

REPORT TO:	CABINET 10 JUNE 2019
SUBJECT:	STAGE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM SCRUTINY
LEAD OFFICERS:	JACQUELINE HARRIS BAKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES STEPHEN ROWAN, HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & SCRUTINY
LEAD MEMBER:	COUNCILLOR SEAN FITZSIMONS CHAIR, SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	THE CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT THAT CABINET RECEIVES RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND TO RESPOND TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE RECEIPT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations contained within this report:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.1 Receive the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee (30 April 2019) and to provide a substantive response within two months (i.e. at the next available Cabinet meeting on **8 July 2019**)

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Recommendations that have been received from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and its Sub-Committees since the last Cabinet meeting are provided in Appendix A. The constitution requires that an interim or full response is provided within 2 months of this Cabinet meeting.

3. 30 APRIL 2019 – SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee took the Question Time with the Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs, Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed. Subsequent to questions, the Committee came to the following conclusions:

- 1) The wide range of events and activities being organised within the Economy & Jobs Portfolio was to be welcomed.
- 2) There was significant concern that despite a wide range of events and activities being organised, there seemed to be little data to allow an assessment to be made on whether the outcomes from this work was having on a positive impact on the wider economy within the borough.
- 3) The Committee was concerned about the decline of Croydon as a major centre of employment compared to other parts of London and the South East over the last 20 years, and remained unconvinced that there was a wider strategy to reverse this decline.
- 4) The Committee agreed to add to its work programme for 2019/20 an item to focus specifically on the higher level, strategic themes relating to the creation of employment opportunities, the attractiveness of Croydon as a place for businesses to locate to, and the promotion of the economy in Croydon.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- 1) The Scrutiny and Overview Committee agreed to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs be invited to a meeting of the Committee in 2019/20 to discuss the strategic approach to job creation, business attraction, and the promotion of the economy in the borough as a place to do business in.
- 3.2 The Committee also considered the proposed new scope on the Digital Strategy. Subsequent to questions to those present, the Committee came to the following conclusions:
- 1) The Committee welcomed the enthusiasm of the representatives from the Croydon Digital Service team and felt that their engagement with the questions of the Committee was to be commended.
 - 2) The Committee were reassured that there was a genuine vision for the Digital Strategy.
 - 3) Although the Committee were reassured about the vision for the Digital Strategy, concern remained as to whether the wider culture of the organisation would hinder its delivery, as history has shown that previous improvements was slow to be delivered or were never achieved. As such it was concluded that it would be important to review

the progress of embedding the Digital Strategy within the Council in twelve months.

- 4) The Committee had concerns about the Council's current presence on social media and the useability of the council's current website, and agreed that the Digital Strategy should directly address the need for Croydon Digital Service to work with the Communications team to improve the performance in this area.
- 5) The committee was keen to know how this strategy would incorporate the council's commitments to openness and transparency, in particular its commitment to promotion of open data, and accessibility of information for both businesses and residents.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- 1) That the Digital Strategy should specifically reference how the Council's social media presence, including its website be improved.
- 2) To ensure that improvements are delivered the Strategy need to develop a work plan that can be monitored by the public and by Councillors, that have measurable outcomes, where progress against targets can be assessed.
- 3) The concepts of transparency and open data needs to be embedded within the new strategy, and the strategy needs to include how it will assess improvement of these concepts over time.
- 4) That the progress made on the Digital Strategy be reviewed by the Committee in twelve months.

4. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that the recommendations are presented to Cabinet in accordance with the Constitution.
- 5.2 This requires that the Scrutiny report is received and registered at this Cabinet Meeting and that a substantive response is provided within 2 months (i.e. **Cabinet, 8 July 2019** is the next available meeting).

Approved by Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation & Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Background document 1: Reports to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 30 April 2019.

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=1523&Ver=4>