

Homes & Gateway Services

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Deputy Leader, Alison Butler

July 2018

Latest News

CAYSH – Andrews Charitable Trust

The Gateway Service is to implement an exciting initiative to give young people in Croydon aged 16-25 a roof over their heads and support in finding work and becoming independent, in partnership with two charities CAYSH, a local organisation and the Andrews Charitable Trust (ACT).

ACT has committed to investing in the region of £0.5 million to purchase a property in Croydon that will be managed by our partner CAYSH (a local provider of accommodation and support for young people). This initiative will provide accommodation in the borough for a minimum of ten years and enable care leavers with a stepping stone to full independence. Each house will provide accommodation for 3-4 young care leavers as they embark on a working career.

The Gateway and Welfare directorate will provide wrap around support including employment support for the young people who the initiative will house.

The property search has commenced and the plan is for the house to be operational by late Autumn 2018.

Rough Sleepers Initiative

The Gateway and Welfare directorate have been successful in their bid to Government to tackle rough sleeping in Croydon, this has resulted in a £510,210 award. Croydon's funding award was the seventh-highest out of 83 grants given by MHCLG to local authorities nationwide reflecting the level of need in the borough but also the confidence it has in Croydon Council to deliver.

The Council will work with local housing associations, charities and the voluntary sector to provide a range of interventions including a housing first scheme; where vulnerable homeless people often with complex needs will receive accommodation

Homes & Gateway Services

Cabinet Member Bulletin

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July 2018

on the only condition that they maintain their tenancy, rather than needing to meet more detailed criteria. This means that the homeless person has more time and space to settle into their accommodation, get the support they need and become less likely to return to the streets; integral to the scheme is the role of dedicated key workers.

In addition the funding will provide the borough with increased mental health services that will operate on a more outreach basis; something that is much needed in Croydon.

We will now focus our energies on finding suitable accommodation in the borough, and this additional funding will help us to tackle rough sleeping and improve the options available for our most complex rough sleepers.

Hub/ Taberner House and Affordable Homes



In May work began on the Taberner House site to bring new homes to the heart of Croydon. As part of this major development there will be four buildings of 35, 21, 19 and 13-stories. Overall the development will provide 513 homes, with a mix of affordable, for sale and rental units. At least 40% of the units will

be designated as affordable.

The ground floor level will also provide a 13,000 sq foot of retail and office space with the site also benefiting from a new play area, pavilion café and high-quality public space as the Queen's Gardens is enhanced with new landscaping. A new east-west route through the gardens will encourage pedestrian travel around the town centre. Some part of the Queen's Gardens will be temporarily off limits during construction.

Homes & Gateway Services

Cabinet Member Bulletin

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July 2018

Brick by Brick – an update

2018 is proving to be a really busy year for Brick by Brick (BxB). There have been 8 new planning consents for schemes across the borough; BxB opened their 'Suburban Identities' exhibition at Rise Galley; and have been shortlist for an NLA Award 2018 for their Coulsdon strategy and gained great coverage in various magazines and newspapers.

In March planning was granted for the exciting Lion Green Road development in Coulsdon. The residential led scheme will deliver 157 dwellings as part of the ambitious strategy to deliver much needed new and affordable homes across the borough. BxB submitted a full planning application in December 2017 for this development of five sculpted 'pavilions' set within a verdant landscape. The scheme is designed by Mary Duggan Architects.

In March and April planning was also granted for Ashby Walk, Windmill Road, Tirrell Road and King Henry's Drive. Each of these schemes is designed by Coffey Architects.

BxB's Wandle Road scheme, which was approved by the LB Croydon Planning Committee on the 7th June, will see part of the council-owned Wandle Road car park replaced by an exciting residential-led regeneration scheme delivering a mixture of 126 high quality 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

Designed by the award winning Pitman Tozer Architects, 50% of the new homes will be classed as affordable, by habitable room, and made available through affordable rent or shared ownership. As a result, 68 homes will be available via private sale or rent with Croydon resident's getting the first option.

Adjacent to the Croydon Flyover, the part 5, 22 and 25 storey building is set to become a new landmark for Croydon and it will be surrounded by new, landscaped public spaces to improve the look and feel of the local street-scene and activate a previously underutilised part of Croydon Old Town.

Site works

On Auckland Rise groundworks are now progressing well across the various sites in anticipation for the arrival of the timber panelised system. In addition, a community

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Cabinet Member Bulletin

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July 2018

engagement event is planned to take place soon to get local children involved in selection of play equipment and a chance for local residents to register their interest in the community garden and help shape the proposals. Further details will be announced shortly.

On the corner of Beulah Hill and Harold Road the Ravensdale scheme is really starting to take shape with the timber panelised system due to start installation very soon. In Thornton Heath demolition of the former empty care home, Cheriton House, is now complete and the contractor has commenced piling works for the foundations. Our site on Homefield Road has now been cleared of the empty care home that had occupied the area. Now this structure is gone ground works will commence to begin the next stage of the build.

BXB registrations

In March BxB began communications to Croydon residents advertising the fact that new units are available exclusively to Croydon residents for a set period of time. This was done through 'Your Croydon' bulletins, Brick by Brick blogs, Brick by Brick social media channels, poster sites, flyer drops across the areas where our first sites will be built and a one page piece in the Your Croydon local magazine which was delivered on June 13. Anyone interested in a BXB home can sign up via the website www.bxbdevelopment.com.

GLA Rogue Landlord Checker

Croydon is now fully signed up to the GLA data base into which London authorities are entering details of legal action taken against landlords for offences under the Housing Act 2004. The data base can be accessed by members of the public to check if any action has been taken against their landlord, or prospective landlord, within London. Additional information is available to London boroughs which will be useful if they themselves are considering taking legal action against a landlord. The data base can be accessed at [Rogue Landlord and Agent Checker](#)

Homes & Gateway Services

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Deputy Leader, Alison Butler

July 2018

Sprinklers Update

Sprinklers are now installed in around 400 homes so far under Croydon Council's ongoing fire safety upgrade programme launched in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

After the fire on 14 June last year, Croydon announced it would retrofit sprinklers in its tallest high-rise blocks, approving a £10 million programme in 25 blocks of 10-12 storeys, plus an eight-storey sheltered block.

In October, Croydon started retrofitting sprinklers by beginning work to a 10-storey building at College Green, Upper Norwood. These sprinklers went live in January, and council contractors have since completed work in eight more of these, or around 400 flats. The remaining blocks will be completed by the autumn.

The council has requested a financial contribution from Government three times to limit the impact on council budgets, but to date ministers have not pledged any money.

To monitor the sprinkler installation programme and wider standards across the borough in both publicly-owned and private buildings, the council set up a Fire Safety Board. This meets each month with representatives from London Fire Brigade to discuss everything from cladding inspections to fire risk assessments.

Croydon Council has also carried out extensive checks as part of a programme to maintain or improve fire safety for its 14,000 tenants and leaseholders and the wider borough. This has included:

- Completing inspections that found none of the council's 39 high-rise blocks had cladding like the kind used at Grenfell Tower
- A review that confirmed all council-owned buildings met the required fire safety standards
- Replacing 442 communal and flat entrance fire doors
- Other fire safety works done to 163 of the council's blocks

At a time when we are all remembering the victims of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, a lesson learnt must be that fire safety continues to be a top priority

Homes & Gateway Services

Cabinet Member Bulletin

Deputy Leader, Alison Butler

July 2018

for everyone. This £10m programme is very important, but it will hit our long-term finances unless we receive Government help. I continue to urge ministers to relax tight restrictions on councils' housing budgets like the borrowing cap, rent setting and right to buy receipts, this would boost not just Croydon but other councils with bigger fire safety bills.

Ahead of sprinkler works beginning on each of the 26 Croydon Council-owned blocks, staff and contractors brief residents in advance by sending letters, carrying out door-to-door visits and inviting them to view sprinklers already installed in neighbouring flats.

Each flat getting the upgrade has around six sprinklers hidden near ceilings behind a flat white disc. These pop off when the room temperature hits 57 degrees Celsius, then at 67 degrees they spray a fine water mist at a wide angle. The sprinkler will only be triggered in the room affected by fire. This kind of targeted sprinkler reduces the risk of false alarms and water damage, coupled with fire breaks in place that limit spread between neighbouring flats and floors. The system also has alarms that mean London Fire Brigade is alerted when sprinklers are activated.



Homes & Gateway Services

Cabinet Member Bulletin

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July 2018

New Homes

The council continues to procure street properties to create homes for Croydon residents in housing need. 169 properties have either been completed or are in the pipeline.

Launch of Croydon' Social Lettings Agency

The council has begun a project that helps Croydon residents avoid homelessness through tenancy training and matching them with responsible landlords.

For many people with challenges, ranging from debt problems to mental health needs or learning difficulties, falling behind with rent or breaching a tenancy contract is more likely to happen.

In response to this and as part of the Administration's manifesto commitments the Council has set up a pilot social lettings agency, called Croydon Lettings, widening the use of council referrals into the private rented sector and further reducing the number of people presenting as homeless and being housed in emergency or temporary accommodation.

The scheme is targeted at both tenants who have either been homeless or are at risk of being unable to sustain a long-term tenancy and at landlords who want a guaranteed rent.

The agency has launched with initially around 20 tenants and 12 landlords, and works by giving the prospective tenants the skills to maintain a long-term tenancy before they are matched with a private landlord.

The six-week training for prospective tenants, provided by the council's Gateway welfare service, includes:

- Financial management, including budgeting advice, benefits support and help setting up their rent payments by direct debit
- Tips on how to keep their property in good condition and report issues to the landlord
- Wider employability training to boost their job prospects and earning potential

Homes & Gateway Services

Cabinet Member Bulletin

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July 2018

Croydon Lettings also gives tenants a month's rent and deposit in advance to reduce moving costs, and it sets up the tenants' council tax and utility bill accounts.

Landlords benefit by getting a wider pool of vetted tenants, a guaranteed rent, paying no charges to the council unlike with high street lettings agents, a named contact at the council, and a reduced need to take legal action against tenants.

For more information, email CroydonLettings@croydon.gov.uk