity rate remains higher than the London rate of 78.5% in the period Oct 2017 - Sept 2018, it has fallen from 82.4% (Oct 2016-Sept 2017) to 79.1%.
- 2.6 The most recent data relating to worklessness rates is difficult to compare with other areas due to the impact of Universal Credit. However the data suggests that number of workless households increased in 2016 - 17 by 3%. Croydon does not have the highest rate of workless families however the borough has experienced a higher rate of increase when compared with London.

3 External Economic context

- 3.1 There are 26,000 residents in Croydon who were born in EU countries and many more who work in our economy and live elsewhere. Brexit has caused uncertainty among this population and their employers. Particular concerns in the business community lie in retail, hospitality, construction and health and social care, where EU citizens make up a large proportion of the work force.
- 3.2 Regardless of the type or timing of exit from the EU there has been an impact on the local economy. The run up to Brexit has resulted in a significant slowing down of investment from all types of businesses, including non-international businesses. This is mainly due to increased uncertainty and concerns that import prices are likely to rise leading to higher costs for goods and services. The scale of these increased costs are likely to be on a sliding scale with a managed Brexit yielding less impactful costs and a no-deal Brexit resulting in higher costs due to the need to negotiate lengthy Trade Preferential Agreements with numerous countries.
- 3.3 Ongoing Brexit uncertainty is causing businesses to divert money as they maintain their preparedness for a no-deal scenario. According to analysis by the ONS there was a surge in manufacturing output in March 2019. This was attributed to firms stockpiling in preparation for a no deal Brexit. The results of this are higher borrowing rates and a rise in the cost of storage.

- 3.4 Austerity has continued to threaten growth in the borough. Since the start of austerity in 2010 Croydon Council has lost 70% of funding from Central Government. At the same time the borough's population is growing and demand rising. The borough has an ageing population and demand for services is increasing due to welfare benefit reform, the freezing of working age benefits and real term reduction in people's wages.
- 3.5 Additionally public sector workers are impacted by austerity through pay freezes and potential job losses. The public sector is an important sector in the borough, employing 21.1% of the borough's working age population - higher than London and England. There has been 60% growth over the past 5 years (2012-2017) in the number of Government & Public Sector employees in Croydon. This is driven in part by the location of major government offices in the borough, including HMRC and Home Office.
- 3.6 An additional external threat to the borough's economic growth is the shift to online shopping and other changes in the retail sector. This is impacting all of the borough's high streets, but particularly the metropolitan centre, which has historically depended on retail. At the end of 2018 20% of all retail sales were online and this proportion is growing. This has led to challenges and Deloitte's Retail Trends 2019 report suggests, record levels of discounting, store closures, business failures and job losses are predicted for the year ahead.

4 Corporate Plan Area: Everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career

- 4.1 As the economic context suggests Croydon has an ongoing need to help residents to prepare for, find and keep good jobs. The past year (April 2018 - 19) has been a period of great activity in this area.
- 4.2 To address the issue of growing youth unemployment a new, more effective **work experience** offer at the council has been piloted during this year, with young people from many Croydon schools and colleges accessing work placements. A new Croydon Works based application process has meant that all young residents have fairer chance of accessing placements at the council, with places being offered to schools most in need. The centrally coordinated and organised nature of the programme ensures that all involved receive a high quality experience, with group employability training, a full picture of job roles in the council (including Apprenticeships) and an insight into the nature of local democracy. 28 placements will be offered to residents and school/college students in June/July 2019.
- 4.3 A **programme of events** has been held to raise awareness of job opportunities and support for job seekers, reaching thousands of residents:
- *ChooseDayTuesday*, a careers and apprenticeships day in March 2019, held at Croydon College. This day welcomed school/college students, businesses and parents to three consecutive events focused on learning about apprenticeships
 - *Croydon Health & Social Care Training and Recruitment* event in December 2018 in Thornton Heath. On this occasion over 100 residents sought information about jobs and training in the sector, with many receiving offers of interviews.

- *Apprenticeships Work* event showcasing many apprenticeship opportunities for residents.
- *Apprenticeship consultations*, talking with young people across the borough about why they might (or not) chose an apprenticeship.

4.4 Thousands of young people have also been supported in their preparation for the world of work in Croydon's schools and colleges by employers organised under the **EPiC** (Employment Pathways in Croydon) programme and in partnership with the Coast to Capital Enterprise Advisers programme.

4.5 EPiC is a service that connects schools and businesses to create employer engagement opportunities for young people. Good careers guidance is critical for young people to make informed decisions about their future. EPiC introduces businesses to schools and colleges through a range of Council, business and school led activities such as career fairs, work experience and employability workshops.

4.6 In 2018 EPiC worked directly with 29 businesses, 11 schools, and engaged 2,600 students. It also ran events including sector specific job fairs, CV workshops, mentoring, workplace visits and tours and interview support.

4.7 In the last year **889 residents were supported into work** or better jobs by employment services delivered by the council and 153 businesses have received free recruitment and taken on our residents.

4.8 **Croydon Works** is a job brokerage service, delivered by a partnership between Croydon Council, Croydon College and Jobcentre Plus, to provide a free to use recruitment service for local businesses and support for residents to access these vacancies. In addition to the office-based service in the Clocktower, Croydon Works offers training in libraries, such as CSCS Card training, and is part of the localities based model in Thornton Heath. This year Croydon Works has expanded the service it offers, and demand is still rising. In order to meet this demand the council has:

- Successfully bid for funding from the Construction Industry Training Board to provide a programme of support to increase representation amongst long term unemployed people and women in the construction sector
- Applied for two European Social Fund (ESF) projects:
 - Focusing on improving the position of residents in low paid and insecure jobs to reduce in work poverty
 - To support those furthest from employment to secure on the job training and work experience through an Intermediate Labour Market scheme.

In the next 12 months Croydon Works will continue to develop relationships with major developers, investors, employers and contractors to ensure that local residents secure work. This includes work with anchor employers such as the Hospital and care homes to support recruitment into health and social care.

4.9 **Gateway** projects include:

- Supported internship programme – supporting 8 young people this year. A supported internship is a study programme specifically aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who have a statement of special educational needs or an EHC plan, who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so. It is a combination of study at Croydon College and supported employment at Croydon Council.

- Transitions Officer role to work with our SEN schools to allow smoother pathways for their students and have achieved 39 outcomes of supporting SEN students into further education, employment or work placements.
- Endorsement of 'CR Zero 2020' which is an initiative to find new ways to help our rough sleepers. CR Zero 2020 is part of a European-wide initiative to end chronic rough sleeping across Europe by 2020. Croydon is one of the two Local Authority areas in London that are early adopters of the campaign in the UK. The collaborative approach delivers the campaign with several partner organisations including Crisis, Expert Link, Homeless Link and Thames Reach. CR Zero 2020 has engaged 100 local community volunteers to get to know every rough sleeper in Croydon by name, understand their needs and find out what they need for a sustainable route off the streets.
- Locality based working - operating services out of the Fieldway Family Centre since September 2017. They plan to operate out of Parchmore Methodist Church, Youth and Community Centre from May 2019. This will link up with services provided by the Gateways Welfare Rights team who already provide surgeries there.

4.10 Over the next year Gateway are planning to:

- Deliver more supported internships and supported apprenticeships to support people with disabilities into work;
- Seek funding through the Community fund for specific projects focusing on:
 - Single parents – this project is focused on benefit cap households and households affected by domestic violence, it will be delivered in partnership with Successful Mums
 - Care leavers
 - Securing employment in retail for those who have never worked or who are long-term unemployed and for disabled people
- Seek Flexible Support Funding to provide tailored employment pathway's, intensive employment work, early intervention, tailored to individual need, and 1:1 debt advice from a specialist debt officer, while assisting them to realise their housing, health, educational and employment aspirations.

4.11 This year has been a very successful for CALAT, Croydon's **Adult Education** Service. 3,360 learners have been upskilled in 650 courses at CALAT. Courses in ESOL, English, Maths, employability skills and many other essential skill areas are provided. While CALAT's offer serves a very broad purpose it makes an important contribution to the success of the economy by improving the skills of the workforce and those who are currently seeking work.

4.12 This year CALAT's apprenticeship offer has expanded to include Apprenticeship opportunities such as the Level 5 Departmental Manager and Level 3 Business Administration. CALAT are the council's main apprenticeship training provider, and a key provider to schools.

4.13 CALAT plays a critical role in supporting residents most in need of employment and training, for example:

- 63% of learners on Community Learning courses were from BAME backgrounds, compared with 45% (estimated) of residents in Croydon being

from BAME backgrounds.

- Overall female learners made up 78% of total learners
- 34% of learners having a learning disability or difficulty.
- 61% of learners on accredited courses were claiming means tested benefits and enrolled on courses to enter the workplace or develop their careers and earning potential. 1,056 of those learners were unemployed.
- 225 learners were allocated financial support towards the costs of their study via the discretionary learner support fund due to low incomes.
- 74% of all learners in 2017/18 were from areas of multiple deprivation.

4.14 A key priority for the council is helping local people and businesses benefit from the opportunities arising from development and as such it has recently strengthened its Section 106 policy in relation to employment, skills and local procurement. Outputs are dependent on the size of the development but as a guide they are based on the following minimum targets and obligations:

- 34% of the total jobs created by the construction phase to be filled by local residents
- 34% of the total jobs created in the end use phase to be filled by local residents
- All vacancies to be advertised via the council's job brokerage service, and any other agencies as stipulated by the council
- One work-based training opportunity or accredited apprenticeship provided to Croydon residents for every 10 construction workers during the construction of the development
- Provision of training opportunities and health and safety training for all staff based on site
- 20% of net construction budget to be procured within the London borough of Croydon
- Commitment to (sign up to or working towards) Good Employer Croydon
- All direct employees to be paid the London Living Wage
- Evidence of working with local education providers, schools and/or colleges to provide curriculum and career support such as work placements, careers events/talks and employability skills

4.15 While unemployment might be low for many groups it remains high for **disabled people and those with health conditions - Better Working Futures** aims to tackle this. Better Working Futures is delivered across the 5 South London Partnership (SLP) boroughs of Croydon, Merton, Sutton, Richmond and Kingston by Reed in Partnership who provide an integrated package of employment and wider support to people with disabilities and health conditions to support them into and help them remain in work.

4.16 Better Working Futures is resourced through the Work and Health Programme - funding devolved to the council from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) to flexibly commission services to meet specific local need for residents who have multiple and complex barriers to work. The council is accountable body for the

programme – the south London programme is one of the best performing in England.

4.17 From March 2018 to February 2019:

- there have been 820 referrals to the programme, against a profile of 755 (109% against profile).
- Of these referrals, 431 started on the programme, against a profile of 497 (87% against profile).
- 72 participants have started work so far.

4.18 The council's **apprenticeship programme** continues to go from strength to strength. 26 people have been employed by the council this year as apprentices in a variety of roles such as project management, cultural heritage and customer service. These opportunities respond to a business need to ensure a pipeline of talented people entering council roles – with training targeted towards specific roles, as well as creating a variety of entry level roles which are accessible to a range of residents. Additional apprentices will be recruited by the council between August and December 2019.

4.19 Croydon's real commitment to diversity in its apprenticeship programme was recognised in July, when we won an Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) award. Our entry focussed on the programme's equality objectives; designed to support people often with a barrier to employment into work. Our commitment to creating a range of positions across the organisation and the fresh energy apprentices have brought to the delivery of services was also of note. We were the only public sector winner of these awards.

4.20 The council also began offering apprenticeship opportunities to existing staff in a programme of professional development. This year 20 officers have begun programmes including project management, data analysis and business administration.

4.21 Apprenticeship activity will further increase over 2019 as the Council led Croydon Apprenticeship Academy starts to deliver. This will start with a project delivering **100 Apprentices in 100 days**. Providing support to businesses interested in recruiting apprentices and a strong offer to residents trying to access these roles. The project will secure 100 apprenticeship placements in employers across the borough and will match 100 residents into those placements - all within 100 days.

4.22 The vehicle to deliver the 100 in 100 campaign will be the newly formed **Croydon Apprenticeship Academy** – a partnership of Croydon's training providers and the council which will continue to deliver quality information and guidance to residents seeking to become apprentices and businesses looking to recruit. It will also make use of the council's unspent apprenticeship levy and will contribute up to 100% of the apprenticeship training costs for eligible small businesses in the borough.

4.23 In the past 12 months the journey towards expanding Croydon's higher education offer has picked up speed, culminating in the announcement in March of a partnership between the council and London South Bank University (LSBU). **Croydon Creative Campus** is a project which seeks to integrate learning, culture, innovation, design and flexible models of future living to make Croydon a 21st Century Sustainable City. Central to the concept is to promote Croydon's aspiration to bring a top quality national and international higher education offer to the borough – through it we have invited partners to discuss potential investment and partnership to create a higher learning campus across Croydon.

4.24 Attracting more university provision in Croydon, adding value to the work already underway at Croydon College will be to enable our residents to secure higher paid jobs in developing sectors; 65% of primary school students will access jobs that do not currently exist in the labour market. In the next 12 months the borough expects to see an expansion in HE provision at Croydon College, John Ruskin College (now merged with East Surrey), LSBU and other universities.

5 Corporate Plan Area: Business moves here and invests, our existing businesses grow

5.1 Bringing new jobs and businesses to the borough through inward investment and existing business growth is critical to ensuring Croydon's economy thrives. A number of strategies have been produced and presented to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee, such as the Evening & Night Time Economy Delivery Plan and the draft Economic Growth Strategy. Significant public consultation is planned for the Growth Zone projects and the public and business community are currently being consulted on the following:

- Economic Growth Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Evening & Night Time Economy Action Plan

5.2 Croydon's small and micro business community is thriving and full of energy, truly the engine of growth for the borough. According to 2018 data there are 14,640 micro, small and medium sized enterprises in the borough (fewer than 250 employees), 13,600 of whom are micro businesses (1-9 employees). This gives Croydon an amazing opportunity for growth and as such the council has developed a programme of support to enable their development.

5.3 Croydon's commitment to the success of SMEs was demonstrated in the '**Croydon Means Business**' campaign. In response to the findings in the 2017 **Small Business Commission** report, 2018 saw 158 events and activities take place, all with the purpose of celebrating, supporting and promoting Croydon's small businesses. This work was supported by the Croydon Business Network (a collaboration of 34 business support and membership organisations that work in Croydon). The year culminated in a very successful Economic Summit at Boxpark in February.

5.4 In the next 12 months the support programme continues with monthly finance clinics; the Social Enterprise Network regular meetings; and further work to support SMEs to access the supply chains of the council and its partners. The annual Economic Summit will take place in September 2019 in Fairfield Halls and will explore issues such as the gig economy, our high streets and the cultural and creative industries.

5.5 The Small Business Commission highlighted the need for more **affordable workspace** right across the borough. As with many London local authorities the pressure on employment land, caused by housing requirements and central government planning policies, such as permitted development rights allowing office to residential conversions, leads to increases in the cost of remaining office and workspace causing hardship for businesses. The Council has responded by supporting providers of workspace through business rate relief, including TMRW Tech Hub, Sussex Innovation Centre and the Business Exchange Hub.

5.6 Over the next 12 months and beyond the Council will be looking to ensure supportive planning policy in terms of the creation of more affordable workspace. The intention is to have a local plan which views affordable workspace in the same way as affordable housing. In addition we are looking to bring in external funding to support workspace projects in our district centres, such as the Strategic Infrastructure Pot (London wide pooled business rate topslice funding). These proposals will likely look to provide an innovative loan programme for operators, combined with business support, business rate exemptions and an inward investment support package.

5.7 The number of businesses with **Good Employer Charter** accreditation has continued to grow; reaching 72 by March 2019. These employers have all demonstrated that they:

- Use local businesses in their supply chains;
- Provide job opportunities to residents by using Croydon Works;
- Ensure employees are paid a fair wage (the London Living Wage, or they are working towards paying this);
- And promote best practice in equality and diversity, staff wellbeing and by ensuring environmental sustainability.

Accredited employers benefit from a programme of events, opportunities to highlight aspects of their work and networking opportunities.

5.8 The aim of the Charter is to increase the number of “good” jobs in the borough – those that enable our residents to achieve financial independence and move out of in-work poverty by encouraging our businesses and employers based in the borough to recruit well and to decently paid jobs with ethical working practices.

5.9 A key finding from the Small Business Commission is that access to affordable finance remains a barrier to small business start-up and growth. To address this the council operates **Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund (CELF)** which provides loans of up to £50,000 to Croydon residents and businesses. Feedback from businesses is positive, for example: “Without the Croydon Council’s, CELF loan fund, our growth would have been curtailed and we wouldn’t have been able to employ more people and expand our training facilities”. - Dean Slade, Slades of Surrey Ltd t/a Bluebird Care Croydon (Winner of ‘Business of the Year’ at the Croydon Business Awards 2018). “I wanted to thank Croydon Council for all their support in the weeks’ leading up to the Loan Panel meeting. I am absolutely thrilled with the result. This funding has provided a real opportunity to grow the business and I’m really grateful” - Nathalie Selvon-Bruce, Vanilla Chinchilla Ltd t/a Buttercup Bus.

5.10 This year Croydon’s **Evening and Night-time Economy Steering Group** was formed to investigate the challenges facing the Evening & Night Time Economy (ENTE) and to propose and lead actions to address them. The group is made up of strategic partners and operators in the ENTE including the Metropolitan Police, Croydon’s 3 BIDs, Croydon Culture Network, Shaking Hands, Fairfield Halls, Boxpark, Ludoquist and Pubwatch. The steering group have taken part in ENTE walks around the borough, commissioned a survey and contributed research findings and ideas for improvements. In addition, a Marketing & Communications sub-group has explored ways of collaborating on joint messaging and promotion of Croydon’s ENTE. An action plan has been devised and shared with this committee as a pre-decision report; it will go to cabinet in the Autumn following wide consultation. In the meantime the council and steering group members will pilot a joined up approach to marketing the summer

programme of events this year.

- 5.11 As part of wider efforts to support the ENTE we will shortly launch the **Croydon Curry Chef of the Year Award**. This will raise the profile of the restaurant sector in the borough, support our ENTE, and draw attention to a skills shortage area.
- 5.12 Following a recent review by Scrutiny & Overview Committee the council is planning more support for its **social enterprises and co-operatives** over the coming months. The baselining activity which took place to inform the Committee report showed there were no Croydon registered co-operatives. A further piece of research on the state of co-ops and community businesses in Croydon will take place later this year as part of a piece of work focused on Community Wealth Building.
- 5.13 In 2016/17 **Surrey Street market** recently underwent a £1.1 million refurbishment programme to help create a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly zone, making it a great destination for shopping and relaxing in the heart of Croydon. This has paved the way for a new and exciting opportunity for a regular Sunday market which was piloted in 2017/18. A provider for a more sustainable Sunday market is currently being commissioned and a regular Sunday offer is expected from to start in the next few months. In June Surrey Street will host an international market conference mobile workshop, which will focus on the innovation and investment that has taken place and the challenges still facing markets around the country.
- 5.14 A key area in which the council can support borough SMEs is through contracting and procurement. The council has placed **social value through procurement** at the heart of the procurement of tier 1 contracts, which includes asking for a commitment to using local suppliers in their contract delivery. For example FM Conway are committed to spending 40% of their supply chain spend with Croydon suppliers, and increasing this by 10% on an annual basis. The council is supporting all suppliers with their commitments in this area through a local business directory and meet-the-buyer events. In addition, this is a key demand of the Good Employer Charter accreditation.
- 5.15 This year the council has worked hard to increase the level of **international investment and trade** in the borough. The council maintains an active relationship with the Department for International Trade, and London & Partners who promote opportunities in Croydon to international investors and businesses. Croydon businesses are supported through the London & Partners Borough Growth Programme to access markets including international trade opportunities.
- 5.16 In addition Croydon is regularly represented at investment conferences and events including MIPIM and LREF (London Real Estate Forum) where Croydon showcased its £5.25 billion regeneration programme, including the Growth Zone and refurbishment of Fairfield Halls. Croydon as a place to invest is actively promoted through the Croydon Urban Edge brochure and website, and contributes to journal and trade articles to promote Croydon.
- 5.17 Four Chinese delegations have visited the borough since May 2018 and we expect these relationships to develop in 2019. For example Croydon Council hosted a high level delegation from one of China's regional governments on 28 August to promote economic links between the borough and the province of Henan. These international visits put Croydon on the map and enables the council to show off the scale of the borough's economic transformation beyond the national level.
- 5.18 The main way that we will attract commercial investment and business relocation and retention in the borough is to create places that people and businesses want to be. This involves working with developers and landowners to create attractive new spaces

and investing in infrastructure to unlock growth through the Growth Zone or other investment vehicles. The following paragraphs give examples of the range of activity delivered and planned through Growth Zone, the list is not exhaustive but highlights key areas of delivery.

GROWTH ZONE

- 5.19 **Growth Zone** programme has delivered a number of precursor projects in the last 12 months including the Croydon Arts Store; Ground Art installations; College Square installation; the College Road 'Street Park'; High Street pedestrianisation (including a series of installations such as Ground Art pieces, a parklet, light art trail, further greening and a cultural programme). The projects provided an important platform for collaborations, began to change patterns of behaviour and use of these places which are vital components of long term sustainable growth, regeneration and improving perceptions.
- 5.20 The **High Street** experimental order and cultural programme delivered in 18/19 were an important precursor laying the foundation for long term change. Over 400 interviews were conducted to enable the support for a permanent scheme to be measured. There were warm attitudes towards the interventions, 3 in 4 agreed it's made the High Street more vibrant and generally improved. Visitors specifically liked the ground art (77%), seating (75%) and events (79%). The initiative scored highly against the Healthy Street aspirations, creating an inviting space and supporting health and wellbeing. Overall there was a 3.6% rise in footfall compared to the same period in 2017. This was favourable compared to 5.6% drop in nearby North End for the same period. On event days the footfall increased by as much as 40%. Wimbledon screenings were attended by 6,500 people, with 96% rating the experience 4/5 stars.
- 5.21 In January 2019 an OJEU competitive procedure was launched in order to procure an outstanding designer to transform the space around **Fairfield Halls** into a truly world class, exemplary public space. Once implemented 'Fair Field' will be an important public space that will create a fantastic setting for the iconic Fairfield Halls and will be an exciting destination in its own right.
- 5.22 Design briefs for **Minster Green** and forecourt and **Thomas Turner path** were produced and consulted on. For the Minster the brief was to frame the regeneration of the area immediately around the Minster, and was a step towards creating a space that will raise the profile of Croydon's rich heritage within and outside the borough while catering for the existing and future local community. For Thomas Turner path, the brief set out how this key link between the retail core and the civic centre (and the future Town Hall Square) is to be improved to both encourage footfall but also create a pocket space.
- 5.23 Design options and feasibility study for the redevelopment **Clocktower** have been prepared, the intention is to create a truly flexible and modern cultural, creative and learning space to enhance core uses including CALAT, the museum, library and David Lean cinema and bring in new complementary activities both during the day and in the evening. The proposals included innovative designs for the main entrance area and a combined central reception space. Subject to approvals, improvement works will begin in the next 12 months.
- 5.24 A number of core **transport projects** are in the early stages of scheme development. A key component of the 2018/19 programme was focused on Croydon's project management input into schemes led by external partners - the Brighton Main Line

Upgrade Project (led by Network Rail) and two TfL- led projects: Transforming Fiveways and Tram Capacity Improvements. Certain project areas are at a more advanced stage, in particular the Cycle Programme and this has been the main focus of scheme delivery in 2018/19. Also Initial designs for West Croydon station were produced. The projects in the pipeline for the next 12 months include Wellesley Road crossing and Park Lane Gyratory.

- 5.25 A feasibility stage that commenced this financial year was to assess current and future demand, supply & displacement for **parking** as will be impacted by new developments and ensuring the on-going provision of a balanced and accessible parking arrangement in the Town Centre and surrounding areas. The aim was also to explore advancements in technology & how these may be used to make parking easier and more efficient to manage.
- 5.26 A particularly innovative element of the Growth Zone portfolio of work relates to **The Internet of Things** consists of devices or sensors that ‘talk’ to each other using connectivity. As part of Croydon's approach to becoming a smart city it aims to become a recognised Internet of Things test bed to develop innovative solutions for a wide range of purposes. The Council has established a Low Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN) for IoT development. The network is free to use for experimentation and prototyping of IoT solutions. The Council, in partnership with Digital Catapult, ran an IoT innovation challenge on measuring the impact of construction sites on air pollution to help collect relevant data and address this challenge in such a way as to minimise and mitigate the negative impact.
- 5.27 The Council was awarded a Department for Transport (DfT) grant of £80k to trial a new system and technology to preventatively identify roads defects and damages. For this project the Council and DfT worked with a local tech business using connected vehicle technology and machine learning to assess road quality and trigger alerts for early maintenance intervention. The solution is directly embedded in the Urban Data Platform developed for the Growth Zone. The pilot project was in recognition of DfT seeing Croydon as a supporting testbed for new ideas and innovation.
- 5.28 Smart City initiatives in the pipeline include a Connected Autonomous Vehicle pilot, overall upgrade of Croydon's CCTV network and open data.

CROYDON DIGITAL

- 5.29 Croydon's ambition is to become a world-class digital borough and leading destination for innovation, growth and individual opportunities. Already a fast growing sector in terms of enterprises and jobs, future success requires investment in world class infrastructure; a highly skilled workforce and collaborative working with and within the tech sector. This year we have demonstrated that we are serious about the borough's digital future by recruiting a new Chief Digital Officer – Neil Williams who has formed a digital team to cover three main areas:
- **Digital council:** Optimising how the council uses digital, data and technology to work efficiently, collaborate and innovate.
 - **Digital services:** Transforming the council's relationship with residents by providing online services so good that people prefer to use them.
 - **Digital borough:** Maximising opportunities for digital, data and tech to enhance the quality of life and economic growth in our borough.
- 5.30 The new team have already generated a huge amount of positive energy in the tech community by launching the Croydon Digital web site; consulting on the borough's first

Digital Strategy; beginning the process of multi-vendor delivery models for the council's IT purchasing and holding regular events for the tech industry.

5.31 Croydon Digital brings together the borough's tech community and acts as a borough noticeboard for tech news, business opportunities and jobs. Members of the borough's tech community post regular blogs and share information and jobs on this new web site. Croydon's Digital Strategy which spans our internal operations as a council, the services we provide to residents and cross-sector plans to make Croydon a more digital, smarter place, is currently undergoing a public consultation. Events have included:

- Networking drinks;
- Tech Stack Croydon;
- Cyber Security briefings
- Tech Tuesday, a drop-in at SINC for businesses looking for bespoke software packages to improve their businesses.
- Guidance on accessing government contracts.

5.32 The Croydon Corporate Plan 2018-2022 clearly sets out the council's objective to provide 'the best possible environment for businesses to sustain themselves and to further develop and grow', by 'ensuring excellent broadband is available to Croydon businesses'. **Digital connectivity** is a key focus and while Croydon is well positioned on superfast (speeds of 30Mbits/s) coverage with the latest 98.5% of postcodes having access to superfast connectivity, ultrafast (speeds of 300Mbits/s) coverage is only 5%, mainly residential, and there are still many areas in Croydon that still suffer from low connectivity or are "not spots" (with insufficient coverage). Our key challenge is therefore to match our digital infrastructure with our ambition.

5.33 We will improve digital connectivity across the borough by creating the conditions for, and enabling the provision of, digital connectivity infrastructure that is technically capable and future-proof. Crucially, and inline with our commitment to building community wealth, we are also determined that its deployment and operation contribute to Croydon's growth by using local businesses where possible.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Despite significant external pressures and uncertainty surrounding the Croydon and wider economy the aspiration, ambition and activity of the Council to ensure economic growth continues and meets the needs of our residents is clear. The wide ranging, cross council programme of activity demonstrates the clear strategic objectives from the corporate plan to ensure everybody has the opportunity to work and build their career and business moves here and invests.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny & Overview Recommendations & Actions

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Appendix 1: Scrutiny & Overview Recommendations & Actions

| SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION | DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING | ACCEPT/ REJECT RECOMMENDATIONS (inc. reasons for rejection) | IDENTIFIED OFFICER | ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (ie Action Plan) | DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK |
|---|--|---|--------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| <p><u>Croydon's Growth Zone's Proposed Five Year Public Realm Programme (12/9/17)</u></p> <p>The engagement programme be honest with the aims of the project and limitations to ensure people are aware of what can be achieved.</p> | <p>Place</p> <p>Councillor Shahul-Hameed</p> | Accept | Lee Parker | No | The principles have already been implemented and the engagement programme will include robust consultation on a scheme by scheme basis. | TBC |
| <p><u>Croydon's Growth Zone's Proposed Five Year Public Realm Programme (12/9/17)</u></p> <p>Future reports and engagement activities clearly communicate how the town centre would change from the Masterplan (2007/8) and into the future (2025).</p> | <p>Place</p> <p>Councillor Shahul-Hameed</p> | Accept | Lee Parker | No | Engagement activities will show how the town centre is likely to change and seek public opinion before schemes commence. This will include any changes from town centre masterplans where appropriate. | TBC |
| <p><u>Croydon's Growth Zone's Proposed Five Year Public Realm Programme (12/9/17)</u></p> <p>Those with disabilities are taken into consideration when designing schemes and consulting.</p> | <p>Place</p> <p>Councillor Shahul-Hameed</p> | Accept | Lee Parker | No | Croydon Mobility Forum and the Council's internal Disability Network will be fully involved and consulted as schemes are designed and progressed. | TBC |
| <p><u>Cooperation & Social Enterprise in Croydon (30/10/18)</u></p> <p>Recommend to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs that a comprehensive strategy is developed to set out how the Council will provide support for all forms of co-operatism and social enterprise.</p> | <p>Councillor Manju Shahul Hameed</p> <p>Place</p> | Accept | Emma Lindsell | TBC | Included as a priority in the emerging Economic Growth Strategy 2018 – December 2019 Comprehensive action plan to be developed in Q2 19/20 | Cabinet Member Question Time – April 2019 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|---------------------------|------------|---|---|
| <p><u>Housing in Croydon (6/11/18)</u> Recommend to Optivo, Caysh, CCHA and Thames reach to work extensively to encourage their contractors to pay staff the London Living Wage.</p> | <p>Councillor Manju Shahul Hameed</p> <p>Resources</p> | <p>Accept</p> | <p>Emma Lindsell</p> | <p>TBC</p> | <p>Presentation to be given to next RSL group meeting – 29.01.19 Individual engagement re. Good Employer Charter – Feb 2019 Member follow up if required – April 2019</p> | <p>Cabinet Member Question Time – April 2019</p> |
|---|--|---------------|---------------------------|------------|---|---|