

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	CABINET	
DATE	28 June 2023	
REPORT TITLE:	STAGE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM SCRUTINY	
LEAD OFFICER:	Jane West, Corporate Director for Resources Adrian May, Interim Head of Democratic Services T: 020 8726 6000 X 62529. Email: adrian.may@croydon.gov.uk	
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Rowenna Davis Chair, Scrutiny and Overview Committee	
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	<p style="text-align: center;">Recommendations that have been developed from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and its Sub-Committees since the last Cabinet meeting are provided in the appendices to this report. The constitution requires that an interim or full response is provided within 2 months of this Cabinet meeting.</p>	
KEY DECISION?	No	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents recommendations to the Executive from Scrutiny following meetings of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 22 May and 6 June 2023 and Streets & Environment Sub-Committee in March 2023 (approved by Scrutiny Committee in May).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Executive Mayor has the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations contained within this report. The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is asked to:
- 2.2 Receive the recommendation arising from the meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 22 May 2023 (Appendix 1), 6 June 2023 (Appendix 2) and the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee on 14 March 2023 (Appendix 3).

- 2.3 To provide a substantive response to the recommendation (a Scrutiny Stage 2 Report) at the Cabinet meeting on 27 September 2023.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 3.1 There is a statutory requirement for Cabinet to receive the recommendations made by Scrutiny.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 22 May 2023

Item: Month 11 Financial Performance Monitoring Report

- 4.1 The Scrutiny & Overview Committee welcomed the streamlined process for publishing Financial Performance Monitoring reports, as well as the provision of a dedicated page on the Council's websites for the reports, as it would help to improve transparency.
- 4.2 The Committee was concerned that given the precarious nature of the Council's finances, the three month delay between month end and publishing financial performance monitoring report would make it challenging to identify issues affecting budget delivery at an early enough stage. However, it was noted that the current timeframe for financial reporting was not out of keeping with other local authorities.
- 4.3 The Committee had concern about whether the financial performance monitoring reports were as understandable as they could be for Members and the public, and welcomed the invitation of the Cabinet Member of Finance to meet to discuss the report.

Item: Annual Asset Disposal Plan 2023-24

- 4.4 The Scrutiny & Overview Committee welcomed the reassurance that the Mayor will have sign-off on any assets added to the list of disposals, while at the same time, officers will have delegated powers to be able to respond flexibly to the market in completing any such disposals.
- 4.5 The Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed that ward councillors may be able to provide valuable local insight on the potential implications that could arise from the disposal of council assets, particularly on those assets that were in use.
- 4.6 The Committee welcomed confirmation that individual equality impact assessments would be prepared for assets added to the disposal list that were in use or occupied.

Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 6 June 2023

Item: Executive Mayor of Croydon – Scrutiny Update

- 4.7** The Scrutiny & Overview Committee noted that it was a continuing challenge for the Council to balance the available staff resources to enable the delivery of transformation programmes at the same time as continuing to provide business as usual services. The Committee is aware that the 2023/24 budget has an allocation of £10m in 2023-24 for transformation work to fund extra capacity. The Committee agreed that it would seek reassurance in the coming year, that this budget was being effectively allocated.
- 4.8** The Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed that it would move the item on the Mayor and Council's Relationship with the Improvement & Assurance Panel from the 6 June 2023 agenda to its next meeting on 25 July 2023 and include a discussion on the duty of best value.
- 4.9** Although a response was expected from the Government, until it was received there remained a concern that the specific detail on the Improvement and Assurance Panel's new statutory role with the Council had not been clarified.
- 4.10** Of more significant concern for the long-term financial sustainability of the Council, was the clarity on the outcome of the request to Government for the treatment of its unsustainable debt. Until that outcome was known, uncertainty remains in the 2024-25 budget setting process.
- 4.11** The Scrutiny & Overview Committee was disappointed to hear that it was unlikely that a planning application for the town centre would be finalised this year, but welcomed the commitment of the Mayor to continue pushing the developer, Westfield, on the redevelopment and looked forward to seeing progress on meanwhile use within the town centre in the next year.

Streets & Environment Sub-Committee – 14 March 2023

Item Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract Specification

- 4.12** The Sub-Committee were of the view that officers and the Cabinet Member had a good understanding of the work that needed to happen, but Members acknowledged that it was a challenging market for Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing.

Item: Cabinet Report - Local Planning Authority Service Transformation

- 4.13** The Sub-Committee were of the view that the digitalisation and workforce workstreams would be key in ensuring that transformation of the Planning department was successful, and that the Sub-Committee should continue to monitor progress in these areas.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Scrutiny meetings do not necessarily result in any recommendations to the executive.

6 CONSULTATION / PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

6.1 The recommendations were developed from the deliberations of either the Scrutiny & Overview Committee or one of its Sub-Committees.

7 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 Outcome 1: The Council balances its books, listens to residents and delivers good sustainable services:

Priority 4: Ensure good governance is embedded and adopt best practice The Council must learn the lessons of past failures and embed sound governance processes to ensure that decision-making is transparent, open and honest. These must ensure effective control of our projects and programmes and encourage meaningful scrutiny and challenge.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 The Scrutiny recommendations to the Executive may have financial implications. Following the recommendations being received at Cabinet, the Executive will identify and consider any financial implications as part of their response.

8.1.2 If any recommendation is subsequently progressed for consideration and decision by the Executive Mayor in Cabinet, full financial (as well as legal and equalities implications) would be presented.

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 Under Section 9F Local Government Act 2000 ("The Act"), Scrutiny and Overview Committee (SOC) have the powers to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken in connection with the discharge of any executive and non-executive functions and to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority with respect to the discharge of those functions. SOC also has the power to make reports or recommendations to the executive or to the authority on matters, which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of its area.

8.2.2 Under Section 9FE of the Act, there is a duty on Cabinet to respond to the scrutiny report, indicating what (if any) action Cabinet proposes to take, within 2 months of receiving the report and recommendations.

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

8.3 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the contents of this report

8.4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.4.1 The recommendations in the appendices to this report have equality implications and will require an EQIA as part of the development of the proposals. The implications will be explored to identify impact and mitigation utilised to negate any adverse impact where necessary.

Approved by: Denise McCausland Equality Programme Manager 16/05/2023

8.5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.5.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from the contents of this report, the report received recommendations from scrutiny, but no decision for recommendation.

8.6 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

8.6.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from the contents of this report, the report received recommendations from scrutiny, but no decision for recommendation.

8.7 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

8.7.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

There are no Data Protection implications at this stage, but that the situation will be reviewed again at Stage 2 when Cabinet provide their response to the proposed recommendations.

HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?

NO

9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 22 May 2023

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 6 June 2023

Appendix 3 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendation from Streets & Environment Sub-Committee – 14 March 2023

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 22 May 2023

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=3657&Ver=4>

Meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee on 6 June 2023

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=3510&Ver=4>

Meeting of the Streets & Environment Sub-Committee on 14 March 2023

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=170&MId=2947>