

# Homes & Gateway Services

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Alison Butler

#### December 2019

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#### LATEST NEWS

#### **Croydon's statutory rough sleeper count – 28th November – 29th November 2019**

I would like to thank the many Croydon Council staff, Croydon Reach and other volunteers who took part in the annual rough sleeping count.

The Rough Sleeper Count is an annual statutory commitment to holding a large scale coordinated head count of those found bedding down on the streets. The event is held at the end of November each year by each London borough and all council across the country receiving MHCLG funding for rough sleeper response and prevention services. The count is held on the same night across London to avoid duplicate counting. The figures accrued from the rough sleeper count are used for national statistics, reconciliation of outcomes and funding streams and design of rough sleeper strategies both locally and nationally

The event is overseen by the Homeless Link who act as a moderator to ensure best practice.



Croydon's Gateway Service coordinate this event with a mixture of service providers across rough sleeper services as well as a large cohort of volunteers sourced internally. The volunteers attend a number of training sessions prior to the street count in order to be prepared for such event. In spite of increasing numbers of street homeless hitting Croydon's streets our statutory rough sleeper count has more than halved in the last three years due to a range of initiatives including Housing First, Rapid Rehousing Pathways and excellent partnership working across all sectors.

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Approximately 40 people in total searched the borough in multiple teams spread amongst designated routes, counting the total number of people bedded down. Croydon also carries out a bi-monthly street count as part of our rough sleeping initiative funding which operates on a similar principle to the annual count but with less volunteers.

If you want to know more or get involved in street counts or helping street homeless please contact [Rebeccah.clews@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Rebeccah.clews@croydon.gov.uk) or [Leo.fenn@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Leo.fenn@croydon.gov.uk)

#### **Somewhere Safe to stay assessment hub**

Following a successful funding bid by Croydon's Gateway Service, Croydon Council was granted £622,000 to develop and establish an innovative assessment hub.

Throughout November the somewhere safe to stay hub located in the north of the borough, mobilised through a soft launch for up to 8 rough sleepers whilst various processes were put into practice and capital works are completed. One half of the site remains closed until early December when the full launch of the hub will take place.

The council has commissioned Evolve to manage the assessment hub, which includes shared sleeping quarters, female-only shared bedrooms, a private room, a kitchen and a medical room. The hub will offer up to 15 people a bed for up to 72 hours and a same-day holistic assessment of their financial, health and housing circumstances.

Rough sleepers, or people about to sleep rough, are referred to the hub by the council's homelessness assessment team and partners including Croydon Reach and Crisis. They then receive help into settled accommodation and one-to-one help with their finances and job skills.

To refer rough sleepers, or for rough sleepers to self-refer, contact **StreetLink** by calling **0300 500 0914**, visiting their website or downloading their app on iOS or Android.

To help rough sleepers aged under 18, contact the council's emergency duty team at Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA or call the Metropolitan Police.

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#### **Crystal Palace FC re-opens its Selhurst Park extreme weather emergency shelter in partnership with Croydon Council**

Crystal Palace Football Club is re-opening its extreme weather emergency shelter for rough sleepers at Selhurst Park this winter in partnership with Croydon Council.

Whenever the overnight temperature is forecast to fall below freezing, the Glaziers lounge at Selhurst Park will be converted into a temporary overnight shelter for up to 10 rough sleepers, staffed by volunteers and specialists from the council's homelessness services. New arrivals are welcomed with a camp bed for the night, a hot evening meal, breakfast and washing facilities before the space is converted back for normal club use each morning.

Rough sleepers are given advice by staff from Croydon Council's Gateway homelessness prevention service and its specialist outreach support workers from Thames Reach, who will try to help them find long-term alternatives to rough sleeping. When Selhurst Park is unavailable because of home matches, and over the Christmas period, the council will continue to refer rough sleepers to other emergency shelters in Croydon and central London.

#### **Croydon Churches**

Croydon Churches Floating Shelters (CCFS) have operated in Croydon since 2004 and is entirely run by committed volunteers. The CCFS operate from November through to the end of March each year. The service is run by a number of churches across the borough on a rota basis. The churches provide 14 bed spaces every night in an effort to help street homeless people get off the streets.

The volunteers at the churches provide hot food, a bed for the night, breakfast and a packed lunch and also provide invaluable companionship and support in a caring environment.

Croydon's outreach services provided by Croydon Reach work with the rough sleepers and help them to access the shelters. Croydon's Gateway Service work closely with the outreach teams and the churches by assisting with the coordination of volunteers and providing support and services to our rough sleepers.

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#### Launch of Monks Hill Community Connect & The Food Stop



At the official launch on 22nd October 2019, St Francis's Church in Monks Hill was welcomed as the latest location to adopt the Community Connect / Food Stop model, a multi-agency approach which saves low-income families up to £700 a year on household bills.

Community Connect provides help to Croydon's most vulnerable residents and families, with Croydon Council's Gateway service delivering budgeting, debt, income maximisation support and help with employment support to boost training skills & job opportunities.

As part of Community Connect, residents can benefit from accessing The Food Stop which offers around £15 to £20 worth of fresh food and other groceries for £3.50 a week to those who are struggling financially, especially those affected by welfare reforms or those who are in debt.

Community Connect/Food Stop was first piloted at the Family Centre in New Addington and St Francis Church will add to the great success, by providing families in Monks Hill and the surrounding areas to access to the Food Stop and support of Community Connect.

#### Croydon ranked 2nd for tackling food poverty November 2019

Croydon has been ranked second among the top London councils for helping to lift families out of food poverty, jumping from eighth place last year in the annual [Beyond The Food Bank league table](#) – run by food charity Sustain the report measures actions the council can take to help support vulnerable residents and families who are at risk of food poverty.

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Croydon excelled this year through dedicated staff going above & beyond their normal duties to secure funding of more than £600,000 to tackle holiday hunger, supporting breastfeeding and weaning parents and creating innovative ways to encourage families to claim Healthy Start vouchers to purchase milk, fruit and veg to maximise struggling families income.



Further targeted work to eliminate food poverty was also commended including the [Food Stop](#), a community-led alliance helping residents to better manage their finances and offering them low-cost food. In addition the success of Croydon's seven food flagship schools and Croydon's SUGAR SMART campaign, which has a number of growing local food businesses signed up to the council's Eat Well Croydon scheme was also celebrated.

### Ground Source Heat Pump at Chertsey Crescent

The Council is piloting a low-carbon, ground-source heat pump system to reduce council tenants' bills while helping the environment. The heat pump being installed at a 10-storey block in New Addington will reduce carbon emissions, help improve air quality, and save up to £300 per home per year on more than 40 households' heating bills. The pump works by extracting the natural heat stored more than 200 metres beneath the ground, and then piping it into residents' homes.

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The block in Chertsey Crescent is the first Croydon Council building to get the technology, which will replace the existing electric storage heaters. As well as saving each home between £260 and £300 a year off residents' bills, the ground source heat pump is expected to cost the council less to maintain. The project aims to contribute towards a local carbon emissions reduction target – 34% by 2025 – set by the council as it declared a climate emergency this summer. The average night storage heater produces approximately 1,092kg of carbon dioxide per year, compared to the new system that produces around 396kg per year.

The £700,000 heating system will be funded through the council's ring-fenced housing budget and via energy credits from energy regulator Ofgem. Specialist Company Kensa expects to complete the works by spring 2020, which have been timed to coincide with an 18-month, £3.2 million refurbishment to the block including new insulation, a replacement roof and windows, landscaping and new parking.



#### Full Fibre Broadband to Social Housing

Full fibre broadband is to be delivered to our council homes. We are working with Community Fibre and Open Reach to bring up to 1Gb broadband speeds to residents across the borough. Community Fibre have started their infrastructure deployment in South Norwood at Sevenoaks and Tonbridge blocks and on the Regina Road Estate. They will next be surveying around South Norwood and Upper Norwood. Open Reach are currently surveying in Thornton Heath and we are expecting a detailed delivery programme very shortly. Through the delivery of the broadband there will also be the creation of local employment opportunities, apprenticeships, skills and training opportunities, as well as free Wi-Fi to a number of community sites across the borough.

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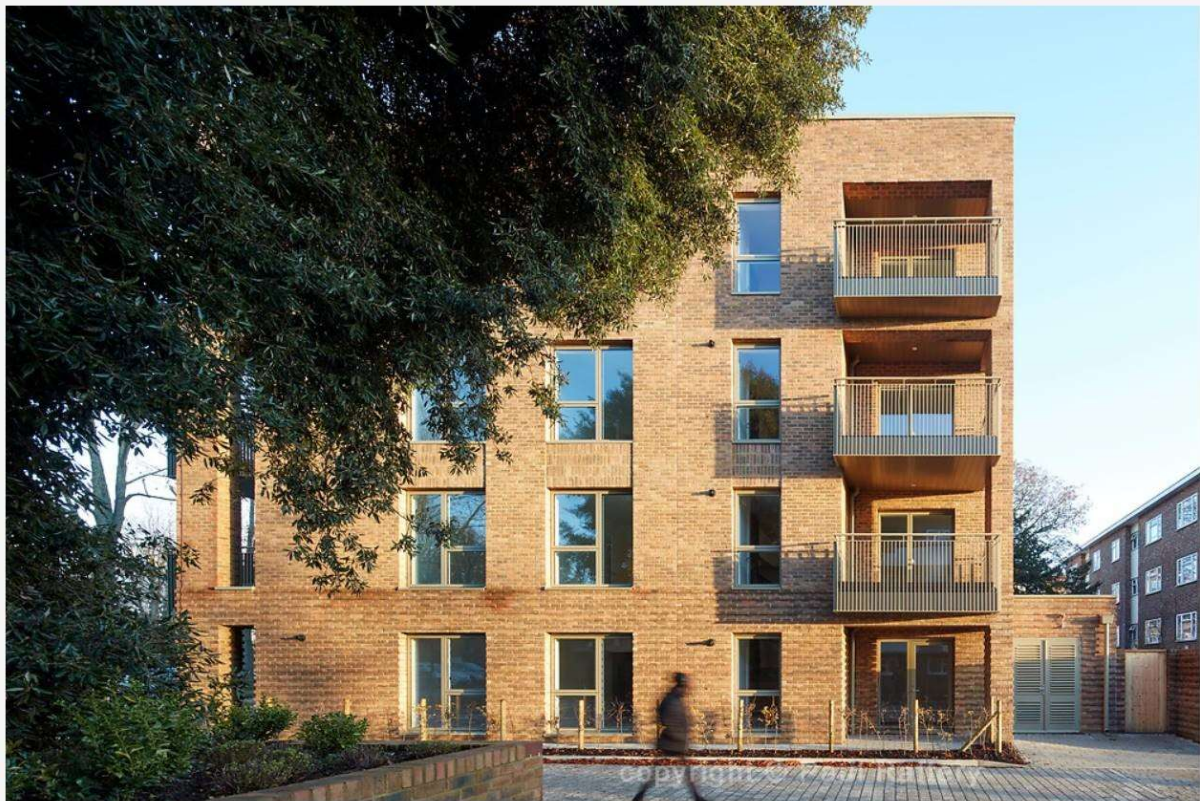
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#### Brick by Brick

Brick By Brick has started completions of its first schemes. The first official completions are at Auckland Rise & Sylvan Hill in Upper Norwood, with Flora Court in Thornton Heath coming soon after. The houses at Ravensdale & Rushden in Upper Norwood, and Windmill Place in Old Coulsdon, are almost 100% reserved and are also close to handover.



Between them, these schemes offer a mix of private sale, shared ownership, and affordable rent homes, with a significant proportion of reservations coming from residents of Croydon. It's especially exciting to report that our first new affordable rent tenants have been allocated new homes, and will be moving in before Christmas 2019.

Brick By Brick has started a series of public consultations on new sites across the borough, holding community events to share ideas before they go to planning in 2020. In New Addington and Fieldway a deeper level of resident involvement in the design process is being offered, with the aim of delivering homes that meet the needs of local residents even more closely. This is a joint initiative being trialled by Brick By

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Brick and Croydon Council, and the intention is to introduce the approach across the wider pipeline as it develops.

Brick By Brick have recently announced that they have been awarded £1.9m of additional funding from the GLA to help with the additional challenges that small sites present, which is great news for Croydon. This funding will help Brick By Brick progress with its ambitious pipeline of sites, delivering more well-designed homes for Croydon, and a return to its sole shareholder Croydon Council.

For more information on Brick by Brick projects see [www.wearebrickbybrick.com](http://www.wearebrickbybrick.com) or follow @brickbybrickldn on Twitter.