

**For general release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b> <b>4 February 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Guy van Dichele, Executive Director Health, Wellbeing &amp; Adults</b> <b>Julia Pitt, Director Gateway Services</b> <b>Yvonne Murray, Director Housing Assessment and Solutions</b> <b>Stephen Tate, Director Council Homes, Districts and Regeneration</b> <b>Steve Iles, Director – Public Realm</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Alison Butler, Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Councillor Alison Butler, Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services</b>
<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	This item has been identified by the Sub-Committee as an area of scrutiny
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the update on areas of the Cabinet Member's portfolio and consider if it wishes to make any recommendations.

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out a review of 2019/20, focussing on current issues and headlines, including any key decisions made in the last year. It also covers service budget issues, plus any future strategies and policies that will be worked on over the coming 12 months.
- 1.2 It provides a progress update and response to the conclusions and recommendations made at meetings concerning the areas of this portfolio: Brick by Brick, council housing stock, council estate regeneration, Croydon Affordable Homes, Fire Safety Board, Gateway Services and Access Croydon, Homelessness, Housing Needs and Assessment, Housing Allocations, Housing Strategy and Commissioning, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Landlords' Licensing Scheme and houses in multiple accommodation (HMOs), Private Sector Housing Standards and Enforcement, Social Lettings Agency, Taberner

House site, Temporary Accommodation and Tenancy and Caretaking Services, Welfare and Benefits Service.

## 2 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND TENSIONS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><b><i>New homes within great places</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brick by Brick – flexible commercial construction vehicle</li> <li>• Croydon Affordable Homes; avoids RTB</li> <li>• Local plan pipeline of sites for housing development</li> <li>• Relatively low land and property values attractive for development investment</li> <li>• Suburban housing design guide</li> <li>• Place planning and regeneration</li> <li>• Learning gained through first Community Led Housing (CLH) tender.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Good quality homes</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated high quality council housing stock asset management data: 99% Decent Homes compliant, sprinklers installed to high rise blocks.</li> <li>• Selective Licensing Scheme</li> <li>• Established empty homes programme</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Better access to homes and independent living</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holistic and collaborative Gateway approach</li> <li>• Development of Housing First model in Croydon</li> <li>• Re-procurement of social care dynamic purchasing system including supported living and supported housing</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>New homes within great places</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited regular liaison and partnership with RP sector</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Good quality homes</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small social housing stock (15% of total)</li> <li>• Housing stock borough-wide which does not meet current space, access or environmental efficiency/sustainability standards</li> <li>• Inability to capture full supported exempt accommodation funding limits options for supported housing development and procurement</li> <li>• Compulsory purchase and enforced sale policy re empty homes is very difficult and convoluted.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Better access to homes and independent living</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcrowding and under-occupation of homes, including council homes</li> <li>• Confusing multi-layered offer &amp; incentives for landlords letting property to LBC</li> <li>• Under-provision of accessible and adapted homes for residents with disabilities</li> <li>• Over-provision of residential care homes and under-provision of supported housing/living schemes</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	TENSIONS
<p><b><i>New homes within great places</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Plan Review</li> <li>• Borrowing cap removed from HRA</li> <li>• Community Led Housing (CLH), including co-operative housing and the use of the GLA's small sites initiative</li> <li>• Partnership with RPs – research, policy development, land-assembly and home-building</li> <li>• Major regeneration and development programmes</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>New homes within great places</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brexit – rising construction costs, departure of EEA workforce</li> <li>• Weak housing market reduces ability to cross-subsidise affordable housing</li> <li>• Population growth</li> <li>• Older people housing need (support, downsizing)</li> <li>• Growing numbers of care leavers requiring transitional support and housing</li> <li>• Ongoing losses of council homes to RTB</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLA grant funding, inc. for supported housing, and closer working with GLA on funding bids</li> <li>• Potential to develop a more comprehensive community engagement and resident involvement approach as part of planning for new housing development or regeneration</li> <li>• Ongoing infill development via BxB</li> <li>• Scope for further institutional investment and property purchases via CAH</li> <li>• Modern methods of construction</li> </ul> <p><b>Good quality homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Croydon Standard based on residents' priorities and contractor knowledge</li> <li>• Delivery of ground source heat pumps to provide efficient, zero-emission heating</li> <li>• Sustainability Commission: council commitment to sustainability</li> <li>• Renewal/expansion of selective landlord licensing in 2020</li> <li>• Article 4 direction for new small HMOs</li> <li>• Community Led Housing to bring empty homes back into use</li> </ul> <p><b>Better access to homes and independent living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationalise incentives and engagement with landlords for TA, forward plan procurement and reduce spot-purchasing</li> <li>• Expansion of Croydon Lettings</li> <li>• More strategic planning and policy for provision &amp; allocation of accessible homes</li> <li>• Capital letters London-wide collaboration for TA procurement</li> <li>• London Councils working group on pan-London hostel commissioning</li> <li>• Existing extra care schemes transferring to 'in house' management - potential to improve and rationalise provision</li> <li>• Opportunity to procure/acquire or develop new supported living and extra care homes</li> <li>• Develop more targeted approach to meet needs of downsizers, including high quality new homes for older people</li> <li>• New Gateway homeless support hub</li> <li>• Partnership with Crisis to end core homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities' concern over new development and opposition to new homes at a local level</li> </ul> <p><b>Good quality homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government limits range of renewed Selective Licensing Scheme, weakening the ability to tackle rogue landlords</li> <li>• Less national funding to improve energy efficiency of homes; 17,000 Croydon homes at risk of fuel poverty (2017)</li> <li>• Climate change and the need to improve housing fabric and fuel efficiency: council homes achieve an average energy rating of 68.77 (EPC rating D)</li> </ul> <p><b>Better access to homes and independent living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large volume of emergency and temporary accommodation/need</li> <li>• Ongoing impact of austerity on services preventing homelessness: hostels, housing support, mental health, drug, alcohol services.</li> <li>• Household benefit cap, benefit freeze till April 2020, Local Housing Allowance uncoupled from market rents, and universal credit</li> <li>• Competition for affordable market housing from other London boroughs seeking placements for their residents</li> <li>• Homelessness Reduction Act new burdens funding ends 2020</li> <li>• Build to rent market unaffordable to Croydon residents and does not fulfil local housing need</li> </ul>
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### 3 BUDGETARY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Housing Assessment and Solutions and Gateway Directorates sit within the old Gateway, Strategy and Engagement Department. Overall, the department overspent by £224,000 at the end of Q2, as reported to Cabinet in December. These directorates transferred to the Health, Wellbeing and Adults Department on 1 January 2020.
- 3.2 In Housing Assessment and Solutions, the main reason for the overspend relates to the private rented schemes used for Temporary Accommodation (TA), where there is a shortfall between what the Council pays to landlords and what can be reclaimed from tenants. Combined, from two of the three main private landlord schemes, there was an overspend of £457,000.
- 3.3 In Emergency Accommodation (EA), there is a forecast underspend at Q2 of £200,000, compared to historic overspends in previous years. There has been work to reduce the number of residents within Emergency Accommodation, although this impacts on Temporary Accommodation costs. Emergency Accommodation also received a budget increase in 2019/20 enabling the service to better manage costs within budget. More detail on the actual and forecast expenditure on EA and TA is set out at section 4.3.6 below.
- 3.4 Within Gateway Services, there are pressures due to the challenges of meeting the savings target within Adults and Children's services as they are currently overspending. While Gateway has been successful in identifying areas of savings and cost avoidance, within the context of significant overspends, these haven't translated into savings which enable budgets to be reduced.
- 3.5 The budget setting process is underway with Members expected to agree a budget in line with the timetable. Given the financial pressures faced by the Council, both these services will need to play a part in delivering a balanced budget.

## **REVIEW OF 2019**

### **4 HOUSING NEED AND HOMELESSNESS**

#### **4.1 Levels of demand and causes**

- 4.1.1 Factors causing housing need and homelessness were set out in the report on A Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Croydon to the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 17 December 2019 (see Appendix 1). They can be summarised as:

- ***Croydon's population is growing:***
- ***People are living longer:***
- ***Mismatch between supply and demand:***

- **Housing affordability:** Many residents cannot afford to rent or buy in Croydon even with Housing Benefit.
- **Poverty:** due to relatively low pay and reduced welfare benefit entitlements
- **Austerity:** Ongoing public funding constraints and cuts continue to impact on housing support, hostels, mental health, drug, alcohol services that help people avoid homelessness.
- **More people have complex health and social care needs:** This includes people with physical and learning disabilities and people with mental health support needs. Some need adaptations to their current homes and others need to move to more suitable accommodation.
- **Croydon has the largest population of young people in London.**
- **Limited recourse to public funds:** for non-UK nationals since 2014

### **Homelessness Demand**

4.1.2 Around 3,500 households a year approach the council for assistance. In 2018/19 more than 1,650 at risk of losing their home were helped to avoid homelessness. The loss of a private tenancy is the most common cause of homelessness, followed by eviction by parents, relatives or friends, and domestic violence.

### **Rough Sleeping**

4.1.3 Throughout 2018/19 274 people were found bedded down on Croydon's streets by outreach services and recorded on the London-wide CHAIN database. Only 27 of these had slept rough previously. In November 2018 15 rough sleepers were found bedded down in Croydon on the night of the street count. This number excludes those sleeping in night shelters. The figure from the 28.11.19 street count will be released by the Government on 27 February 2020.

4.1.4 The Council commissions Thames Reach to provide [Croydon Reach](#), our outreach and resettlement service for rough sleepers. Where people qualify for housing in Croydon we will usually arrange supported housing, such as a hostel, with a subsequent move into long-term affordable rented accommodation with resettlement support.

4.1.5 For the most chronic rough sleepers and those who repeatedly return to the streets we will where possible use Housing First. This is a support service that we have commissioned which will provide intensive, open ended and user-led support, and case management for up to 20 homeless people with multiple and complex needs who will have long-term sustainable tenancies secured for them. The Housing First approach is evidence based and provides a trauma informed response to rough sleepers who have a lengthy history of rough sleeping and failed engagement with multiple services. The service is designed to build long term engagement and trust, without conditionality. Currently, 10 people have secured tenancies and a further 9 are being supported by the service.

- 4.1.6 The Council secured £468,000 Rough Sleeping Initiative Funding in in 2019/20 in addition to the £510,000 achieved in 2018/19. This is funding Housing First, mentioned above, a clinical mental health outreach service, a Crisis Migrant Employment and Accommodation Scheme for those with no recourse to public funds, personalised budgets for rough sleepers, and a Rough Sleeping Coordinator to mobilise services and develop good practice and partnership work. The Council also commissions a Turning Point drug and alcohol service for rough sleepers.
- 4.1.7 In addition, the Council secured £622,000 of government Rapid Rehousing Funding in 2019/20 to provide a rapid route off the streets including a 24-hour, 365-day hub for up to 15 people with an average stay of 72 hours. The service began in November with a soft launch for up to 8 rough sleepers. The hub provides instant respite for people who are street homeless or who are at risk of sleeping on the street that night, together with a comprehensive assessment and a personal pathway off the streets. Support services will be available at the hub. “Navigators” will work intensively with people with the most complex needs from assessment until they are settled into suitable accommodation and with people leaving prison, and will improve access to private sector accommodation with resettlement support, freeing up hostel places.
- 4.1.8 The Council works closely with voluntary and faith based services that provide vital engagement and support, such as Crisis Skylight Centre, Salvation Army Well and Croydon Churches Floating Shelter, ensuring an effective partnership with commissioned services. The severe weather protocol achieves a coordinated approach to bring rough sleepers off the streets in the coldest weather. Partners have also contributed to successful funding applications by giving evidence on gaps in services for rough sleepers.

## **4.2 Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy priorities**

- 4.2.1 Consultation on Croydon’s draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy runs until 17 February 2020. The strategy has the following priorities:
1. Increase use of engagement and early intervention services
  2. Prevent homelessness
  3. Ensure sufficient sustainable accommodation to meet the needs of homeless households
  4. Support our residents through localised support services based on local need
  5. End entrenched rough sleeping
  6. End youth homelessness in Croydon.

#### 4.2.2 Key actions in the draft strategy include:

Develop a new partnership with Crisis and prepare a new 10 year strategy

Develop 'Croydon Lettings', the Council's Social Lettings Agency, from pilot to full service offer.

Explore the development of a local homelessness reduction board

Establish a 24/7 assessment hub for rough sleepers

Develop the Housing First model to become integral to the Croydon homelessness offer

### 4.3 Temporary Accommodation

4.3.1 In December 2019 the Council was housing 2,110 homeless households in emergency and temporary accommodation, 30% of which are in bed and breakfast emergency accommodation. Rising rent levels, the capping and freezing of benefit levels as well as competition for properties from other councils mean that it is increasingly costly to source these homes. We must meet demand for emergency and temporary accommodation while controlling costs, and continuing to secure supply of more permanent homes.

4.3.2 Table 1 sets out the number of placements as at December 2019 by type of temporary accommodation.

**Table 1: Type of temporary accommodation (December 2019)**

Type of temporary accommodation	Total
Council accommodation	532
Bed & Breakfast	624
Housing association privately leased accommodation	24
Private Sector Leasing Scheme (Concord, Sycamore & Windsor Houses)	266
Sponsored tenancy scheme placements	75
Street properties purchased by Council and transferred to Croydon Affordable Homes	95
Housing Associations B&B	22
Lennard Road	6
Private Sector Licensing agreement	466
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2110</b>

4.3.3 The majority of placements of single vulnerable homeless people are in Fairfield and Thornton Heath wards, and along the London Road corridor. 1,213 placements in both supported exempt accommodation and commissioned supported housing are distributed across 24 wards. Those with more than 100 placements are Fairfield, Thornton Heath, Broad Green, Selhurst and West Thornton. In addition, placements of 182 single homeless vulnerable people in

emergency accommodation are mainly in the CR0 postcode, which covers 17 wards, but mainly Fairfield, Shirley North, Waddon and Broad Green.

**Table 2: Placements of single vulnerable homeless people by postcode of emergency accommodation**

No of Placements	Postcode
4	BR1 (Bromley)
114	CR0
3	CR2
31	CR7
3	CR8
1	ME9 (Kent)
2	SE25
7	SE26
17	SW16
8	SW18

4.3.4 We lack comprehensive information on placements in Croydon by other authorities but understand that a Surrey council places people in Thornton Heath.

4.3.5 Reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) can only be directly associated with the placement of a single vulnerable homeless person if they relate to nuisance inside the placement. Those relating to nuisance in the street outside may not be linked to the property. Relatively few ASB reports made in the last three months related to placements of single vulnerable homeless people in Fairfield ward, Thornton Heath ward and the London Road corridor, as shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Reports of ASB relating to placements of vulnerable single homeless people in the last three months**

	ASB inside placement	ASB in vicinity of placement	ASB inside/in vicinity of placement	Total ASB calls in ward/area
Fairfield ward	1	3	4 (1% of total calls)	332
London Road corridor	0	5	5 (5% of total calls)	105
Thornton Heath ward	2	8	10 (9% of total calls)	117

#### **Funding and expenditure**

4.3.6 The council's net expenditure for on temporary accommodation for homeless households for the financial year 2018/19 was £3.35m; a cost primarily met from the General Fund. Table 4 below shows actual and forecast gross and net expenditure between 2017/18 and 2020/21.

**Table 4: Temporary Accommodation actual and forecast costs (2017-21)**



	2020-21 (forecast)	2019-20 (forecast)	2018-19	2017-18
				£
Nightly paid including B&B and self-contained units (EA)	14,412,124	13,725,832	13,154,998	16,808,033
Monthly paid including private sector rentals (TA)	22,335,754	21,272,147	20,306,161	13,691,625
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>36,747,878</b>	<b>34,997,979</b>	<b>33,461,159</b>	<b>30,499,658</b>
Nightly paid including B&B and self-contained units (EA)	4,580,157	4,580,157	2,161,484	5,250,478
Monthly paid including private sector rentals (TA)	62,839	-637,161	1,188,175	1,428,756
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>4,642,996</b>	<b>3,942,996</b>	<b>3,349,659</b>	<b>6,679,234</b>

- 4.3.7 There is an average estimated cost of around £7,000 per year for a household in Emergency Accommodation (EA). The council almost consistently can't reclaim the full costs associated with EA tenancies, with the amount of shortfall varying by location, size and tenancy type as well as the presence of any adaptations to the property. Some funding shortfalls are currently being funded by Homelessness Flexible Support Grant from central government.
- 4.3.8 Larger Households stay for more extended periods in EA. Of the Council's top 50 most expensive EA placements by nightly charge around 70% are for 4 or more person households. EA and Temporary Accommodation (TA) properties of 5 or more bedrooms can create significant cost pressure to the council, as the maximum LHA rate is for a 4 bedroom property.
- 4.3.9 Some of our most expensive placements are driven by the complexity of their cases. The top 3 most expensive households in EA require fully adapted units for disabled access along with further bedroom(s) for children and/or carers.
- 4.3.10 For temporary accommodation (TA), the costs of properties owned by the Council or on long leases (e.g. the 230 homes in Concord, Sycamore and Windsor Houses) are cost neutral for the Council. However 1-3 bedroom TA homes sourced via the council's existing 'Croylease' and private sector leasing schemes cost between £8 and £38 per week to the council, as they are above the equivalent local housing allowance rate.
- 4.3.11 Supported exempt accommodation (SEA) is a resettlement place or supported accommodation provided by a county council, registered housing provider (housing associations), registered charity or voluntary organisation where that body or a person acting on their behalf provides the resident qualifying for Housing Benefit (HB) with care, support or supervision. Such accommodation includes hostels, refuges, extra care housing and adapted housing for the disabled provided by the organisations listed above but must be providing extra

support/care. HB recognises the often higher costs of providing such accommodation. However, the Council is unable to reclaim 40% of the higher costs it pays when residents are placed in SEA run by private providers. This creates a budgetary pressure on the general fund from HB subsidy. The Council can reclaim 100% subsidy for placement in SEA provided by county councils, charitable organisations and registered housing providers.

#### ***Plans to rationalise TA schemes***

4.3.12 The Council has commissioned a strategic review of the private rented sector and the Council's emergency and temporary accommodation portfolio assessing exposure, risk and opportunity against demand and market profile. This will drive proposals for future investment, incentives and/or partnerships with private providers in order to best meet our need for emergency and temporary housing. The Council is considering a proposal for the purchase of a further 100 street properties and block purchases off plan from developers or leasing of properties. This is one of the work streams associated with the development of the housing strategy.

### **4.4 Supported housing**

4.4.1 We work with vulnerable single homeless people, ex-offenders, young people and care leavers, and people experiencing domestic violence or street homelessness. We provide access to 493 short-term units of supported housing and floating support in the home to enable vulnerable people to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Between 2015 and 2018 there was a 123% increase in referrals, with young people with various support needs seeing significant growth. However, some services have rising numbers of overstayers. We will work with providers to ensure supported housing services meet rising and developing needs, provide more floating support and increase the rate at which people move on to independent housing.

4.4.2 Following extensive engagement with the market, the Council published a market position statement in September 2019 setting out the Gateway Service's commissioning intentions for supported housing services to single vulnerable homeless people for the period 2020-2025. The Council's contract investment objectives are: Economy (ensuring the contract investment takes into account the cost of potential population increases within the cohorts supported and enables providers to deliver sustainable services); Efficiency (improving the throughput of the service); and Effectiveness (improving quality in terms of outputs and outcomes). The commissioning intentions cover:

- Accommodation based and floating support
- Sustainable move-on
- Complex needs
- Business support, social value and workforce
- Employment and training
- Financial resourcing, including future bidding opportunities.

#### **4.5 Social Lettings Agency**

[Croydon Lettings](#), our lettings agency, placed 47 households in private tenancies at LHA rents in its first year, with a support package for landlords. In some cases we are able to provide extra help, such as the deposit, rent in advance or essential items needed to make a house a home.

### **5. Gateway Services**

5.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed a new duty on local authorities to provide people at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days with advice and support to prevent them from becoming homeless. In 2018/19 the Council helped 2,400 families avoid homelessness through support, saving almost £8m in costs that would have been incurred had they become homeless.

#### ***Croydon's Gateway results***

5.2 Our Gateway service is a council-wide prevention and early intervention approach that works with partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors to improve people's futures. We prevent homelessness through negotiating with landlords, stopping illegal evictions, and family mediation. We help people help themselves by providing wrap around support for the whole household on issues such as budgeting and debt management, tenancy advice, maximising income and getting a job.

5.3 As there are not enough social homes to meet housing need, renting privately is an important alternative option, yet some landlords are reluctant to let to people on welfare benefits and other rents are unaffordable. Private renting is a way for people to avoid homelessness. It is also an important option for homeless people in emergency or temporary housing to make a fresh start. We help people find a home more suitable to their needs and budget through [advice and information](#). We also offer information, advice and support to homeowners who are thinking of letting their properties. In 2018/19 we secured settled homes for 220 homeless households to rent privately, discharging our housing duty (and for 62 homeless households in April to December 2019).

5.4 2018/19 achievements

- Helped more than 2,400 families avoid homelessness
- Given budgeting support to over 14,900 people
- Supported over 4,700 people on Universal Credit to improve their digital skills
- Seen a 15% reduction in the number of people applying as homeless
- Cut the cost of giving people emergency accommodation by £2m
- Increased the homeless prevention rate from 25% to 58%
- Reduced the numbers in emergency accommodation from 824 to 667

- Supported 587 residents into employment.

### ***Gateway in the Community***

- 5.5 People are referred to Community Connect/Food Stop, a combined welfare and food club, for help to tackle food poverty. The latest Community Connect/Food Stop was launched in Monks Hill on 22 October. The Gateway service also offers over 30 drop-in surgeries per month across the borough, to support residents with welfare rights, personal budgeting and employment support. These interventions enable tenants to regain control, improve their financial independence and outlook, and pay their rent once more. Croydon has been ranked second in London for helping to life families out of food poverty. Increasingly these services will be delivered with partners closer to the people who need them.

## **6. COUNCIL HOMES**

- 6.0 The Council owns 13,475 council homes (at March 2019), including 1,221 sheltered and special sheltered homes, fewer than many other London boroughs. There are also 2,400 leaseholders, who bought their homes through the Right to Buy (RTB). In 2018/19 83 council homes were sold under the RTB. However, the first Brick by Brick properties are being transferred to the Council. Only 670 social homes became available in 2018/19, of which 320 were offered to non-homeless applicants, yet we had 5,468 people on our housing register in March 2019, vastly more than we can help. We offer grants and support to under-occupying tenants to encourage them to downsize, freeing up a family home; 37 were moved in 2018/19 and 45 in April to December 2019.

### **6.1 Tenancy and Caretaking Services**

- 6.1.1 The Tenancy and Caretaking service structure is now embedded, with seven permanent managers managing across the borough.
- 6.1.2 Tenancy surgeries are held in each locality at least every month. They are also carried out in all Sheltered and Extra Care blocks on a monthly basis. In addition, duty tenancy officers are working daily in Access Croydon, ensuring that anyone coming into our building has a face to face conversation with a tenancy officer.
- 6.1.3 A Tenancy Focus Group has been set up in order to ensure KPI recording and case management follows continued improvement
- 6.1.4 Work continues to improve South West London Waste Partnership bin collections on estates, specifically relating to missed collections and food waste collections. An ongoing project is assessing the bin chamber capacity on our estates to establish whether current arrangements are appropriate for the block / estate needs.

6.1.5 Tenancy continues to work with residents and Brick by Brick on minimising the disruption to bin collections and parking caused by Brick by Brick work on estates, where car parking spaces have been either temporarily or permanently re-used in other ways, whilst development and regeneration of space takes place. In addition, Tenancy are facilitating conversations between tenants and Brick by Brick where pipeline development sites and plans impact on tenant's property boundaries.

## **6.2 Responsive Repairs**

6.2.1 The Responsive Repairs Service carries out approximately 65,000 day to day repairs a year to all council homes and communal works to blocks. The service covers around 16,000 homes including leasehold properties. On average it prepares around 650-700 void properties a year for re-letting. The repairs service is funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget within the 5/30 year HRA business plan. The cost of the service is £12.281m annually (inclusive of repairs support costs) with £9.221m currently allocated to the Axis repairs contract.

6.2.2 A review is being conducted of Axis Europe plc's delivery of responsive repairs, voids, electrical and gas services. Axis is in Year 6 of an initial 7 year contract which expires in March 2021 (this is the subject of a separate item on the agenda). Performance has generally been good and compares favourably with benchmarked performance. Resident feedback on the service is obtained and 10% of works are inspected after completion to maintain quality. In April to November 2019, resident satisfaction is 92.8% against a target of 90% and 97.4% of jobs passed inspection, against a target of 96%. The contract is primarily based on a price per property (PPP) model which provides an inclusive price per property for repairs, gas breakdown and servicing and voids. This covers an extensive range of repair work and places more of the risk with the contractor as they get paid one amount per property for all works rather than for each visit or repair carried out.

6.2.3 There is also an ongoing and joint review of three other contracts that deliver housing repairs and maintenance and are also due for extension or re-procurement by March 2021:

- Mechanical and Electrical contracts including installation of domestic gas heating boilers - Clairglow
- External decorations - Mulalley
- General building contract - Mulalley

6.2.4 Two additional contracts are due for review in 2020/21 for either extension or re-procurement in 2021/22:

- Electrical servicing, testing and rewiring – AJS
- Lift maintenance, servicing and replacement – Guideline

### **6.3 Council Homes Major Works and Planned Maintenance**

- 6.3.1 Over the past year, the capital investment programme has focused upon maintaining the Decent Homes Standard. It is funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), a ring-fenced account made up primarily from tenants' rent. In 2019/20, the programme is expected to deliver over £36m of maintenance and investment into Council owned homes. This will continue to achieve over 99% compliance with the Decent Homes Standard and make homes more modern and energy efficient. The Decent Homes Standard is a technical standard for social housing: homes must meet the statutory minimum standard for housing, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services, and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- 6.3.2 Major work projects have been ongoing at several schemes across the borough this year. Works are underway at College Green sheltered housing scheme to replace the roof, install new windows, fit insulated rain screen cladding, and add additional units on the ground floor. The project is expected to complete in the summer of 2020. In addition, work is in the final stages of completion at Longheath Gardens, where 17 blocks have benefited from roof replacements and concrete repairs. An exciting block regeneration project started in the autumn of 2019 at 56-76A Chertsey Crescent. In addition to a new roof, replacement windows, and insulated rain screen cladding, the block will also be the first in the borough to have ground source heat pump central heating. This is a zero emission heating source, generating heat from deep underground, and helping to improve air quality. Other schemes receiving similar works in 2020/21 are Dartmouth House and College Green.
- 6.3.3 Following the decision to insource the extra care provision earlier this year, funds have been made available to invest in the commercial kitchens, kitchenettes, communal lounges and shared facilities. This will help to make these spaces more modern, friendly and welcoming to residents and visitors. A longer term review of the extra care schemes is underway to ensure that the Council are able to meet the ongoing needs of residents with additional medical needs.
- 6.3.4 Following adoption of the Housing Asset Management Plan 2019-28, key policies and procedures are planned to be reviewed and implemented over the course of the year. The Asbestos Policy has been reviewed in line with the corporate policy, and procurement is underway to bring in a specialist contractor to routinely assess asbestos throughout the Council owned housing stock. Similar policies and procedures across several areas of compliance will be reviewed next year.
- 6.3.5 Full fibre broadband will be installed for use in council homes. We are working with Community Fibre and Open Reach to bring up to 1 GB 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. The programme will also create apprenticeships, local employment, skills and training opportunities, and free Wi-Fi to a number of community sites.

- 6.3.6 A 'Croydon Standard' is being developed, based on resident priorities and contractor knowledge, to deliver benefits for residents, more standardised components and efficiencies. Firstly, work is underway with colleagues in Adult Social Care to review the standards in extra care housing. The Croydon Standard will be developed further for other tenure types over the coming year. In addition, it will consider changes to the Decent Homes Standard that are being suggested and legislation to implement the Hackitt Review recommendations.

## **6.4 Fire Safety**

### ***Croydon works programme***

- 6.4.1 Since 2017 there has been an increased focus upon fire safety, particularly in buildings over 18m in height, and in health and safety compliance in general. All 25 of our high rise blocks of 10 or more storeys and one nine-storey sheltered housing block have now had sprinklers installed, 1,252 homes in all. To date 15 of these homes have not been accessible so far due to resident issues such as unavailability, but work is ongoing to secure access and complete the installation. London Fire Brigade endorsed and supported the installation programme. They inspected every property after installation to familiarize themselves with the arrangements.
- 6.4.2 Spend on the Sprinkler Programme, originally budgeted at £10m, has totalled £7,893,754 to November 2019 across the financial years 2017-18; 2018-19 and 2019-20. No government funding was made available despite ongoing correspondence between the Council and the MHCLG. The works have been funded partly from HRA revenue underspend and partly from slippage in other HRA planned maintenance and improvement (PMI) works. However, the full planned maintenance programme is being delivered. When the preparatory surveys flagged the need for other work such as asbestos removal or rewiring this was either done alongside the sprinkler installation or listed for programmed work.

### ***Fire Risk Assessments***

- 6.4.3 Comprehensive fire risk assessments have commenced across all high rise blocks, highlighting fire safety actions that are currently being remedied by our existing contractor partners. 757 fire risk assessments are required in blocks, all

of which have been completed. They are repeated on a cyclical basis. Contracts for two new fire risk assessor contractors went out just before Christmas following final Contract Commissioning Board approval.

- 6.4.4 Issues identified through fire risk assessments and London Fire Brigade visits, such as the upgrade of smoke detection systems, communal doors and flat front doors, and the installation of emergency lighting, are either under way, planned or proposed for future programmes of work. They are added to an issues log that will be monitored by the Compliance Manager.

#### ***Person Centred Risk Assessments***

- 6.4.5 London Fire Brigade have asked for Person Centred Risk Assessments (PCRA) to be completed. Tenancy officers will be completing PCRA's at the time of their new tenant visits and during the tenancy audit visits. Careline are working through the sheltered schemes to update PCRA's. A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be completed where an issue is highlighted from a PCRA.

#### ***Concord, Sycamore, Windsor Houses (temporary accommodation)***

- 6.4.6 All flat entrance door frames replaced. Additional works to riser cupboard doors, laundry room and IT server room doors are due for completion on 17 January 2020.

#### ***Parchmore Road***

- 6.4.7 Replacement of windows and spandrel panels to nine flats following a fire in the block.

#### ***Data collection on external wall systems on high rise blocks***

- 6.4.8 We have a Fire Safety Board that meets regularly to consider issues concerning council and private properties. The Council is responsible for reporting data to government on the external wall systems on all blocks over 18 meters tall, both those owned by the council and privately owned blocks in the borough. A letter has been sent to building owners asking them to provide information on external wall systems to our Compliance Team who are coordinating the response. The Council is using selective licensing scheme data and working with the London Fire Brigade to ensure it has a full list of buildings over 18m.

#### ***London Councils fire safety developments***

- 6.4.9 The Government has accepted the Hackitt review recommendations to improve building safety. Every block over 18 metres high will have to have a Building Safety Case. Camden Council estimate it will cost c. £40,000 per block to produce a Building Safety Case. A responsible competent person or body will need to be designated for each property.



6.4.10 London Councils Directors Fire Safety Steering Group has been looking at operational arrangements, including recruitment, retention and training of key fire safety staff (fire safety managers, surveyors, fire safety clerk of works, project managers and building control inspectors). It is also looking at what the Building Safety Manager role may look like. London councils are experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff in fire safety roles as there is a skills shortage. London Councils is developing a pan-London approach to address this issue. Examples of training initiatives:

- Kensington and Chelsea are looking to introduce fire safety apprenticeships
- Enfield are looking at cross training existing staff and introducing graduate sandwich training
- Camden have created an in-house team and expect training of these individuals to be complete in 18 months.

6.4.11 On 20 January 2020 and in the debate the following day the Government announced several measures to improve building safety:

- A new Building Safety Regulator, within the Health and Safety Executive, will oversee the design, construction and occupation of high-rise and higher risk buildings.
- A new [single advice note](#) consolidates all previous notes into one core document. The advice makes it clear that aluminium composite material (and other metal composite material cladding) with unmodified polyethylene filler (ACM Category 3) is now deemed unacceptable on residential buildings of any height and should be removed. There is no stated intention to extend local authorities' responsibility to report where ACM Category 3 is present in buildings under 18m in height. There is also no intention to provide funding for the remediation of buildings with ACM Category 3 that are less than 18m tall.
- The Government is minded to reduce the height requirements for sprinkler provision in new buildings from 18m to 11m, and will publish a proposal for consultation in February 2020.
- The Government is considering whether financial support can be provided for leaseholders facing largescale bills. Reference was made to low-cost or zero-interest loans.
- A [Consultation](#) seeks views on extending the current ban on combustible materials on the external wall systems of new buildings to buildings between 18-11m in height, as well as the building types covered, list of exemptions, attachments such as blinds, shutters and awnings, and a proposal to specifically ban the use of metal composite panels in and on the external walls of all buildings. The consultation closes on 13 April 2020.
- A [call for evidence](#) (open till 17 February) seeks views on how to assess and prioritise fire safety risks in existing buildings. We understand that the objective is to develop a risk based assessment so that building regulations covering fire safety matters can extend beyond height-based criteria.

- A Fire Safety Bill will bring external wall systems and flat front doors unambiguously within the scope of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, requiring building owners to assess risk and take precautionary measures. It will make clear the enforcement powers that can be used locally by fire and rescue services against building owners who have not remediated ACM cladding.
- The Government will, from February 2020, name building owners who have not commenced remediation work.

## **6.5 Resident Involvement**

- 6.5.1 We want tenants to be proud of their homes and feel that they are heard. There are many ways in which they can be involved, from the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel that focuses on broader housing issues affecting all council tenants and leaseholders, the Resident Involvement Group, Leaseholders Group, Sheltered Housing Panel, Housing Disability Panel and Housing Scrutiny Panel. Other ways include focus groups to consider a specific issue for a limited time, estate walkabouts, mystery shoppers and volunteer housing inspectors. Two new residents' groups were established last year. The Health & Safety Panel will ensure that any concerns raised by residents are addressed and it will enable the Council to involve residents in its proposals to enhance health & safety within their homes and estates. A Performance Monitoring Group is now receiving quarterly reports summarising the council's performance across all housing management services and benchmarking our services against similar landlords across London. This will enable residents to hold the service managers to account and make suggestions for service improvements. Both these groups have encouraged a number of new residents to get involved, representing a wider range of our residents across the borough.
- 6.5.2 Our quarterly publication, Open House, is sent all council tenants and leaseholders four times a year, and is supplemented by an online newsletter. This helps us to ensure they are kept up to date and able to have their say about their housing services. It promotes key housing initiatives, is a mechanism for consulting residents on proposed housing policy or strategy changes, and enables the Council to meet the regulatory requirement of ensuring that information and communication is appropriate to the diverse needs of its tenants.
- 6.5.3 The Council is developing the use of digital technology to reach a wider cross section of residents. Its Facebook page has over 1,000 Facebook followers. The Health & Safety Panel is hosted via an online Facebook group (in addition to face to face meetings). Tenant & Leaseholder Panel meetings are webcast from the Council's website. We are delivering a year-long project (funded by the LGA) to develop the digital skills of residents living in sheltered blocks in New Addington and Fieldway to improve access to online council services and resident engagement channels.

6.5.4 We are now regularly surveying our tenants to gauge their satisfaction with housing services and obtaining their ideas for service improvements. Quarterly reports are now being produced for both service managers and residents.

6.5.5 The Council worked with residents to produce an exhibition to celebrate 100 years of council housing. The exhibition is currently circulating the council's libraries and showcases the development of council housing in Croydon and some of the memories of existing and former council tenants.

## **6.6 Council homes renewal and regeneration**

6.6.1 We will create new social and affordable homes through converting and extending existing buildings, replacing homes that are not cost effective and building on infill sites. We will also provide light, clean and safe communal spaces, designing solutions for anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping hotspots.

6.6.2 In 2019 we were successful in bidding for funding from the GLA's Homebuilding Capacity Fund to undertake a Suburban Housing Capacity Study, considering opportunities for adopting some of the principles from the recently adopted Croydon '[Suburban Design Guide](#)' (a supplementary planning document which seeks to stimulate greater home building potential in Croydon's suburbs by making more efficient use of sites) across the Council's housing stock.

6.6.3 We are committed to taking a best practice approach to any future estate regeneration and are learning from the guidance developed by the GLA and the experience of other London Councils regarding resident offers and estate ballots. We are preparing a policy framework to provide the evidence, criteria and guidance required to ensure that any future decision-making on council housing regeneration proposals is robust and transparent and ensures that any agreement to progress with estate regeneration is a decision taken in partnership with our residents.

## **7 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**

### **7.1 Overview**

7.1.1 An estimated 58,500 homes in Croydon are rented from private landlords (36% of all homes in the borough, compared with 30% across London). Most landlords provide decent housing. However, 23.8% of tenants rent homes that are overcrowded, cold, damp, or put them at risk of tripping or falling. Overall, in 2018/19 we served 232 enforcement notices and 21 prohibition orders on landlords and imposed 16 financial penalties. Category 1 hazards (that pose a serious and immediate risk to the occupier's health and safety) were removed from 51 private rented homes as a direct result of action by the council. We work closely with London Fire Brigade and require landlords to resolve the most serious fire hazards within 24 hours.

## **7.2 Selective Licensing renewal**

### ***Current Selective Licensing Scheme***

- 7.2.1 The current scheme began on the 1 October 2015 and will end on the 30 September 2020. So far more than 36,000 licences have been issued. This is remarkable given that the Government estimated that there were a maximum of 39,000 privately rented properties in Croydon. We now believe there are potentially 58,000 which is more than a third of all residential accommodation in the borough. Our data prediction indicates that around 48,000 of these would be licensable.
- 7.2.2 We are still receiving an average of 240 applications per month. This is because of all the new-build property for rent as well as the office conversions and landlords we are proactively pursuing. Despite this it is estimated that there may be more than 5,000 licensable properties which are currently not licensed which means that the landlords who have paid are subsidising those who refuse to pay.
- 7.2.3 A major drive is now on to identify landlords who have failed to apply for a licence and ensure that they apply and pay for one. When appropriate, enforcement proceedings will be taken.
- 7.2.4 As part of the enforcement of the current scheme:
- More than 11,000 properties have been inspected
  - 5 pending prosecutions for failing to licence
  - 22 Financial Penalty Notices (excluding those subject to appeal) for failing to licence
  - Over 1,000 improvement notices have been served specifying remedial action to remove hazards
  - 42 prohibition orders served preventing properties or parts of properties being used as residential accommodation as they were not suitable for occupation
  - Several warrants for unannounced entry which have resulted in the discovery of properties which were overcrowded and seriously deficient in terms of housing standards and fire precautions.

### ***The New Selective Licensing Scheme***

- 7.2.5 The new scheme requires Government approval which can only be given provided certain criteria are met. Our submission will be based on two criteria:
1. Following a review of housing conditions in the borough carried out under section 3(1) of the Housing Act 2004, we consider it would be appropriate for a significant number of properties to be inspected, with a view to determining whether any category 1 or category 2 hazards exist on the premises.

2. Some areas of the borough are experiencing significant and persistent problems caused by anti-social behaviour

7.2.6 In both cases we believe that making a designation will, when combined with other measures taken in the area by the Council either alone or in partnership with other agencies, result in substantial improvements in terms of housing conditions and anti-social behaviour.

7.2.7 As part of the application the Council must carry out a consultation process for a minimum of 10 weeks with all stakeholders including neighbouring boroughs. Cabinet authorised the consultation on 21 October 2019 and it began on 16 December 2019 and will end on 9 March 2020. The consultation was delayed by the General Election so government approval might not be issued before the current scheme ends.

### **7.3 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**

7.3.1 There may be up to 3,000 HMOs in Croydon. The Council undertakes a statutory role through its environmental health responsibilities to manage issues associated with HMOs in the borough and as a result of complaints through a dedicated HMO team. The team manage a licence register to record HMO properties in the borough. In March 2019 there were 719 properties with mandatory HMO licences in Croydon. Given the quantity of HMO properties in Croydon, the HMO team are under constant time and resourcing pressure, particularly to identify the estimated 1300 unlicensed HMOs in the borough or monitor and respond to complaints regarding these properties. We are supported by Community Safety Team with further enforcement against ASB and criminal activity associated with problematic HMOs.

7.3.2 The Council recognises that HMOs provide an option for low cost housing in the borough, but over the last 10 years over 900 family homes have been lost to conversion and to large HMOs. Owners are able to convert multi-bedroom properties to small HMOs under a permitted development right, which means they do not need planning consent. A small HMO is defined as the use of a dwelling house between three and six unrelated individuals as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom.

7.3.3 Croydon's Local Plan seeks to prevent the loss of family homes with three bedrooms to meet the borough's housing needs. However, the Local Plan does not remove the permitted development. The Council has therefore made a borough-wide direction pursuant to Article 4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, the effect of which is from 28 January 2020 to require owners to seek planning permission before converting dwellings into small HMOs.

7.3.4 The introduction of this borough-wide direction will:

- help to retain the three bedroom family homes and homes with a gross internal floor area of less than 130m<sup>2</sup> that the borough is currently losing to conversion
- ensure any new proposed small HMOs are compliant with other planning issues, such as the Council's bedroom space standards for HMOs and provision for adequate bin storage.

7.3.5 A process between Planning and Licensing is being finalised to ensure efficient enforcement from the implementation date of 28 January 2020. The measure is not retrospective.

## **7.4 Repairs to private homes**

7.4.1 Our [home investment loans](#) help qualifying homeowners carry out essential repairs to remove hazards from their homes. The loans are means tested to ensure that those in the most need get the most help. The loan results in a local land charge being registered to the property which remains in force until the loan is repaid. [Home Repair Loans](#) help qualifying homeowners with small scale repair or improvement works. [Croydon Energy Loans](#) help them to improve their home's energy efficiency and assist vulnerable people who may be in fuel poverty. 134 owner-occupied and 67 private rented homes were improved through grants and loans in 2018/19.

## **7.5 Empty properties**

7.5.1 1,870 homes in Croydon had been empty for more than six months as of 31 December 2019. (This is down from 2,070 as of 20 May – a reduction of 9.5% in a little over seven months.) The Empty Property Service encourages residents to report empty properties online, by telephone hotline or via the 'Don't Mess with Croydon' app. The Empty Property Officers have a combined caseload of 925 properties that have been prioritised to enable the officers to intervene as necessary with specific assistance as required. They can offer grants and loans to repair and renovate long-term empty properties. If grant funding is used to bring the property back into use then the Council is able to nominate future tenants for a minimum of five years. This can save £6,700 a year for each household no longer needing emergency housing. If an owner is non-cooperative the Empty Property Officers use enforcement powers where appropriate. The team acquired a property by Compulsory Purchase Order, which has since been sold.

## **7.6 Staying Put Service and adaptations**

7.6.1 As our population ages and more people have restricted mobility we must ensure that people are able to live independently and in comfort in their own homes for as long as possible. Our [Staying Put Service](#) helps older, disabled and other vulnerable people who need advice and assistance to carry out repairs or adaptations to their homes. [Disabled Facilities Grants](#) (DFGs) are available for work in private or housing association properties that will help a disabled person remain in their home. 134 DFGs were completed in 2018/19

(and 69 in the first six months of 2019/20). We also provide major adaptations for council tenants who have a disability.

## **8. NEW HOMES**

### **8.1 Overall development**

8.1.1 Overall, in 2018/19 construction started on 2,752 homes, net of homes lost. 631 (23%) of these homes were affordable, including intermediate homes. 192 of these were for social or affordable rent only. Between 1.03.19 and 31.08.19, construction on 1,924 net homes started. 240 (12.5%) of these were affordable, including intermediate homes. 87 of these were for affordable or social rent only (5% of the total). It should be noted that some market homes are subsequently converted to affordable homes after planning permission has been granted, through purchase by the Council or a housing association.

8.1.2 Many developments are on small sites of fewer than 10 homes and are not subject to affordable homes targets under the Local Plan. The result is lower overall numbers of affordable homes. In 2018/19 26% of all new homes started were on small sites of less than 10 homes. Between 1.03.19 and 31.08.19 the figure was 39%. The Local plan review will look at options for addressing this issue.

8.1.3 Affordability continues to be an issue for young people in Croydon. Shared ownership can enable younger people to join the housing market. 15% of all new homes started in Croydon in 2018/19 are intermediate housing (mainly shared ownership) and more than a quarter of homes currently being built by Brick by Brick are for shared ownership. The sales team in the Brick By Brick shop in Central Croydon has experience with Help to Buy and Shared Ownership and can advise customers on low-cost home ownership. First time buyers and home movers are both eligible for a Help to Buy Equity Loan, where the government lends up to 40% of the cost of a new build home and the buyer must provide a minimum 5% cash deposit upfront. No loan fee is charged for the first five years. Forthcoming community-led housing projects will also provide opportunities for creating homes in Croydon that are affordable in perpetuity, including homes to buy. In addition, 'Build to rent' homes being developed across Croydon will broaden the spectrum of homes younger people are able to access. The development of an evidence-based Croydon-specific definition of affordable housing will help us to plan for a range of housing tenures and types that meet the needs of Croydon residents at rents and prices to suit a range of local incomes.

### **8.2 Brick by Brick**

8.2.1 Brick by Brick, the Council's wholly-owned housing company, provides the Council with a commercial and adaptable way to build new affordable housing

ourselves on council owned land. By selling 50% of homes at market prices the profits from the sales can be used to fund homes for people to part-buy or rent at affordable rents. 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.

8.2.2 Brick By Brick has started handing over its first completed schemes. The first completions are at Auckland Rise & Sylvan Hill in Upper Norwood. In Flora Court in Thornton Heath [three council homes were let](#) in December 2019 to people on the housing register and 24 shared ownership homes will be completed in early 2020. Houses at Ravensdale & Rushden in Upper Norwood, and Windmill Place in Old Coulsdon, are almost 100% reserved and are also close to handover. Table 5 sets out Brick by Brick schemes, total units, affordable units and estimated project completions. Overall 47% of homes will be affordable.

**Table 5: Brick by Brick schemes**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>Affordable Units</b>	<b>% Affordable</b>	<b>Estimated PC<sup>[1]</sup></b>
Auckland Rise	57	19	33%	Q4 19/20
Cheriton House (Flora Court)	27	27	100%	Q4 19/20
Homefield House (Windmill Place)	24	0	0%	Q4 19/20
Kingsdown Avenue	34	6	18%	Q1 20/21
Malton House	9	5	56%	Q1 20/21
Marston Way	12	0	0%	Q1 20/21
Northbrook Road	11	0	0%	Q1 20/21
Ravensdale (Ravensdale Gardens & Rushden Close)	31	0	0%	Q1 20/21
Regina Road	19	19	100%	Q3 21/22
Tollers Lane	40	18	45%	Q3 20/21
Academy Gardens	9	0	0%	Q2 21/22
Chertsey Crescent	7	7	100%	Q1 20/21
Coldharbour	8	8	100%	Q1 21/22
St Ann's and Drummond Rd	28	0	0%	Q1 20/21
Eagle Hill	8	0	0%	Q1 21/22
Heathfield Gardens	20	0	0%	Q1 20/21
Hermitage Gardens (Faithful Court)	9	0	0%	Q4 19/20
King Henry's Drive	7	7	100%	Q1 21/22
Longheath Avenue	53	53	100%	Q4 20/21
Oxford Road	9	0	0%	Q1 20/21
Station Road (Pump House)	14	0	0%	Q4 19/20
Thorneloe	10	0	0%	Q3 20/21
Tollgate	42	15	36%	Q1 20/21

<sup>[1]</sup> Date is for completion of entire scheme and does not take into account phased completion and handover of individual buildings within schemes which may have happened earlier.



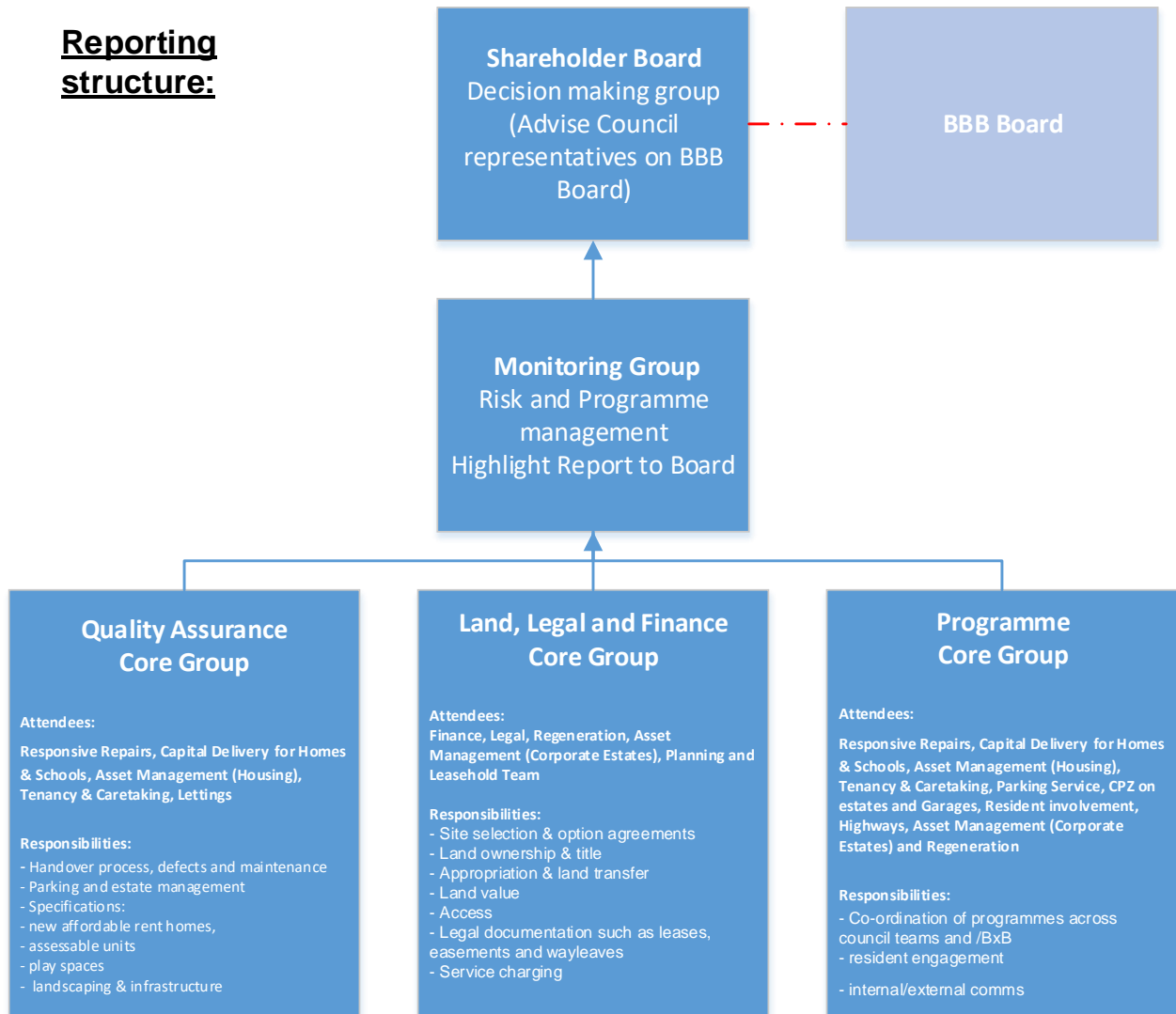
Uvedale Crescent	6	6	100%	Q1 20/21
Warbank Crescent	36	36	100%	Q3 20/21
Avenue Road	12	7	58%	Q1 21/22
Coombe Road	9	0	0%	Q4 20/21
Coulsdon Community Centre	33	16	48%	Q4 22/23
CALAT	0	0	0%	Q3 21/22
Queens Road (Ashby Walk)	9	0	0%	Q2 21/22
Queens Road (Tirrell Road)	9	9	100%	Q2 21/22
Queens Road (Windmill Road)	6	6	100%	Q2 21/22
Shrublands	26	26	100%	Q3 21/22
Warminster	6	0	0%	Q4 20/21
Lion Green Road	157	79	50%	Q4 21/22
Wandle Road Car Park	128	60	47%	Q3 21/22
Belgrave & Grosvenor	102	50	49%	Q3 21/22
Sanderstead Car Park	14	4	14%	Q2 21/22
Tamworth Road	8	0	0%	Q3 21/22
Arkeil Grove	9	9	100%	Q3 21/22
Bedwardine Road	22	16	73%	Q3 21/22
Kennelwood Close	6	5	100%	Q3 21/22

### **Governance**

8.2.3 The Council and Brick by Brick have set-up a stringent governance structure to ensure the successful delivery of homes, play spaces, landscaping and infrastructure on council land and estates (see Table 6). There are three core groups: Quality Assurance; Land, Legal and Finance; and Programme. Core group members include directors, heads of service and technical experts. These groups report and escalate issues to the Monitoring Group, members of which include the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services, the Council's Executive Leadership Team and the Chief Executive of Brick by Brick. This group reports to the Shareholder Board (of which the Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services is a member), the decision-making group that advises the Council's representatives on the Brick by Brick Board.

**Table 6: Brick by Brick Reporting Structure**

**Reporting structure:**



***Quality Control and Handover***

8.2.4 The Quality Assurance Core Group is responsible for ensuring that the end result of a project/programme is consistent with implementation designs and infrastructure that were made in the planning phase for affordable rent homes. It also ensures that Brick by Brick has adhered to the guidelines set-out by the Council for these specifications.

1. Handover process, warranty management, defects and maintenance
2. Parking and estate management
3. Full sight of and sign off on all design specifications and components for new affordable rent homes, landscaping and infrastructure
4. Mitigating against any escalating costs to meet the necessary lifecycle, repairs and maintenance requirements of properties, and ensure the Council's contractors are able to deliver the necessary repairs and maintenance.

8.2.5 The Council has implemented a process for the handover of buildings from Brick by Brick, with templates for document/record information and building manuals, timetables for receiving information, site visits/demos and property

sign offs.

- 8.2.6 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 Brick and Croydon Council, and the intention is to introduce the approach across the wider pipeline as it develops.
- 8.2.7 Brick By Brick has 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. 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.

### **8.3 Community-led housing**

- 8.3.1 The Council is piloting the development of community-led housing (CLH) in Croydon by offering small council-owned sites for resident-led schemes that produce 100% affordable housing. [Crystal Palace Community Land Trust](#) was chosen to develop homes on the first site at the Lawns in Upper Norwood with support from Brick By Brick. The combined teams are now working towards a planning application. The Council will be a supporting partner throughout the process helping to ensure the views of existing residents are heard. Another site on Shrublands Estate will be now be offered. To support the Council's community engagement in Shrublands, New-Practice, an architecture practice that is an engagement specialist, was commissioned in October. A workshop on 14 November brought together colleagues from Housing Assets, Regeneration Team, Brick By Brick, Tenancy & Caretaking and Resident Involvement). A detailed programme has been developed for the following three months in order to ensure the Shrublands community is genuinely listened to and can meaningfully shape the changes in their local built environment. These include: a dedicated [website](#), flyers, walkabouts with residents, interviews with local stakeholders and a community conference.

### **8.4 Croydon Affordable Housing**

- 8.4.1 Placing homeless families in temporary accommodation is costly for the Council and unaffordable for families. Croydon Affordable Housing LLP (CAH), a charity set up by the Council, moves families out of B&B hotels and into genuinely affordable local homes. CAH has used council Right to Buy (RTB) receipts to buy 254 2-3 bedroom homes. The Council keeps the freehold and receives income from CAH. Homes are let for up to three years at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rent levels so that people on welfare benefits can afford them. As these tenants will not have the right to buy these homes, we will be able to build up the number of homes we can let at affordable rents to local families.

Legal & General has invested £44.6m for 167 new homes for homeless families to be leased by the Council for 40 years before they become council property. This has saved the Council £20m in borrowing costs.

## **8.5 Taberner House site**

8.5.1 The Taberner House redevelopment consists of the erection of four buildings ranging in height from 13 to 35 storeys comprising 514 residential units and commercial space at ground floor level. The 2017 planning permission secured a minimum 35% of units as affordable accommodation, with 50.2% of the provision now proposed as homes for affordable rent.

8.5.2 Croydon Affordable Homes will be granted a 250 year lease for Block 2, to be named Crocus House, with 90 affordable rent homes which will go to families on the Council's housing register. It will be completed in May 2021. L&Q will be acquiring Blocks 3 and 4, taking the number of affordable homes to over 50%.

## **8.6 Croydon Local Plan Review**

8.6.1 A [Local Plan Review](#) is under way to update the vision and strategy for Croydon's growth up to 2039 and set out how the Council will continue to deliver much-needed new homes, jobs and community facilities. It will consider how these new homes must be delivered within the context of successful neighbourhoods, with appropriate associated transport, economic and social infrastructure. The consultation on issues and options which is based around three spatial strategies, sites and planning policies necessary to meet these needs, ran from 8 November 2019 until 13 January 2020.

## **9 CHANGES TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

9.1 The Council is changing how it manages demand and operates with fewer resources. Services and, by consequence, structures are therefore being redesigned.

9.2 A restructure of senior management is under way, in response to duplication of service activity in some areas and opportunity to bring like activity together to be more efficient. There is a need to reshape some of the senior structure to reflect the Council's operating principles more effectively.

9.3 In terms of the new management structure, the framework has been defined by the following core principles:

- Bringing housing delivery services together
- Bringing regeneration and employment activity together to drive ambitions around inclusive growth.
- Bringing asset management together

### **The new structure as it impacts on Cllr Butler's portfolio**

9.4 The number of executive directors (EDs) is reduced from five to four with the

deletion of the post of ED of Gateway, Strategy and Engagement. The Director of Gateway and the Director of Housing Needs & Solutions will report to the ED of Health, Wellbeing & Adults.

- 9.5 The regeneration, employment and growth functions will be bought together under one Director and report to the ED of Place. Table 7 summarises the changes

**Table 7: Summary of changes agreed so far:**

Role	Managed by	Action
Executive Director (ED) - Gateway Strategy and Engagement	Chief Executive	Executive Director role deleted
Director of Gateway	ED Gateway Strategy and Engagement	Transfer to Health, Wellbeing & Adults
Director of Housing	ED Gateway Strategy and Engagement	Transfer to Health, Wellbeing & Adults
Director of Policy	ED Gateway Strategy and Engagement	Transfer to Resources
Director of Facilities	ED Place	Expanded role created: Director of Homes and Social Investment. Transfer to Place
Head of Communications	ED Gateway Strategy and Engagement	Transfer to Resources
Director of Council Homes, Districts and Regeneration	ED Place	Role deleted. To be replaced by new role of Director of Regeneration, Employment and Growth
Director of Economic Growth	ED Place	Role deleted. To be replaced by new role of Director of Regeneration, Employment and Growth
Director of Growth (vacant)	ED Place	Role deleted

- 9.6 The net revenue saving of these proposals is c £350,000; however, some investment will be required short term to support the programme and will be funded through transformation funding, which would otherwise be spent on external consultants.

**Changes to the Housing Assessment and Solutions Directorate**

- 9.7 The context of the restructure is extremely challenging pressures relating to housing, poverty, demographic and other changes locally, regionally and nationally including the following:

- a housing crisis in London and the South East stemming from a chronic shortage of affordable homes, the affordability of market housing and the condition and security found in private rented accommodation.
- the implications of welfare reform, with its links to homelessness and poverty and its impact on finding sustainable solutions.
- budget pressures and austerity with the impact on public services generally and on the community services that help prevent homelessness and keep people in sustainable homes and communities
- increasingly complex needs presented by vulnerable people accessing housing support

#### 9.8 The changes will:

- reduce 4.6 FTE to 3 new Heads of Service, saving c £129,000 per year
- the transfer of 1.4 Heads of Service into the directorate
- leave teams intact (lift & shift) to minimise disruption, so new Heads of Service can review and reshape.

#### 9.9 Effective from 1 January 2020 the heads of service reporting to the Director of Housing Assessment and Solutions are:

- Head of Homelessness and Housing Needs
- Head of Temporary Accommodation and Service Development.
- Head of Income, Lettings & Home Ownership & Renewal
- Head of Tenancy & Caretaking
- Head of Strategic Projects (Growth and Housing) (Interim role, 0.4 time share with Place).

## 10 HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES AND WORK STREAMS

10.1 The following priorities were agreed by Cabinet on 20 October 2019. The strategy will be developed in 2020 through engagement with partners and internal and external stakeholders.

### ***New Homes in Great Places - we will:***

1. Increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes that Croydon residents can afford to rent or buy.
2. Plan for new homes within sustainable neighbourhoods, where people want to live, work and socialise

### ***Good quality Homes - we will:***

3. Improve council homes in estates and neighbourhoods that residents are proud to call their home

4. Improve private rented homes
5. Help with repairs to private homes for those who need it most
6. Bring empty homes back into use

***Better Access to Homes and Independent Living - we will:***

7. Make better use of existing social (council and housing association) homes
8. Increase the supply of temporary and permanent housing for those without a home
9. Enable people to rent decent homes in the private sector
10. Enable people to gain and maintain their independence in their home
11. Prevent and relieve homelessness, and reduce rough sleeping in Croydon

10.2 The current work programme includes the following work streams:

**10.2.1 Update borough-wide housing needs assessment for the Local Plan**

**Review** to ensure population trends and associated housing needs are reflected in it, plans are in place for sufficient physical and social infrastructure in neighbourhoods to accompany new housing development, and new and refurbished homes meet excellent standards for environmental sustainability.

**10.2.2 Develop an evidence-based Croydon-specific definition of affordable**

**housing** to plan for a range of housing tenures and types that meet the needs of Croydon residents at rents and prices to suit a range of local incomes.

**10.2.3 Better planning for affordable housing in development and engagement**

**with Registered Providers** to develop joint approaches for creating new housing supply, such as shared land assembly and regeneration.

**10.2.4 Investment criteria and housing supply briefs**

for the Council's capital investment in new homes and purchase of existing homes, and for partners developing affordable housing (including supported living, extra care and wheelchair accessible homes).

**10.2.5 Investigate new ways of developing new council homes,**

including consideration of conversions, extensions and refurbishment to achieve improved energy efficiency and increased standards for residents, and clear guidelines for the consideration of emerging estate regeneration opportunities.

**10.2.6 Encouraging downsizing**

through improvements to incentives and housing options for households' significantly under-occupying family homes, both in the

social and private sector, with alternative housing that genuinely meets downsizing residents' needs.

10.2.7 **Accessible homes policy review** to inform potential amendments to planning policy in relation to wheelchair design and specification requirements and tenure mix as part of new developments and agree a protocol with RPs to improve the allocation and letting of such properties.

10.2.8 **Housing and income dashboard and a borough-wide housing supply review** of the private rented sector and the Council's emergency and temporary accommodation (ETA) portfolio, to shape proposals for investment, incentives and/or partnerships with private providers to best meet our need for ETA.

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**APPENDICES:** Appendix 1 Report on A HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY FOR CROYDON to the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 17 December 2019

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None