

For general release

REPORT TO:	Scrutiny & Overview Committee 5 March 2019
SUBJECT:	Cabinet Member Question Time
LEAD OFFICER:	Jacqueline Harris Baker, Executive Director of Resources Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director of Place Hazel Simmonds, Executive Director of Gateway, Strategy and Engagement
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Hamida Ali Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon and Communities
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Councillor Hamida Ali

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

- Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home;
- People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives;
- Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential.

Crucial to the delivery of any of our priorities and objectives in Croydon is the impact on our residents, whether adult, child or young person. This report details how the council's equality and diversity agenda is imperative to secure positive outcomes for all residents.

Safety is a top priority and working with our partners, our activities are regularly reviewed and embedded for all residents to live, work and socialise in the borough without harm.

Our businesses feel confident that our standards are clear and easy to access, and feel supported that the council is supportive of their delivery.

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	Policy and Partnerships
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	Delivering for Croydon, ensuring that safety and communities are at the heart of our delivery. To provide an update on all areas of the Cabinet Member's portfolio, and map the progress made

	against our priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides a strategic overview of the progress and challenges of 2018/19. It further provides a summary of service budget issues, both for the immediate and longer term, in addition to any strategies and policies that will be worked on over the coming 12 months.
- 1.2. This report also acts as a progress update and response to the conclusions and recommendations made at meetings concerning the areas of this portfolio.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. I am pleased to introduce my first scrutiny report following the successful re-election of this Administration in May 2018.
- 2.2. This report highlights our accomplishments across what is a diverse portfolio of services. We are delivering our manifesto commitments as reflected in the council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022. Specifically this report will update on the following Corporate Plan themes and objectives;
 - Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home;
 - People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives;
 - Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential.
- 2.3. Adopted by the council on 8 October 2018, the Corporate Plan sets out how we will deliver against our manifesto commitments, working with businesses, residents and partners. Delivery Planning will ensure that service delivery and projects are driven with our new ways of working in mind, ensuring a system-wide approach to working with partners.
- 2.4. The Corporate Plan gives emphasis to delivering services that help residents and businesses thrive in Croydon; encouraging personal responsibility for positive outcomes. Our vision focusses on reducing inequalities, supporting health, happiness, and independence, and maintaining a safe place where people choose to live, work and socialize, and everyone has the opportunity to flourish.

3. EVERYONE FEELS SAFER IN THEIR STREET, NEIGHBOURHOOD AND HOME

Community Safety

- 3.1 Ensuring that Croydon is a safe place to live, work and visit was a clear commitment within the manifesto and Corporate Plan. We need to reduce the fear of crime and ensure more people feel safer in their street, neighbourhood and home. We have a responsibility to keep our residents safe.
- 3.2 Improving community safety is not the responsibility of the Council alone. In order to tackle the challenges that Croydon faces, and for any improvements to

be sustained, we must work in partnership. The Safer Croydon Partnership acts as the statutory Community Safety Partnership for Croydon. The partnership is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of Croydon's Community Safety Strategy. The partnership comprises a wide range of partners, including police, fire, probation, health, businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations.

- 3.3 The Community Safety Strategy aims to reduce the overall crime rate in Croydon by focusing on violent crime and domestic abuse, improving the safety of children and young people, and tackling anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. Within the Corporate Plan, and with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership, we have a genuine commitment to make Croydon the safest London borough for young people.
- 3.4 Our preventative and community-oriented approach towards tackling serious youth violence is gaining recognition across a number of our key stakeholders including, London Councils, the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Metropolitan Police Service, and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). We believe treating youth violence as a public health issue is the best way to make a difference. A public health approach means developing an evidence-led, preventative and long-term approach.

Partnership & Intelligence – governance

- 3.5 The Safer Croydon Partnership (SCP) and intelligence unit is responsible for coordinating the bidding for MOPAC local crime prevention funding (LCPF). Following the restructure of the partnership in autumn 2017, the community safety team has been supporting the function, with the new governance structure. This includes the executive board, five thematic programme boards and their supporting case management and problem solving panels. The current thematic boards are aligned to the Partnership's key strategic priorities including;
- Youth crime and safety
 - Domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV)
 - Offender management
 - ASB and environmental crime
 - Confidence and community engagement
- 3.6 The support the team provides includes the creation and monitoring of the partnership key performance framework, annual strategic assessment, bi-monthly thematic updates, LCPF funding returns and in-depth thematic reviews presented at the executive board.
- 3.7 The team is currently producing a refreshed strategic assessment to inform the thematic action plans for 2019/20, alongside a public survey on community safety issues, which has had over 1,000 responses to date. A key challenge for the partnership is that the majority of partners are now structured to deliver services at a regional level. This includes probation, community rehabilitation company (CRC), and the police, who are in the process of moving to a tri-borough structure encompassing Sutton, Bromley and Croydon. As these changes are designed to deliver management savings, the capacity for partners to engage in local partnership structures has reduced.

Knife crime and serious violence

- 3.8 Serious violence and violent crime is a key priority for the Safer Croydon Partnership.
- 3.9 Whilst not responsible for front line delivery, the community safety team has also coordinated the partnership's response to Serious Youth Violence (SYV) and knife crime, including the creation of the borough's SYV and knife crime action plan. This coordination is managed through the Gangs and SYV Sub-Group with representatives from council services, Community Rehabilitation Company, health, police, voluntary and community sector, and education sector.
- 3.10 The group has been managing the delivery of the SYV and knife crime action plan which has over 50 actions under the themes: Plan, Prepare, Protect, Pursue and Prevent. The plan was cited as best practice at the London Knife Crime Conference on 27 June, by London Councils, MOPAC and the Metropolitan Police Service.
- 3.11 In addition to the partnership group there is the SYV forum set up by the Croydon BME forum which brings together voluntary and community sector organisations working in this area – enabling engagement with over 30 partner organisations who are delivering work to tackle SYV and knife crime in Croydon.
- 3.12 A key challenge has been coordinating the volume of activity currently being undertaken, with multiple funding streams that sit outside of the partnership's governance structure. The partnership has, for example, mapped over 165 interventions going into Croydon schools that are relevant to the SYV and knife crime prevention. Whilst it is fantastic to have such a range of activities, it is very challenging to identify exactly what is leading to the reductions Croydon has seen in SYV and knife crime since January 2018.
- 3.13 Croydon is currently leading on a nationwide project carrying out online test purchasing, by a young person, of knives. This is funded through National Trading Standards and we are finding that a significant percentage of test purchase attempts are resulting in knives being delivered to us. All such cases are proceeding to further investigation with a view to potential legal action being taken against the retailers. In addition, a further project of test-purchasing cosmetic products which we are having tested for the presence of illegal skin-whitening agent is taking place. This team also deals with doorstep scams, other age-restricted products such as alcohol and tobacco, and the sale of counterfeit products.
- 3.14 The current enforcement notice issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) against the MPS has also impacted on the ability of the police to share gangs' information until the ICO are satisfied that the MPS has improved its policies and practices. The ICO has announced a second investigation into partners that receive police information which may make partners increasing reluctant to share data due to the risk of ICO sanctions.

Violence Reduction Network

- 3.15 As set out earlier in the report, we believe treating youth violence as a public health issue is the best way to make a difference. A public health approach means developing an evidence-led, preventative and long-term approach. Our work to date has gained significant recognition, however, further improvements are needed and the improvements that have been achieved need to be sustained. Therefore, the Council recently announced the proposal to establish a Violence Reduction Network, and engagement with partners, stakeholders and the community is currently underway.
- 3.16 Compared to other London boroughs, youth violence and weapon enabled violence in Croydon has been falling at a significant rate since January 2018.
- Knife crime with injury where the victim is under 24 reduced by 27%, with Croydon ranked 7th highest of the 32 London boroughs.
 - Total knife crime reduced by just under 17% in Croydon in 2018 and is ranked 12th highest.
 - Whilst Croydon ranks highest in London for Serious Youth Violence, the borough also has one of the highest youth populations in the city (93,000).
 - Based on the number of young people living in the borough, Croydon is ranked 16th highest rate in London with 3.7 offences per 1,000 young people. This is one place lower compared to January 2019.

Croydon Violence Reduction Approach: Framework and Delivery Model

- 3.17 One of the key priorities for the administration was to adopt a public health approach to violence for the borough. In January 2019 the council held a violence reduction conference to start to shape the approach and how we would deliver it. Some of the clear messages from the conference were that the approach needs to be built on the existing provision in the borough, that the community and voluntary sector are key in both shaping and delivering services and the approach has to use existing structures rather than create a new governance arrangement.
- 3.18 Since the conference the council has been working with a wide range of partners to draft the Croydon Violence Reduction Approach – Framework and Delivery Model. A series of listening events have been planned for February and March, to present the broad themes and priorities of the Framework and gain commitment in the support of its delivery.
- 3.19 The Croydon Violence Reduction Approach set out how we define “violence” in the borough. The approach needs to recognise the importance of defining violence in all its forms. Therefore, our definition of violence in Croydon is based on how we define domestic abuse. It includes controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour. It can be carried out directly, through others, online or in other digital formats. The diagram below illustrates the types of violence that are included.
- 3.20 The framework sets out five key themes and a series of priorities. The priorities are the key actions that need to be delivered in the next 12-24 months to

ensure we achieve sustained reduction of violence in the borough. Our intention is to use the listening events to test the themes and priorities to make sure they reflect the views of our partners, community, voluntary sector providers and our citizens. The themes are as follows:

- **Theme 1** – Using Data to drive our approach: gathering data that can identify existing and new trends is core to prevention and changing outcomes long term.
- **Theme 2** – Preventing violence before it occurs: taking every opportunity to intervene early, we can be more successful in preventing the long term harm that violence can cause. Using evidence based data, we have the opportunity to provide a support programmes for those young people and young adults who are showing the indications of behaviour that increase their risk of becoming involved in violent relationships in later life.
- **Theme 3** – Community based support: looks at how we build a network of support at a local level, using the strength of our community and voluntary sector organisations, so that those who are experiencing violence can navigate and find pathways that lead away from conflict and violence.
- **Theme 4** – Targeted intervention: aims to address violence, by looking at the wider family and connected family dynamics. It supports children, young people and their families who struggle with symptoms of trauma to access targeted provision.
- **Theme 5** – Intensive intervention and enforcement: to provide bespoke intensive support programmes delivered by highly skilled professionals or organisations who can provide long term support. These support is aimed at those who are heavily involved in serious violence and offer help for those who are looking to make a positive change. For those that refuse help, agencies and the community will use their combined efforts to enforce and reduce the harm to society.

3.21 Priorities are still being developed and will be shaped by the partner and stakeholder engagement that is underway. However, it is clear that the following are already identified as key issues for the Violence Reduction Network:

- Every person understands the role they can play in reducing violence;
- Developing community based networks;
- A collaborative approach - combining our resources and inviting those that have the best skills and knowledge to lead on the themes and deliver the actions that we will make the most difference.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

3.22 Our approach to tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) involves a combination of partnership approaches that include mobilising the professional and community network, building capacity and capability, shared leadership perspective that drives forward the strategic partnership priorities as well as a client facing service delivered from the specialist DASV service, the FJC (formerly the “Family Justice Centre”).

3.23 The partnership also has a specific priority for the safety of children and young people beyond the youth violence and knife crime issues highlighted previously. There are a number of priorities that link with the Croydon safeguarding

Children Board including CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), DASV and female genital mutilation (FGM).

- 3.24 The FJC provide independent advocacy support and delivers its services at a new dedicated centre as well as the police station, hospital and numerous community based locations. The work of the service is aligned with the partnerships Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-21.
- 3.25 Increasing children's social care referrals to the FJC was an area which the DASV programme board focussed on exploring further. Through identifying this and delivering DASV training to children's social care professionals at the start of the financial year we have seen an increase by 45% in the referrals made to the FJC by the service during quarter three, when compared to the previous quarter. This is a positive outcome and will continue to be regularly monitored to help identify risks more efficiently.
- 3.26 The FJC regularly delivers training sessions to council staff, schools and nurseries to help raise awareness of DASV and introduces the services of the FJC. The service also run the DASV forum in conjunction with Croydon Voluntary Action. The forum is open to anyone working with residents and families within the borough, and is well attended (70 at the last event).
- 3.27 The DASV leads form a professional network of officers that, as a service, we can impart specialist knowledge to include training offers and to form a cohesive pathway to share information about clients we know that are impacted by abuse. For example, 87% of schools have a designated and trained DASV lead, whilst 83% of GP practices have identified a DASV lead.
- 3.28 Croydon is the only London site of a new national pilot to disrupt the perpetrators of domestic abuse and sexual violence, either through intensive case management work or focused police enforcement activity. The Drive project has been running since July 2018, with the intensive support commissioned via Rise Mutual and is due to last until January 2020.
- 3.29 Whilst not yet in post, there is a multiagency bid in place to recruit a female genital mutilation (FGM) social worker for 2019/20, to work within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team to be based at Bernard Weatherill House.
- 3.30 FGM often takes place within the family context, making it difficult to identify and record. Despite this, here in Croydon there are estimated to be 3,480 females who have been affected by FGM at some point in their lives. This project works in partnership with the National FGM Centre and will align activity with existing projects that support and protect the women, girls and communities affected by FGM in our local area.
- 3.31 The project aims to reduce the rate of repeat victimisation, whilst improving the mental wellbeing of DV survivors. The profile of harmful practices will be raised across practitioners working with young girls.
- 3.32 The ambition of this project is to maintain an average of 20 volunteers who in turn, would support up to 2 families at any given time for between 3 and 6 months. To achieve this, the volunteer coordinator will deliver a minimum of two

training courses each year. 22 were carried out last year, which exceeded the target.

- 3.33 In addition, we aim to support 156 clients (this does not include their children) by the end of the project in 2022.
- 3.34 Further, the project will ensure that after the two years all professionals within Croydon working with young girls and families will have an increased understanding of FGM, the mandatory reporting procedures if FGM is suspected, confidence to complete the risk assessment tool and to discuss such a matter with individuals and families.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime

- 3.35 Anti-social behaviour has consistently ranked as a key community safety priority when surveying our residents. Whilst it may not receive the same headlines as violent crime, it can still cause significant harm to individuals and communities. It can also increase the fear of crime and impact on the quality of life for our residents.
- 3.36 The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team work closely with housing and the police and have a number of ‘tools’ to deal with all aspects of anti-social behaviour, including informal contracts, injunctions, premises closure orders and possession orders (for council properties). They do not deal with ‘criminal’ behaviour as such, as this is dealt with by the police, but very often there is a fine line or an overlap.
- 3.37 Cases closed by the ASB Team in 2017 are as follows:

Client Group	Count
A: Noise	47
B: Verbal Abuse / Harassment / Intimidation	36
C: Hate related incidents	1
D: Vandalism and damage to property	15
E: Pets and animal nuisance	5
F: Nuisance from vehicles	1
G: Drugs / substance misuse / dealing	6
I: Domestic Violence / abuse	3
K: Litter / Rubbish / Fly Tipping	7
L: Garden nuisance	7
M: Misuse of communal areas / public space	35
O: Other criminal behaviour	14
TOTAL	177

3.38 Cases closed by the ASB Team in 2018 are as follows, reflecting a reduction in public demand:

Client Group	Count
A: Noise	26
B: Verbal Abuse / Harassment / Intimidation	13
C: Hate related incidents	1
D: Vandalism and damage to property	4
E: Pets and animal nuisance	2
F: Nuisance from vehicles	1
G: Drugs / substance misuse / dealing	6
I: Domestic Violence / abuse	4
K: Litter / Rubbish / Fly Tipping	1
L: Garden nuisance	2
M: Misuse of communal areas / public space	12
O: Other criminal behaviour	11
TOTAL	83

3.39 The Neighbourhood Safety Team (NST) is comprised of circa 35 Neighbourhood Safety Officers and 5 Neighbourhood Safety Managers. The teams are currently deployed across the borough on an area basis covering all the wards in the borough as follows:

- North
- Central
- South

3.40 We have a proactive enforcement team dealing with emerging environmental hot spot areas who will deal with more complex investigations and direct operations focus. In addition we have Time Banded Waste Collection Team. This Team has identified areas of the borough where there is a predominance of flats above commercial premises and will ensure that all waste is properly deposited between agreed times for collection. This team also deal with business and their responsibility to responsibly and legally dispose of waste.

3.41 The NSO's support multiagency operations in the borough across departments and with external stakeholders and partners such as the police and immigration along with the council's anti-social behaviour, outreach and support teams. This includes supporting ASB team led operations, focussing on the active street population of street drinkers and the rough sleepers in the town centre.

3.42 The NSO teams also provide high visibility reassurance patrols in partnership with the police particularly in the aftermath of a violent event such as a stabbing. Officers are visible in the areas affected and will also patrol parks and greens spaces where these incidents have taken place in the past. NSO's support the HRA funded areas by providing high visibility ASB patrols in council

housing areas supporting tenancy officers, safer neighbourhood (police) teams and caretaker services.

- 3.43 The team successfully coordinated the LCPF submission for the partnership's projects worth £598,000 per annum, and has drawn down Section 106 funding to bid for improvements to public spaces where there is crime and disorder, including the Shrublands estate shopping parade, Wandle Park and Thornton Heath recreation. Access to sustainable funding is, however, an ongoing challenge for the partnership. Croydon's LCPF allocation was cut by £110,000 by MOPAC from 2019/2020 to fund regional projects, while many funding streams from central government and the Greater London Authority tend to work in paralegal rather than in partnership with local community safety partnerships as part of their bidding processes.

Counter Extremism

- 3.44 Prevent is the government programme to prevent people being drawn into terrorism and extremism and ensure that appropriate advice and support are given.
- 3.45 Croydon has been prioritised as a 'Tier 2' borough, which means it currently receives dedicated Home Office funding for several posts including a Prevent Coordinator, education officer and Channel coordinator. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015), placed the Prevent programme on a statutory footing. The multi-agency Prevent delivery board oversee the action plan required by the Home Office to monitor how this funding is spent.
- 3.46 A key role of both the coordinator and education officer is to deliver Workshops to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training sessions. More than 200 sessions have been carried out for council staff, in schools and colleges and for third sector workers to help facilitate this since 2015. As part of the 2018/19 funding allocated by the Home Office, the team have also rolled out a Digital Resilience programme (online safety awareness session), to over 435 attendees, including pupils and staff at 15 schools and over a 100 foster carers.
- 3.47 The local authority has a statutory duty to host a Channel panel with statutory partners, which has the function of assessing the risk of vulnerable people, referred to the police, being drawn into terrorism. The board is well represented with a variety of partner agencies including the police, social services and mental health.
- 3.48 Croydon receives a high volume of Channel cases referred into the Prevent team. Cases that engage, or are offered a Channel intervention provider, are generally split evenly between Islamist extremism and Far-Right extremism. General data trends such as age and referral origination reflect the trends documented in the South London cluster.
- 3.49 The Prevent team have identified that 60% of all Channel cases that are offered a Channel intervention have domestic violence (DV) incidents recorded. The Prevent team are currently working on a project that will analyse Channel cases with recorded DV incidents and identify policy recommendations and an action plan to develop cross-collaboration between Prevent and DV services.

3.50 The Council has successfully secured Home Office funding to provide a Community Coordinator under the counter extremism programme. This programme is distinct from the Prevent programme, and seeks to engage with local communities to develop community cohesion and reduce the risk of extremism. The role also includes a particular focus to tackle hate crime. The Council held a successful programme of events during Hate Crime Awareness week in 2018.

CCTV

3.51 The current CCTV infrastructure is very old and is reliant on analogue technology, which is past its useful life. The current system is also very reliant on leasing fibre from BT which is expensive to maintain for existing cameras as well as installing new columns. In recognition of this, £2m in the Growth zone programme funding has been secured to modernise and update the network.

3.52 An external review was commissioned to produce a report identifying the best ways to upgrade the network including transmission, Camera and Control room specifications. The review included the identification of opportunities for CCTV to tie into the emerging Smart Cities programme and the specification supplied will enable the control room to develop into a Smart Cities control hub using data analytics and sensor networks to improve service delivery and income generation. The implementation of the new network will start in 2019/20 following a public consultation and procurement process.

3.53 As the network infrastructure review is a long term programme, the service successfully bid for Section 106 funding to purchase ten re-deployable mobile cameras in December 2017. These have been deployed through the partnership Joint Action Group (JAG) to support partnership activity in crime and disorder hotspot locations.

3.54 CCTV has now completed its restructure following the transfer of facilities management contracted security staff. All staff have completed Home Office accredited CCTV training and the service is moving towards achieving the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's (SCC) desktop third party accreditation process, which will demonstrate the control rooms compliance with the SCC code of practice (and allows the use of the SCC watermark).

3.55 There has been an SCC compliance officer working group across services that use surveillance equipment inclusive of Parking, CCTV, Neighbourhood Safety Officers and Anti-Social Behaviour teams. To date the service has completed stage one (self-assessment) of the SCC compliance process and reviewed all its processes to ensure GDPR (DPA 2018) compliance.

4 REGULATORY SERVICES

Licensing

4.1 The licensing team process applications, and issue licenses and permits for a wide range of licensable activities. The team also respond to enquiries & complaints from licence applicants/ holders, members of the public and other stakeholders such as the police and the London Fire Brigade. In addition,

compliance/ enforcement officers regularly check on compliance with the terms and conditions of licenses issued.

- 4.2 The team need to produce and regularly review statutory policy documents in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 & the Gambling Act 2005 which have both been reviewed in the last year and therefore no new reviews are expected in the next twelve months.
- 4.3 Contested applications are taken before the licensing sub-committee (Licensing Act 2003 & Gambling Act 2005) and all other matters go before the substantive licensing committee. This includes policy matters, fee reviews and adopting new conditions as well as contested application for other matters, like street trading.
- 4.4 A national government initiative to cut the maximum stake on betting terminals to £2.00, will have an impact on betting shops both locally and nationally. Following the implementation of this initiative, the council will implement a policy locally to ensure that we are compliant. This review will take place in the next twelve months.

Figures for licensing in 2018 are as follows:

- New premises: 59
- Full variation: 19
- Minor variation: 22
- Vary DPS: 157
- Transfer: 70
- Animal welfare renewals (01/01/18 to 31/12/2018): 48
- Special treatment renewals (01/04/2018 to 31/03/2019): 156
- Gambling premises renewals (2018): 61
- Temporary event notices: 552

In total, the council renewed 66 licenses in 2015, versus 61 in 2018. Therefore five gambling premises have surrendered their licences between 01 January 2015 and 31 December 2018.

“Best Bar None”

- 4.5 In recent years a competition – “best bar none” – has taken place as a scheme that bars in Croydon can take part in to check standards, and claim the winning place as the best bar in Croydon. This is in the form of an audit, either by an external party, or by the council. This is an excellent opportunity to check staff training, emergency procedures and how the venue is rated via customer feedback, and ensures that businesses in Croydon are of a high standard. It is intended that this competition will run again in the coming year.

Food and safety

- 4.6 The team carry out routine food hygiene inspections as well as investigating complaints relating to food or health and safety issues, and have recently had some successful prosecution outcomes, with one food business receiving fines and costs totalling over £13,500 for food hygiene offences including an

infestation of mice. The team are currently investigating issues of illegal indoor smoking in Shisha bars.

Noise pollution

- 4.7 The pollution team deals with issues of noise from all types of premises and can serve notices to stop excess noise or unruly behaviour which causes a disturbance to others.

5. PEOPLE LIVE LONG, HEALTHY, HAPPY AND INDEPENDENT LIVES / OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE AND REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

- 5.1 As the title of this portfolio highlights, working with our communities is critical to identify and deliver our priorities. The voluntary and community sector (VCS) play a vital role in providing services and support to our residents, especially those that are more vulnerable or isolated.
- 5.2 Our Communities Team provide a strong link with the VCS, providing advice and guidance and managing a range of funding processes. This section outlines some of the key activities that the Communities Team are currently supporting.

Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy

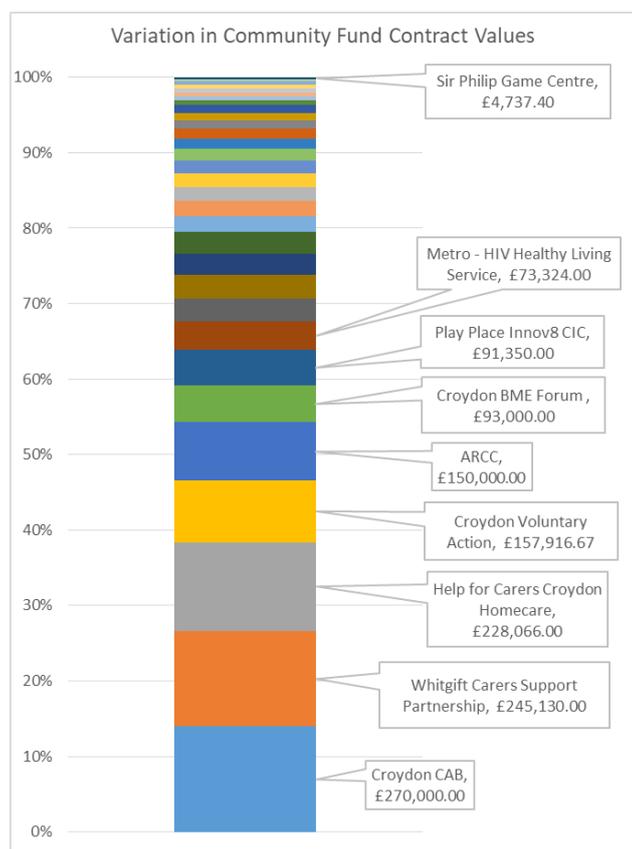
- 5.3 The council is developing a Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy which will provide a framework for the council's work with the sector. This will be the first such strategy developed by the council. It will set out the priorities for which the council seeks support from the sector. The voluntary and community sector is a crucial partner in the implementation of the council's approach to locality working and our focus on prevention and early intervention.
- 5.4 The strategy will also set out the ways in which the council will support the sector, directly and indirectly, in terms of funding and commissioning, contracting opportunities, promoting and supporting volunteering, maximising the availability of premises for the sector, and building the capacity of voluntary and community sector organisations. The council will also facilitate and encourage collaborative working and partnership with and among organisations.
- 5.5 The strategy development timetable has been set to provide as much time as possible for organisations and groups from across the sector to develop proposals and prepare submissions. This included a survey of voluntary and community sector organisations which ran from 7 December 2018 to 8 February 2019, two engagement events held on 22 January and 5 February and interviews held with the main infrastructure organisations in November and December 2018. This is in response to feedback received through the engagement process and previous tender processes.

- 5.6 The Scrutiny and Overview Committee conducted a pre-decision scrutiny on 11 February 2019 at the request of Councillor Ali. The strategy will be considered by the cabinet in March.
- 5.7 The council will engage with the sector in April and May to develop the framework for commissioning. It is anticipated that the tender process for the Prevention and Community Funds will open in June. Throughout the tender process the council will offer support sessions and advice for any organisation that is considering a submission, or developing a submission. The tender process is expected to close in November, with proposals evaluated and reported to Cabinet in December for decision. Decommissioning support will be provided between January and March 2020, with new contracts commencing from 1 April 2020.
- 5.8 It is expected that the council will also develop policies on the allocation of council premises, rent subsidy, and discretionary rate relief to the sector, following the publication of the strategy.
- 5.9 The council provides a range of support to the voluntary and community sector (VCS), which will be captured in the new strategy. A key element of this support is financial, and there are a number of grant schemes and funding for the VCS:
- Community fund
 - Prevention fund
 - Community small grants
 - Community ward budgets
 - One Croydon Alliance

Community Fund 2017/18

- 5.10 Three-year programme of grants awarded September 2016 brought together different grants programmes & VCS spend, through a commissioning model which was prevention focussed and in-line with the Opportunity & Fairness Commission identifying the following outcomes:

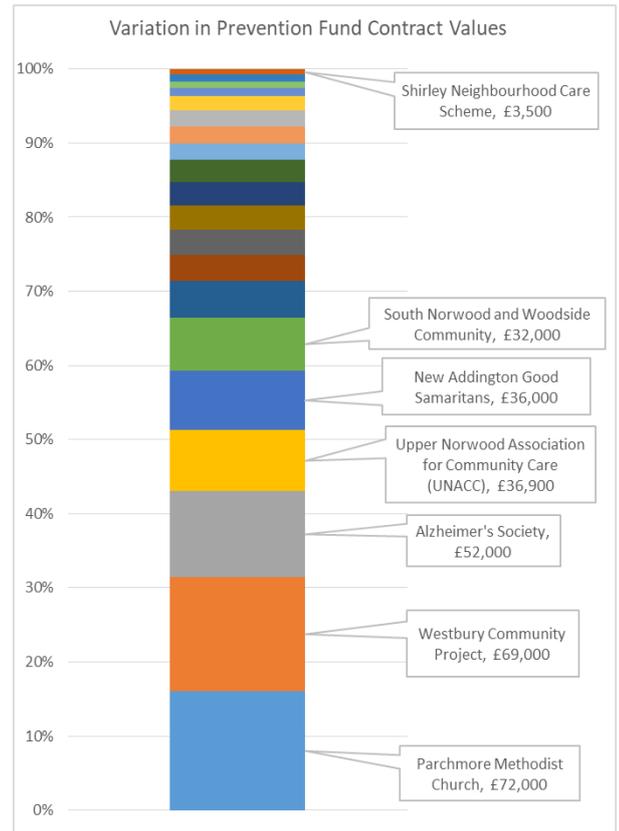
- *Vibrant, responsible and connected communities*
 - *Connected borough where no one is isolated*
 - *Supporting residents towards better times*
 - *Leaving no child behind*
 - *Finding homes for all*
- **31 VCS** organisations received £1,935,510
 - Funding ranged from **£4.7k to £270k**
 - **54%** of funding went to **5 organisations**



Prevention Fund 2017/18

5.11 Providers deliver services aimed at over 65s including lunch clubs, befriending, entertainment/ outings, hospital transport and shopping services for over 65's.

- **21 VCS** organisations receive £449,750
- Funding ranged from **£1.4k to £72k**
- Nearly **60%** of funding to **5 organisations**



Other funding

5.12 The Council supports the VCS through a range of other funding streams:

- Community small grants (up to £5k per grant, £100k total per annum)
- Subsidy and rate relief
 - £247k rental subsidy grant to 18 VCS organisations; 51 get premises rent free
 - £156k discretionary rate relief to 48 VCS organisations in respect of 117 properties.
 - Mostly low value, but nearly 50% is paid to 6 organisations.
 - Budget does not permit new applications for relief.
- Community ward grants (£560k pa)
- A significant number of contracts across the council were successfully bid for and are delivered by VCS orgs. These providers are part of the council's supply chain.
- Additional investment (sometimes one-off funding) for the VCS, which follows a different commissioning process (e.g. £250k youth funding).

Community empowerment and devolution

- 5.13 The council has continued its commitment to community devolution and empowerment. Funding has been devolved to local areas in the form of ward budgets and early adopter areas have been developing community empowerment and testing different approaches.
- 5.14 Ward budgets now stand at £8,000 per year per councillor to support local community initiatives. The decision making for the spending of ward budgets sits with the individual councillors, who are best placed to understand the needs of the communities they serve.
- 5.15 Councillor-led community empowerment and devolution early adopter areas are at various stages. In South Norwood and Woodside, “We Love SE25” is now a formally constituted group comprising of a range of local organisations and individuals. The South Norwood Community Plan was published in December 2018 as a result of this group’s work in partnership with the council. The success of this community-led approach contributed to a successful bid to the GLA’s Good Growth Fund, securing a total of £2.4 million (including council match funding) for the South Norwood and Woodside area. The funding will be used to tackle some key elements of the Community Plan, including reactivating empty shops, improving local community assets, providing support for new and existing businesses and further community capacity building over the next 3 years.
- 5.16 It is clear from the early adopter areas that community capacity, including that of councillors, varies and is vital to developing a successful local steering group or “town team” approach. Local solutions need to develop at a pace that is driven locally and in response to local need and interest, rather than being imposed by the council. Whilst the principles established for community empowerment and devolution early adopters include the principle of councillors as community leaders, in some cases, some officer support may be required to assist the initial development of local steering groups.
- 5.17 The early adopters have taken different approaches, with different priorities and outcomes as a result. It is considered that this area of work could be developed further and a second phase of community devolution and empowerment early adopters is planned to start in early 19/20. This will build on the lessons learnt to date and launch with a new prospectus and community leadership training for interested members. This second phase will provide continued light touch support for the councillor-led early adopter areas already identified as well as any new places put forward by the local ward members. In particular, this will be an excellent opportunity for those Councillors newly elected in May 2018.

6. Croydon Resilience

- 6.1 The Council is a member of the Croydon Local Resilience Forum, which is chaired by the Council’s Resilience Manager. The Local Resilience Forum brings together all agencies with a significant role to play in responding to and recovery from the effects of emergencies.

- 6.2 The Croydon Local Resilience Forum is highly regarded across London. It has dealt with a range of incidents, including major fires, gas leaks that required large numbers of people to be evacuated, and the Tram derailment.
- 6.3 The Council has a resilience team to coordinate its activities in this area. The resilience team have been implementing a large regional programme locally. Known as 'standardisation', London local authorities have previously committed to standardise particular elements of their command and control structure, and response capabilities. Some aims of this programme are to improve efficiency of documentation (plan) management and training delivery for emergency planning teams, consistency in responding to incidents and more effective mutual aid (sharing of staff in large incidents).
- 6.4 The resilience team have been undertaking the following to ensure Croydon is aligned by May 2019. This has included:
- Introduction of London Local Authority (LLA) Concept of Operations (CONOPS) – a response and recovery policy framework agreed January 2019.
 - Review and development of the Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) procedures – December 2018/ January 2019.
 - Review and development of the Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO) procedures – October/ November 2018.
 - Delivery of LLA LALO training package – December 2018.
 - Delivery of LLA BECC training package – February to April 2019.
 - Development of Council Silver role – a new role replacing Chief Officer on Call currently in place. Council Silver will have a more active role in large incidents and be a conduit between the BECC and Council Gold Group.
 - Delivery of Council Silver training to Directors – planned for April.
 - Delivery of Council Gold training to Executive Leadership Team – planned for April.
 - Review of the Corporate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) – planned for March/ April.
- 6.5 Although most of the principles contained within the standardised procedures and training are similar to what has been being delivered by the resilience team previously, the amendments to align to other boroughs to have consistent procedures is anticipated to enhance Croydon Council's response to civil emergencies.
- 6.6 **Exercise Safer City** is a pan-London local authority command post exercise which takes place annually. The 2019 exercise is due to take place on 1st & 2nd May and its aim is to test a number of elements of a Council's response functions, as well as testing the central regional response capabilities such as the London Local Authority Coordination Centre (LLACC). The exercise will seek to validate the new procedures from standardisation and be a beneficial practice for the council's emergency response volunteers. Details are still being finalised, however it is expected that a number of staff and services will be involved at some stage over the 2-day exercise. Local delivery of the exercise is being planned and will be run by the resilience team.

- 6.7 **Resilience Standards for London (RSL):** is a new set of standards to support local authorities to better deliver their resilience programme and assess capability and organisational resilience levels. RSL replaces the previous London assurance programme Minimum Standards for London. The draft standards are currently in a consultation period before being rolled out later in the year. The standards have been derived from the Cabinet Office national resilience standards and the London working group has included Hari Mollett, LBC Resilience Officer. The Executive Leadership Team have been briefed on the standards and the outcomes expected from them. The aim is to encourage more ownership of response capability across the organisation, which will include service areas taking the lead for plan development.
- 6.8 **Corporate Resilience Board:** The Chief Executive has established an officer board whose role is to maintain oversight of the corporate resilience programme. London local authority resilience/ emergency planning has been undergoing significant change over the last 2-3 years, with a large amount of change initiated following learning from the London incidents of 2017, namely the Grenfell Tower Fire, as well as programmes such as the RSL's, standardisation and Member engagement. The board will consist of the resilience team and their line management, director representation from each department and Brexit lead officer(s). The first meeting was held on 27 February and Chaired by the Chief Executive.
- 6.9 **Role in civil emergencies training for Members:** a regional project between the Local Authority Panel and London Councils is to develop training packages for Leaders and elected Members to ensure a joint understanding of their role in civil emergencies. The packages are near completion and will be agreed by the Leader's Committee soon. There will be an opportunity for Members to attend training sessions and be shared material to support the response to civil emergencies. The resilience team will share further information when received.
- 6.10 In December, the **Croydon Resilience Forum (CRF)** established a formal reporting line to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The CRF is a statutory sub-group of the regional London Resilience Forum and is a grouping of responder agencies who collectively plan and prepare for major incidents for the borough. The forum is chaired by Kelly Jack - Resilience Manager, London Borough of Croydon. The LSP will have oversight of the CRF business plan as well as be kept up to date with multi-agency resilience activities such as training, exercises, and incident responses and learning. Generally, the CRF is a well-working forum however there are some challenges with the engagement to complete some pieces of planning. It is hoped that the connection to the LSP will be conducive in helping to address the outstanding pieces of work and support the resilience team in continuing to drive a successful resilience forum.

7. Equality and diversity

- 7.1 In our Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022, equality and diversity are incorporated through all priorities to ensure that it is at the heart of everything we do. This Administration has been clear from the outset that equality of opportunity should be accessible to all; and that we will work to ensure no one is left behind. This report details how the council is working towards a stronger, fairer borough with access to opportunity for all residents.

- 7.2 Throughout 2017/2018 we have worked towards promoting equality of access to education and jobs through the development of programmes tailored to the needs of under-represented communities; worked to ensure employment opportunities for disabled people transitioning into employment or who may need more supportive work environments; are developing more apprenticeship programmes dedicated to meeting the needs of Croydon's young people; and are have increased the availability of parenting training and support services for single parent families. A full annual equalities report will be presented to Cabinet in March 2019.
- 7.3 As part of the Prevent role a weekly community tension score is carried out to test tensions across the borough. Over the last year, the tension scores for Croydon have generally remained consistently low.
- 7.4 Despite national grievances around "punish a Muslim day" and President Trump's visit, Croydon did not see any significant changes in community tensions in relation to these events. Equally tensions remain currently unaffected in relation to Brexit. However, recurring issues around serious youth violence have been noted.
- 7.5 All submissions for the community tensions score are received regularly, from which the lack of tension amongst our communities is illustrated. 'No submission' has only occurred once in the last year from one organisation.
- 7.6 As set out earlier in the report, it is intended that the Violence Reduction Network will have a significant impact on reducing violence, by taking a public health approach to tackling all forms of violence across the borough, including hate crime.

Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)

- 7.7 The council is working towards accreditation to the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) and intends to invite the LGA to do a site visit to carry out an EFLG peer challenge in October/ November 2019. This assessment will seek to review our working practices around embedding equality and diversity across the organisation, and to ensure that we have equality at the heart of our delivery for residents.
- 7.8 The EFLG has three levels of achievement (developing, achieving, excellent) which are measured against five performance areas:
- Knowing your communities
 - Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
 - Involving your communities
 - Responsive services and customer care
 - A skilled and committed workforce
- 7.9 The purpose of the EFLG is to help organisations review and improve their performance in this areas, particular for services to people with protected characteristics under the Equality act 2010.
- 7.10 In order to ensure effective governance of the project, an Officers Equality Working Group and a Members Oversight Committee have been established. The assessment requires a series of case studies to detail the work that the

organisation has delivered, as well as a self-assessment against the assessment criteria. To date, case studies have been drafted, alongside an initial self-assessment against the standards, an overall narrative, and an Equality Action Plan has been drafted to address any areas for improvement, and any gaps that we may have.

- 7.11 Following the receipt of EFLG assessment results, it is intended that an Equality Strategy and an underpinning action plan will be developed, to further embed equality and diversity, incorporating the wider corporate equalities work programme including strategic actions to address feedback from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, and address any areas of weakness identified through the EFLG process.

Financial Inclusion - Credit Union

- 7.12 The current credit union figures for 2018/19 (April to December) are as follows:

	2018/19	2017/18
Membership figures	6,377	5,004
Online joiners	2,267	1,339
Online banking users	2,335	1,661
Total members savings	£3.5m	£2.7m
Total loans	£3.1m	£2.1m

This continues the upward trend of membership since the credit union launched in Croydon.

- 7.13 In 2017 the credit union collaborated with the council in an attempt to provide support for some of the most financially vulnerable members of the community, with the aim of improving their financial resilience and to reduce their reliance on pay day loans, which typically start a cycle of debt. In February 2017 the credit union began offering the “Engage” account to its members. This account allows members to have better control of their money. Registered members can be provided with a debit card, can set up standing orders, make faster payments and have access to all services via internet banking.
- 7.14 Current figures from the resulting pilots are listed below:
- *287 universal credit members have been referred to credit union for financial assistance*
 - *266 of those have been accepted*
 - *188 members have had universal credit payments received via their credit union account*
 - *The total value outstanding under LBC Loan = £74,349 (56 loans)*
 - *Current savings balance of jam jar Members = £41,212*
 - *46 members with agreements to pay rent/ service charges to the council, 15 of which are currently active*
 - *£55,626 paid in total to the council in rent/ service charge to the end of December 2018*

Developing a Public Health Approach to violence reduction

Please refer to item 7, for which a presentation will be given to update on this area of work.

Community Safety Partnership

Please refer to item 5, for which a presentation will be given to update on this area of work.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: