

Cabinet

Meeting of held on Wednesday, 15 May 2024 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Mayor Jason Perry (Chair);

Lynne Hale (Deputy (Statutory) Executive Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes (Vice-Chair)), Councillors Jeet Bains (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration), Jason Cummings (Cabinet Member for Finance), Maria Gatland (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Yvette Hopley (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care), Ola Kolade (Cabinet Member for Community Safety), Scott Roche (Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment) and Andy Stranack (Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture)

Also Present: Councillors Rowenna Davis (Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee), Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair of Scrutiny and Overview), Stuart King (Leader of the Opposition), Callton Young (Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance), Janet Campbell (Shadow Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care), Christopher Herman (Shadow Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment), and Chrishni Reshekaron (Shadow Cabinet Member for Homes)

PART A

155/24 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 24 April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

156/24 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

157/24 **Urgent Business (If any)**

There were none.

158/24 **Stage One - Recommendations from Scrutiny**

The Executive Mayor introduced both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Scrutiny reports – Recommendations and Responses to Recommendations. Both reports were taken together.

The Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Councillor Rowenna Davis, shared with Cabinet that:

- The Scrutiny and Overview Committee (the Committee) recommended as part of the work on community safety that all Councillors of every party and position engage with their Safer Neighbourhood Teams which is particularly important in terms of community intelligence.
- The Committee noted that efficiency and accountability could be improved if feedback on proposed recommendations and whether they were already in progress could be received and clarified early in the process.
- In regard to the council's relationship with the voluntary sector, the Committee (and Executive Mayor) felt that more could and should be done to help. Every voluntary organisation spoken to as part of the round table listening event raised concerns about their relationship with the council in terms of communication and culture. Whilst also facing huge funding challenges the voluntary sector tries to communicate respectfully and work together with the council but it was felt that the council were not reciprocal.
- The Committee acknowledged the concerns and noted that the council was at the beginning of the journey to reset the relationship with promising plans to support local groups to be able to bid for council contracts, including extra training and support. Although it is too early to judge the success of these ideas the intention and direction of travel was welcomed.
- The Committee proposed a few extra recommendations to help strengthen and improve the relationship with the voluntary sector.

2.1 The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **Resolved** to:

1. Receive the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 26 March 2024 (Appendix 1).
2. To provide a substantive response to these recommendations (a Scrutiny Stage 2 Report) at the Cabinet meeting on 24 July 2024.

1.1. The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the responses and action plans attached to this report as Appendices 1, 2, 3 & 4; and
2. Delegate authority to the officers identified in Appendices 1, 2, 3 & 4 to report back to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, or relevant Sub-Committee, within the periods specified in the agreed responses and action plans, and on progress made in implementing any action plan.

160/24

Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026 Performance Report

The Executive Mayor introduced the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026 Performance Report which looks at the journey of improvement for Croydon. Cabinet Members were invited to address the KPIs in their area.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale shared with Cabinet that housing continued to be a very challenging area in terms of delivery with data being central to many of the problems faced, the unreliability of it and the absence of any data at all. Accurate homelessness and temporary accommodation data will be submitted to the government at the end of May, for the first time following a two year pause due to the unreliability of the data.

A significant period of change has taken place, there has been a phased transition to a new IT system, the NEC system resulting in the build up of accurate and reliable information including data on households in temporary settings and the realisation that repairs demand is considerably higher than anticipated. As a result, there will be a review of the KPIs for 2024-2025 which will provide more realistic targets based on sound data and will be conducted in consultation with the Executive Mayor, the Housing Improvement Board and IAP. Any proposed changes to measures/targets will be presented to Cabinet for review and sign off.

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Maria Gatland was pleased to note that targets were being met. Cabinet noted the improvement in the M20 indicator which historically had shown as red, now there is much more connection with schools and colleges, extra case workers who are funded externally, and social media all of which resonated with young people. The Education, Health and Care plans also improved, and demand continues.

Councillor Gatland highlighted the M37 child protection plan remained red as it takes time to deliver change,

and is also impacted by families moving in and out of the borough. An active plan is in place for improvement in conjunction with Islington, the sector led improvement partners. There is a lot of work going on to enhance the lives of young people in the borough, and for further reassurance a meeting will take place with the Child protection Chairs soon.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yvette Hopley informed Cabinet that the indicators remain the same as when last presented. Cabinet noted that the red indicators were those were a number of clients that have been in the system for a long time. However, there is much work in progress currently, especially with Partners and over the next six months a significant change to the figures will be seen in the reports.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, Councillor Andy Stranack updated Cabinet on the latest collated data for Croydon's year as the London Borough of Culture and was pleased to note that the targets set out at the start of the programme by the funders had already been exceeded. The innovative approach to partnership working with the cultural sector across Croydon was highlighted by the volume of volunteers who helped run events and according to feedback the quality of those events were considered good or very good by 98%. Overall, the programme has kept to budget and achieved a small underspend.

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Councillor Ola Kolade shared with Cabinet that progress against the indicators continues to be monitored. Cabinet noted several successful achievements such as the commissioning of third sector partners to deliver a programme of outreach and engagement for young people at risk of violence across the hotspots building on the success of last years commissioned activity engaging young people and has enabled the expansion of the programme to a year long initiative. Effective collaboration between the council and partnerships in preventing and reducing violence was further demonstrated with the significant level of funding secured by the Minds programme to continue bringing positive change and creating better opportunities for young people. In regard to tackling violence against women and girls these operations have also been successful with arrests made. In the case of domestic abuse, the budget has been maintained and ringfenced to safeguard the most vulnerable residents in the borough, and remains the highest priority issue.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Jeet Bains advised Cabinet that there were no red indicators for the Planning and Regeneration portfolio. Cabinet noted that a high number of appeals continue to be received against decisions on planning applications, however, there is an above average rate of success in these appeals.

Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment, Councillor Scott Roche highlighted the key performance indicators from the report for Cabinet

who noted the continued improvements which are going in the right direction across the service.

Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings was pleased to share with Cabinet that the council is still predicting a year end under spend against its budgeted position. Cabinet noted that Council Tax is amber due to a phasing issue as a result of the pandemic (as with most boroughs) however, reassurance was given that the year end target on collection rates is expected to be achieved therefore there are no issues.

The Executive Mayor thanked Cabinet Members and colleagues for the updates and work in their areas.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor King noted that the thresholds set out in section 8 of the new escalation process were too high and requested that the monthly reports are made available to Scrutiny and Opposition lead Members as part of the good governance around service improvement and transformation. Further, although the opposition recognise the challenges and have confidence in the Leadership of the Housing department concerns were raised over the operational effectiveness, in particular the discharge of the homelessness responsibilities and remain sceptical that the answer to missing targets is to lower them.

The Executive Mayor responded by explaining that it is a long process repairing the housing department and the amount of work that now needs to be undertaken.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Lynne Hale reiterated how bad the service was previously as recognised externally by the ARK report. Currently the teams are working hard to repair the damage and provide residents with the service they deserve.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Callton Young questioned whether having one strategic budget KPI namely variance against net budget is good enough when the real test is negotiating debt write-off to address structural financial difficulties faced by the council. Also, are there concern on the data presented on violence with injury, knife crime with injury and void times given homelessness in the borough.

Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Jason Cummings responded to the finance points stating that the M1 indicator was the summation of the council's financial position and includes everything so is an excellent indicator of the financial concerns. There is capitalisation this year as in many years.

The Executive Mayor added that Croydon is on a trajectory of improvement and the commitment remains resolute.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **Resolved** to:

- 2.1 Note the Mayors Business Plan performance report (Appendix A and B) with latest data available on 28 February 2024 (unless otherwise stated) regarding overall council and partnership performance, and actions being taken to improve outputs.
- 2.2 Note that it is necessary to review measures within outcomes one, four and five of the Mayor's Business Plan to reflect changes to statutory reporting and the requirements of independent boards, as detailed in points 7.3 and 7.4 of this report.
- 2.2 Note the enhanced escalation process for areas where performance requires improvement, as detailed in section 8 of this report.

161/24

The Future of The Brighton Road Experimental Cycle Scheme

The Executive Mayor introduced the Brighton Road Cycle scheme which has been reviewed and a number of changes proposed. The technical review highlighted several benefits to the scheme however concerns were also highlighted in the schemes current form which will need to be altered to make it more accessible and safer.

Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Scott Roache informed Cabinet that the consultation identified problems with light segregation (the wands and defenders) and that it has been recommended to remove them. The recommendations represent a balanced approach to ensure the Brighton Road functions as a key corridor and high street,

The Corporate Director for Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery, Nick Hibberd further outlined some of the key aspects of the report, namely the light segregation. Officers feel that these issues should be dealt with promptly. Dialogue has been ongoing with TfL. The proposal is for the whole of the experimental cycle lane to be made permanent and the light segregation to be replaced with road markings. Cabinet noted that an additional road safety audit was commissioned which did not raise any road safety concerns in relation to the proposals.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Stuart King requested that the decision was deferred. Councillor King questioned that refusing to take the time that is still available to properly engage with TfL unnecessarily increased the risk of the clawback of money. Furthermore, is the decision maker aware that the financial risk could be greater as when Tower Hamlets rode back on its active travel measure, TfL suspended its LIP funding. The right course of action would be to defer the decision, engage properly with TfL, who will fund improvements and work with them, the

emergency service and other stakeholders to improve the cycle lanes rather than undermine them.

The Executive Mayor, Jason Perry responded that there is detailed safety evidence and knowledge around this scheme which show that there are safety concerns, and that the proposals will improve safety. The decision has not been rushed, there are ongoing discussions with TfL and the report is open about the risks. The decision is based on data and based on making it a safe scheme for all road users.

The Corporate Director for Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery, Nick Hibberd added that in terms of the timeline, following any decision made a further regulatory process will need to be followed. If the experimental order expires the cycle lane would need to be removed in its entirety whereas the object is to make the cycle lane permanent. The Corporate Director for Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery also highlighted the difference between local authorities and London boroughs who have removed infrastructure in its entirety where there is a greater risk of clawback than in this proposal which is to make the scheme permanent. Lastly, if there were potential for additional funding to invest in a different kind of cycle lane for London Road, that would require a whole new design and approval process which would take a long time to develop and deliver. There is nothing to preclude future changes but there would not be enough time to deliver those changes before the order expires in October.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **Resolved** to:

2.1 Make the following Experimental Orders (as listed in Annex 2) permanent:

- i) THE CROYDON (TRAFFIC MOVEMENT) (NO.22) Experimental ORDER 2023- Brighton Rd cycle scheme changes to bus lane restrictions (Order Ref 2023/40)
- ii) The Croydon (Prohibition and Restriction of Stopping, Loading and Waiting) and (Free Parking Places) (No.4) Experimental Order 2023 – Brighton Rd cycle scheme changes to waiting & loading restrictions (Order ref 2023/41)
- iii) The Croydon (On-Street Charged-For Parking Places) (No.4) Experimental Order 2023 – Brighton Rd cycle scheme changes to parking bays (Order Ref 2023/42)

2.2 For the reasons set out at paragraph 3.3 agree to the removal of all light segregation (wands and defenders) along the cycle lanes

given the issues identified from the technical review as detailed more fully at Appendix 1 annex 2.

- 2.3 Note that officers will separately be undertaking a review of parking places in roads adjoining Brighton Road and junctions which adjoin the Brighton Road to assess whether additional measures might be required to ease congestion and traffic progression in those roads and through those junctions, following on from concerns raised in relation to the impact of the operation of the various Experimental Orders (listed at 2.1) on adjoining roads and junctions. The review will include making adjustments to existing parking places and introducing new ones, additionally specific junctions have been identified for inclusion in the review. (See Appendix A annex 4 for more details)
- 2.4 Note that if it is necessary, following this review in 2.3, to seek additional traffic management measures, these will be addressed either under existing delegated authority of the Corporate Director Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Recovery or brought forward for further consideration by the Executive Mayor or Executive Mayor in Cabinet as appropriate.

162/24

Adult Social Care & Health Peer Challenge - Findings & Next Steps

The Executive Mayor introduced the Adult Social Care & Health Peer Challenge – Findings & Next Steps which outlined the findings from the Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) Peer Challenge provided by the LGA to provide feedback on services, and highlighted a number of areas of good practice and key areas of improvement.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Councillor Yvette Hopley, shared her thanks to everyone who took part in the review. Much was learnt. A plan has been implemented and will be delivered.

The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health, Annette McPartland, echoed the thanks of Councillor Yvette Hopley. Cabinet noted that it had been an open and honest discussion with ongoing challenges and improvements to be implemented. The Peer challenge has been beneficial to Croydon in preparation for CPC.

The Executive Mayor also offered his thanks to everyone who took part.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, Councillor Janet Campbell added her thanks and was glad that staff were adhering to the Care Act. Councillor Campbell asked how the challenges were being addressed especially with the strain on staff, the delays caused by vacancies and the targets

not being met. What measures are being implemented to support officers?

The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health, Annette McPartland responded that she was in agreement with the comments made but stated that nothing is perfect. The team are analysing how things can be improved, so that Croydon can be the best.

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **Resolved**:

- 2.1 to note the findings of the ASCH Peer Challenge contained in Appendix 1, and summarised in 4.7 of this report;
- 2.2 to support next steps and the journey of continuous improvement the Directorate is undertaking, as set out in section 4.9 – 4.10 of the report and our Assurance Improvement Plan at Appendix 2;
- 2.3 to support publication of the Peer Challenge Report and our associated Assurance Improvement Plan.

163/24

Air Quality Delivery Plan 2024-2029

The Executive Mayor introduced the Air Quality Delivery Plan 2024-2029

Cabinet Member for Homes, Councillor Scott Roache, provided Cabinet with the reasons for a statutory consultation and the actions proposed to reduce pollution, raise awareness and change people's behaviours to ensure that Croydon is a clean and safe place to live.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment, Councillor Christopher Herman asked the Executive Mayor if he was fully behind the incentives for greener forms of transport.

The Executive Mayor responded "yes".

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet **Resolved** to:

- 2.1 Approve the commencement of a statutory consultation on the draft Air Quality Delivery Plan 2024-2029 attached at Appendix 1 to this report, for a period of 8 weeks.
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery, in consultation with the Executive Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment, to consider the outcome of the statutory consultation on the draft Air Quality Delivery Plan, approve such amendments to the draft Plan as are necessary and approve the final Croydon Air Quality Delivery Plan 2024-2029 for adoption.

The meeting ended at 7.36 pm