

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	CABINET	
DATE	31 January 2024	
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:	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.	
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 Children & Young People Sub-Committee held on 10 October 2023, the Streets and Environment Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023 and the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 21 November 2023.

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 recommendations arising from the meetings of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee held on 10 October 2023 (Appendix 1), the Streets and Environment Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023 (Appendix 2) and the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 21 November 2023 (Appendix 3).

- 2.3 To provide a substantive response to the recommendation (a Scrutiny Stage 2 Report) at the Cabinet meeting on 27 March 2024.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 3.1 Part 4E of the Council's Constitution: Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules (paragraphs 8.5 – 8.7) and Section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000 require the executive to consider and respond to a Scrutiny and Overview report within 2 months beginning with the date on which the executive receive the report or recommendation.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

Children & Young People Sub-Committee – 10 October 2023

Item: Youth Justice Plan 23/24

- 4.1 The Sub-Committee thanked the officers and Cabinet Members for attending and sharing open and honest responses to Member's questions.
- 4.2 The Sub-Committee concluded that it would like to revisit the Youth Justice Plan early in its Work Programme for 24/25, with a particular focus on how parents and carers would be involved in the development of the Plan.

Streets & Environment Sub-Committee – 1 November 2023

Item: Cleaner Croydon

- 4.3 The Sub-Committee concluded that they would like to add the 'blitz clean' programme to its work programme for 2024/25, to monitor whether the programme was successful and having a sustained impact on district centres, alongside data on the number of businesses and residents engaged during the cleans.

Item: Local Plan Review

- 4.4 The Sub-Committee welcomed the update on the Local Plan review, and for officer's and the Cabinet Member's responses to Member's questions.
- 4.5 Members welcomed the responses to questions on consultations with developers and residents and were keen to see that all those affected by the Plan were able to contribute their views

Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 21 November 2023

Item: 2023-24 Period 5 Financial Performance Monitoring Report

- 4.6 The Committee welcomed the reassurance given that the overspend within the Housing Revenue Account, to address the backlog of repairs, was reaching its peak and that there were controls in place to monitor and manage expenditure.

- 4.7** The Committee noted that work continued on the delivery of identified savings within Children's and Adults Social Care budgets that required further evidencing before being included in projections, with it anticipated that these would be delivered by the year end.
- 4.8** The Committee welcomed the confirmation that their previous recommendations relating to council tax collection had been accepted, but with the reintroduction of enforcement processes, recognised that there would be value in the Service engaging with local advocacy organizations to review processes after a period of operation.
- 4.9** The Committee raised concern about the quality of the questions in the Budget Consultation in comparison to those in the Mayor's resident's engagement survey.

Item: Progress update on tranche 1 asset disposals, seeking approval for tranche 2 of asset for disposal and approval of the update of the Community Asset Transfer Policy

- 4.10** The Committee noted the progress that had been made to date in delivering the asset disposals identified in tranche 1 and that more sales were needed to help improve the Council's financial position.
- 4.11** Although the opportunity to review the report before Cabinet was appreciated, the Committee was concerned by feedback received from community and voluntary organisations that they had not been notified about potential disposals of their leased premises before publication. As such, the apology given by the Executive Mayor to those organisations was welcomed.
- 4.12** As feedback from the local community and voluntary sector indicated uncertainty about how the proposed disposals would affect their tenancies, the Committee welcomed clarification that there would be forthcoming conversations with the tenants about their lease options.
- 4.13** The Committee welcomed confirmation that it was likely the list of properties available for Community Asset Transfer would be available before the end of the year.
- 4.14** The Committee welcomed confirmation that additional capacity had been brought into the team managing the asset disposal process to speed up the pace of disposal.

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 EXECUTIVE MAYOR'S BUSINESS PLAN

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.

7.2 Outcome 3: Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential:

Priority 2: Make Croydon safer for young people. Making the borough safer for our young people is a top priority. In the year to July 2022, serious youth violence in Croydon rose by almost a quarter compared to the previous 12 months. We will work as one Council to strengthen partnerships with the voluntary, business and statutory sectors and schools in Croydon to tackle the root causes of youth crime, protect those at risk of offending and embed a strong joint approach to prevent youth violence and help our young people to be, and feel, safe.

7.3 Outcome 4: Croydon is a cleaner, safer and healthier place, a borough we're proud to call home:

Priority 1: Make our streets and open spaces cleaner so that Croydon is a place that residents and businesses can feel proud to call home. Residents expect and deserve to feel proud of our borough as they walk down the street. That means working with them and partners to look after our streets, parks and open spaces, and crack down on the graffiti and litter which blight our communities.

Priority 4: Ensure new homes are safe, well-designed and in keeping with the local area. New development will be design-led, not density-led. While we must continue to plan for new homes, schemes must respect the views of local people, enhance the character of our places, and recognise the need for amenity space.

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 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. The Committee 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: Mark Turnbull, Interim Corporate Solicitor (28/11/2023)

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 Council has a statutory duty, when exercising its functions, to comply with the provisions set out in the Sec 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council must in the performance of its functions, therefore, have due regard to:

- i. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- ii. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- iii. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.4.2 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.

8.4.3 Approved by: Naseer Ahmad on behalf of the Equalities Manager. (24/11/2023)

9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Children & Young People Sub-Committee – 10 October 2023

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Streets and Environment Sub-Committee – 1 November 2023

Appendix 3 – Scrutiny Stage 1: Recommendations from Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 21 November 2023

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Meeting of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee held on 10 October 2023

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=167&MId=3751>

Meeting of the Streets and Environment Sub-Committee held on 1 November 2023

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=170&MId=3507>

Meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 21 November 2023

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=3513&Ver=4>