



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

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## LATEST NEWS

### Grants for Businesses



### New Discretionary Grants

Croydon businesses impacted by the coronavirus that have yet to receive any financial support are now able to apply to the council for a one off discretionary grant payment of up to £5,000.

Croydon Council is one of only 84 local authorities in the UK that has started paying out the new discretionary grants to businesses in the borough with £786,000 of funding already supporting local businesses at this critical time.

Small businesses in Croydon can apply for grants of £1,000, £2,500 and £5,000 from Thursday 4 June. The grant totals have been deliberately set to ensure as many Croydon businesses as possible can benefit from the funding available at this crucial time.

To be eligible businesses must have been trading on 11 March; employ less than 50 employees; must be able to demonstrate a significant fall in income or financial impact; must show they have fixed property costs related to occupying a property or workspace either fully or partially; and must not have been in receipt of any coronavirus specific grants. Croydon Council are keen to support Croydon businesses through the process, supporting them to provide the evidence needed to ensure that the funding is quickly and efficiently distributed to the heart of Croydon's business community.

As a Council we understand the challenges our small businesses are facing and the need for financial support to be delivered quickly. It is also imperative that we follow the guidelines of government and ensure that processes are in place that protect the

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

funding from fraudulent claims but we are keen to ensure that this is done in a mindful proactive way. With this in mind the Economic Development Team are working side by side with applicants to understand their businesses and support evidence gathering.

Market traders, who must trade five days a week in the borough, will be able to apply for a grant of £1,000; while businesses with property costs of between £0-£999 and £1,000 plus, will be able to apply for grants of £2,500 and £5,000 respectively.

Applications for funding will either close when all funds have been allocated or on 30 June 2020 – whichever is reached sooner – and the grants will be awarded on a first come first served basis.

To apply [CLICK HERE](#)

### Small Business Grants & Retail Leisure & Hospitality Grants

Croydon Council's Rate Team continue to contact local businesses to verify their details so grant payments can be made to support them through the disruption caused by Coronavirus.

In total 3379 grants have been distributed with a value of £45,945,000. The grant scheme only announced in March formed part of the government's support package to ease financial difficulties for businesses, and the council is making the payments on their behalf.

As a Council we knew we had to quickly mobilise to distribute the grants and so processes were created which included a new technology platform that supported the delivery of the grant. Despite new government guidance being updated daily Croydon Council continue to implement the scheme embedding all fraud measures as required by government. This has meant that some of our businesses received a delay to grant delivery due to measures that investigated fraud issues, this included bank accounts that need verification if they did not conform or align with business details or state aid verification.

There are two grants available as part of the support package. All small businesses in Croydon that are in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief, will receive small business grant funding of £10,000. Meanwhile, retail, hospitality and leisure businesses across the borough, with rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000 will receive grant funding of £25,000.

There are still grants waiting to be verified. If you believe your businesses qualifies for the grant please do contact the council today [CLICK HERE](#)

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed July 2020

## Opening Our Markets



The beginning of June saw more stallholders reopening at Croydon's historic Surrey Street market and at locations across the borough as the government continued to ease some of the Covid-19 business restrictions.

After the nationwide lockdown was announced on 23 March, every market in the borough except Surrey Street closed because most stallholders' items did not fit government criteria of selling essential goods only.

On Monday 1 June, the nationwide ban on sales of non-essential goods at outdoor markets ended as part of the government's gradual lifting of restrictions. Surrey Street expanded to include sellers of non-essential items such as flowers and luggage.

Three other locally-run outdoor markets in New Addington, Crystal Palace and South Norwood reopened on 2 June, 6 June and 4 July respectively. The council also advised all other Croydon non-essential retail businesses on social distancing measures ahead of them reopening from 15 June.

Surrey Street is the only outdoor market to have remained open in Croydon throughout lockdown, with essential goods only for sale including fruit and vegetables, fish and takeaway food.

Our historic Surrey Street market was already important to local people before Covid-19, but we celebrate and thank the resilient traders who supplied essential goods in lockdown while following social distancing rules.

This borough faces a long economic recovery from the impact of Covid-19, so reopening more of our colourful and vibrant market stalls while observing social distancing to keep the public safe is a small but significant step for local people and the wider community.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

### United Response to Economic Renewal

Croydon is uniting the public, private and voluntary sector at a local and regional level to drive the borough's post-Covid economic revival and ensure a fairer, sustainable future.

Following on the essential work carried out by the Croydon Business Taskforce, Croydon's new Sustainable Economic Renewal Board include key local and regional stakeholders including the Greater London Authority (GLA), Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, Croydon Business Improvement District (BID), London South bank University, Croydon BME Forum and a major developer and contractor.

Together they will co-ordinate plans for the sustainable revival of the borough's economy, business and employment; housing; planning and development; regeneration, social infrastructure and culture; travel and transport; community safety; and third sector and volunteering.

Croydon has responded swiftly to the Covid-19 health crisis, working together as one strong partnership to care for and protect the borough's most vulnerable residents, while offering welfare support to many more impacted by the economic crisis, as well as a bespoke training and employment support package for residents whose jobs or finances have been impacted.

Supporting local business has been a priority throughout the pandemic, and the Council's emergency response was shaped and informed by the Croydon Business Taskforce, a group of partners which included London Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Croydon BID and London Growth Hub). This group of experts supported the Council to provide a strategic emergency response that placed support at the heart of our business community.

The Sustainable Economic Renewal Board aims to build on this co-ordinated partnership work as it develops Croydon's strategic approach to the long-term impact of the pandemic and the needs of the community, particularly those who have been hardest hit by the crisis.

Croydon has united to respond swiftly to this public health crisis, with the public, private and voluntary sector working as a strong partnership to care for and protect our most vulnerable, and support residents and businesses in their time of need.

The consequences of Covid-19 will be far-reaching and long-term for communities across the country – it has exacerbated every existing inequality, from health to housing need. We are taking a proactive and co-ordinated approach by bringing together our key partners at a local and regional level, to urgently address these

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

consequences and plan for a sustainable future, building on the confidence in our town and ensuring that our local community are the first to benefit.

### Reopening Our Town & District Centres- Retail Release



A raft of new initiatives have been implemented to help residents and visitors stay safe while travelling and supporting local shops in Croydon as more businesses prepare to reopened this week.

Around 65% of Croydon's businesses have reopened their doors on 15 June for the first time since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown, with more expected to follow in July.

And with social distancing still in place, Croydon Council worked with its partners across transport, business, safety and the voluntary sector to support everyone to follow the guidance as the town and district centres start to unlock.

The council and Croydon BID have provided businesses with advice and support to help those who can, restart safely, ensuring they are aware of government guidance and helping them to access PPE where required.

In streets and public spaces in the town and district centres, new signage, pavement stencils and one-way systems for pedestrians supported visitors to maintain social distancing while navigating the town and waiting to enter shops. Pavements were also widened in busy areas, giving people more room to pass each other.

At the same time, new transport schemes are being introduced to help reduce motor traffic and create more space for people to walk and cycle safely. The council

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

continues to explore options for new low traffic neighbourhoods and pop-up cycle lanes to support the rapid increase in cycling and walking.

The council, Transport for London (TfL) and the rail industry have worked together to help the public use public transport safely and ensure safe space can be maintained.

In the town centre, temporary traffic management and pedestrian measures were implemented to accommodate social distancing in certain areas where the pavement is too narrow. Locations include Dingwall Road, Fell Road, High Street, Katharine Street, Park Lane, Lansdowne Road, North End, Wellesley Road, and St George's Walk.

Outside the town centre area, pavements have also been widened at the following locations: Portland Road, High Street South Norwood, Crystal Palace Triangle, Brigstock Road, London Road, Southbridge Road, Clifford Road and Craignish Avenue.

Croydon Council are also supporting those businesses who are preparing to reopen on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, working together to do help businesses to open as safely as possible, adapting streets and public spaces so that people can feel confident travelling to and from work, and supporting their local shops and utilising outdoor areas to support the evening and night time economy.

### **Lobbying on Behalf of Croydon Businesses**

Croydon Council has called on government to provide local authorities with additional funding so they can better support businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a joint letter, Councillor Tony Newman, leader of the council and Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed, cabinet member for economy and jobs, warned government there are businesses in desperate need of support falling through the gaps, because they do not meet the eligibility criteria for government funding.

The letter, addressed to Chancellor Rishi Sunak MP and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Alok Sharma MP, advised more than 10,000 Croydon businesses failed to qualify for the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, forcing them to either rely on schemes such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan and Bounce Back Loans, or try to survive with no support from government funding at all.

Despite the recent announcement of the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, the additional payment – five percent of the council's funding allocation – will fail to

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

address the level of need in Croydon by a considerable margin, meaning some members of Croydon's business community will continue to miss out on the essential lifeline of financial support.

As a result, the councillors have urged government to take immediate, much needed action by: providing extra funding to support businesses falling through the gaps despite the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund; enabling the council to use any residual business grant funding to support businesses; and to broaden the categories of business eligible for grant through the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund to include companies in the supply chain to hospitality and leisure industries.

### **Croydon enhances employment support for those left jobless by Covid-19**



This week new figures emerged that showed the continuing rise of claimants for Universal Credit, with Croydon seeing an increase of 2.1% since April with London seeing a 2.6% increase.

In response Croydon Council is working with Croydon residents whose jobs have been impacted by Covid-19, of the wide range of employment support available to help get their careers back on track.

The impact coronavirus has had on livelihoods across the UK has been significant, and in preparation, Croydon has been developing its work to provide enhanced support to residents whose employment, skills, and training opportunities have been affected.

As part of its emergency response, the council has been working with different businesses and providers to enable it to adapt established initiatives to create new training and employment opportunities for residents.

The council, in partnership with Croydon College has successfully secured £393k funding from the Greater London Authority's Apprenticeships for London fund, which will be used to build on the success of the council's 100 in 100 apprenticeship campaign.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

As one of only two projects funded in London, the money will enable Croydon to offer residents a high quality career pathway through apprenticeships and see the council able to further assist small and medium sized businesses to create apprenticeships across a range of sectors and social enterprises. The money will also be used to create an online apprenticeship portal full of information, advice and guidance on starting an apprenticeship.

Croydon Care Academy is another initiative launching in response to Covid-19. The academy will bring together a range of Croydon health and social care employers and sector professionals so employers and training providers can together address and fill job vacancies and apprenticeships, whilst helping residents develop the skills they need for exciting careers within health and social care.

Unemployed residents will soon be able to receive tailored one to one support to help them become work ready, and to access training through a new partnership between jobs brokerage service Croydon Works and Gateway's Employment Support team, creating a one stop shop for local people already using the council's Gateway service.

Croydon Works continues to work hard on behalf of our residents and has had some success in these difficult times, placing 11 residents in jobs during June. And, as a direct outcome of taster sessions with CALAT in May, residents have secured places on a variety of pre-employment skills courses including Functional Skills, Manual Handling, Digital Skills and Step Into Employment.

Croydon Works also hosted a virtual National Employability Day. It was opened by Councillor Shahul-Hameed, with workshops run by employers, a Croydon Council Apprenticeships update, Gateway colleagues and CALAT held employment related sessions too. It was a great success.

Furthermore the council's partnership with London South Bank University and Croydon Creative Campus will see the town centre become home to a new campus giving residents vital access to higher education to boost their skills, employment and economic prospects in the heart of the borough.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on employment, and in Croydon, we are more determined than ever to support those affected.

Croydon will continue to work tirelessly to create new jobs and training opportunities for those out of work, including by working with local employers to support them to rebuild and create employment opportunities for local people.

We will also continue to work closely with those in the training sector, promoting new and existing courses and programmes available to residents to enable them to develop the skills needed as we adjust to new ways of working. Employment, skills and training support is there for all residents.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**





# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

This offering includes CALAT, one of the largest adult education providers in the country offering more than 500 part-time courses every year in three venues across the borough of Croydon on behalf of Croydon Council. CALAT's award-winning provision has now been delivering courses to residents in the borough for over 70 years. The programme includes a wide variety of recreational, academic, pre-vocational and vocational courses. Subject areas include; Health & social care, creative arts, business administration, ICT, languages, English and maths, English for speakers of other languages, Childcare and education and courses for adults with learning disabilities.

For more information on the employment and training support available visit: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/jobs-and-training-0>

### Croydon Digital and Croydon 10th on Tech Start-ups.



Croydon has been named as one of the top digital destinations in the country with thousands of new tech start-ups making the borough their home.

The most recent figures from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) show Croydon saw 2,450 digital start-ups register in the borough over a year, the 10<sup>th</sup> highest number in the UK and seventh highest in London.

Croydon Council has run a host of networking, idea sharing and skill-development sessions to help digital businesses thrive, creating job opportunities for residents.

Like other sectors digital companies are now facing enormous challenges due to coronavirus and Croydon Council has championed local firms, administering government grants while calling for more support for businesses whose needs are not being met.

The number of new start-ups, reported by chartered accountants UHY Hacker Young, comes after Croydon's tech sector grew by 41 per cent over five years, now employing

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

more than 8,000 people with the borough offering a range of traditional, flexible and shared office space.

Croydon Digital, a shared platform run by and for the borough's digital community, offers a vibrant and active space for tech workers and organisations to collaborate and celebrate successes.

These figures pay tribute to Croydon's growing reputation as a digital town that helps tech start-ups grow but I know many of these firms are facing unprecedented challenges due to coronavirus. Croydon's growing tech sector is a major part of the borough's long-term economic recovery which is why we introduced a new funding grant to support small firms including those taking advantage of flexible and shared working spaces.

#### Applications open for apprenticeships in small firms

Small and medium-sized Croydon companies wanting apprentices can bid for a share of £200,000 from today (Friday) under the council's long-term drive to get more young people into work.



Launched to mark National Employability Day, the council website has information and application forms so companies can apply to Croydon Council's Apprenticeship Fund.

The £200,000 fund is available to fund the costs of training for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that want to develop apprentices' job skills over a 12-month period using approved apprenticeship standards. For information on the process and help with applying, visit the [council website](#).

In return, the council asks employers to provide a good-quality apprenticeship; offer a permanent job after 12 months, where possible; and work towards accreditation with the borough's [Good Employer Charter](#) that promotes equality and diversity in the workplace, fair wages and job creation.

Croydon's money comes from a top-sliced 0.5% of the borough's biggest firms' tax bill, which HMRC redistributes annually to councils nationwide to encourage more apprenticeships in their areas.

Last year the council's job brokerage service Croydon Works used this money to successfully hit an apprenticeship target of [100 in 100](#) days, reaching a total of 110 new recruits in that period across [a range of employers](#), including Price Building Services and Solutions, Axis Europe, PE Global and Croydon Council.

**AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**



# Economy and Jobs

## Cabinet Member Bulletin

### Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

#### July 2020

---

As well as launching the £200,000 fund for SMEs, the council is also marking National Employability Day today with a full day's [online jobs seminar](#) that includes 1-2-1 telephone coaching, information on the council's [award-winning supported employment team](#) and sessions on what it is like to work at major employers including the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and Govia Thameslink