

# Scrutiny

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



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**INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR OF SCRUTINY, COUNCILLOR SEAN FITZSIMONS**



**Cllr Sean Fitzsimons**

Chair of the Scrutiny and  
Overview Committee

I am happy to present this year's Annual Report which provides an overview of the key activities and achievements of Scrutiny in the past year. This reports looks back at the first year of the 2018-22 administration, and the three Chairs of Scrutiny Robert, Sherwan and I have worked closely together, to ensure that we and our committees adhere to the principles of good scrutiny, and act in a non-party political manner, where we hold the executive and senior officers to account, help give users of services a voice and help with policy development.

Lessons learnt from 2017 Ofsted Inspection of Children Services are still a key driver of how we approach scrutiny in Croydon. Children and Young People's Sub Committee has taken up the mantle this last year as the lead committee scrutinising the Council's improvement plan. We have seen that progress is being made, but we are not complacent and the scrutiny of the improvement plan and particular workforce issues will continue to be a major focus of our work in the coming year.

Following feedback from fellow scrutiny councillors and others we are changing our approach to the questioning of witnesses to ensure that concise answers are provided, which directly address our questions. This will ensure that the best use is made of the time available to us and allow for more effective scrutiny. The Chairs of Scrutiny have therefore agreed to take a more robust approach to how we question those who come in front of scrutiny with clarity and brevity sought from all involved.

In 2017 I gave evidence to the CLG House of Commons Select Committee on Local Government Scrutiny. One of the outcomes of this was a commitment by Government to review their Statutory Guidance on Scrutiny. After a six month delay the guidance has just been released in May 2019 and we will work through the implications of what this will mean for us and for the Council as a whole. This guidance is timely, as the Council is undergoing a Governance Review, and it is a good sign of the esteem the Council holds Scrutiny, in that I was asked to be part of the review, in my role as the Chair of Scrutiny. More timely access to information, and a less opaque decision-making structure, are some of the outcomes that would help Scrutiny carry out its role more effectively.

We have worked and continue to work tirelessly to ensure the effectiveness of scrutiny, actively working to build relationships with stakeholders, officers, local residents, neighbourhood associations, unions and other external agencies. We are also keen to promote participation in our meetings and look to encourage the written submission of questions on topics where possible. With the imminent launch of the Council's new Digital Strategy, we will also be see how we can make it easier for residents to engage with us and help shape our future work programmes.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the Committee Members and Officers for their contributions, in particular my fellow Chairs, Robert and Sherwan, for their support and willingness to challenge.

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THE SCRUTINY YEAR 2018 /19 IN NUMBERS

24

Scrutiny meetings in Croydon

01

call-in item

118

recommendations made

118

recommendations accepted

2

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

Over 60

issues scrutinised

Number of residents/ organisations participants -

Participation in scrutiny of approximately 26 residents, organisations and groups.



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**SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



The Scrutiny and Overview Committee directs the performance of all overview and scrutiny functions at the Council, including the development of procedures governing the operation of both the Committee and its Sub-Committees. It also has responsibility for scrutinising crime and disorder matters and flood risk management within the borough. The Committee will consider any call-in of Cabinet decisions other than those relating to education matters, which are heard by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this committee by clicking on the link: [www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

**Overview**

This year, the Committee has completed a wide ranging programme of work, which has resulted in many recommendations being made to the Cabinet, all of which have been accepted.

Where possible the Committee has been keen to engage in pre-decision scrutiny as this provides a welcome opportunity for Members to have an input into strategies and plans prior to their adoption by the Cabinet. Items considered by the Committee in 2018/19 included the Cultural Strategy, the Financial Strategy 2018-22 and the Digital Strategy.

As well as pre-decision scrutiny the Committee has also undertaken a number of reviews, including a review of Cooperatives and Social Enterprise in Croydon and one on the Safer Croydon Partnership. One call-in was considered in

the past year, which was on the Cabinet Decision to purchase the Croydon Park Hotel as a commercial investment. The Committee has also continued to hold regular Question Time sessions with Cabinet Members and the Leader of the Council throughout the year.

Further information on the outcomes from the Committee’s meetings is set out below.

**10 July 2018**

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 10 July 2018 three main items were considered. These were:-

- Question Time with the Leader of the Council
- Financial Strategy 2018-22
- Annual Complaints Report 2017-18

The Question Time session with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tony Newman, focussed on the Administration’s plans for the next four years, following the Council Elections in May 2018. In particular the Committee questioned the Leader on the status of the planned regeneration of Croydon town centre, the delayed completion of the redevelopment of Fairfield Halls and the Council’s work to support EU citizens living in the borough in the event of Brexit. Overall the Committee were reassured by the responses given to their questions.

From their scrutiny of the Financial Strategy 2018-22, the Committee reached the conclusion that the financial landscape for the Council remained challenging, with an ongoing need to balance the growth in demand for Council services against a declining revenue base. In order to meet this challenge the Committee agreed to recommend to the Cabinet that the principles informing the Financial Strategy were reviewed to ensure they reflected the changing nature of local government.

The Committee also agreed to recommend that a principle be included within the Financial Strategy to establish how income delivered by the Council’s housing delivery vehicle,

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Brick by Brick, be used. As a result it was clarified that there was an assumption that all income from Brick by Brick would be transferred to reserves.

A final recommendation was made requesting that another principle be added to the Financial Strategy to establish how the Council would work with its partners to increase the focus on local wealth building and social value as well as economic benefit. Although not specifically included within the Financial Strategy, it was agreed that it would be included as part of the Council's refreshed approach to commissioning services.

The Annual Complaints report for 2017-18 was also reviewed by the Committee, who noted its content. A request was made for future reports to include benchmarking information to allow comparison of the Council's performance against other local authorities. It was also requested that information detailing trends and any lessons learnt as a result of complaints should also be included in future report.

**4 September 2018**

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 4 September 2018 two main items were considered.

These were:-

- Financial Strategy 2018-22 – Asset Investment
- Call-In: Croydon Park Hotel Commercial Investment
- Report of the Chief Executive: Operational Model & Staff Update

One of reports considered by the Committee was an update to the Financial Strategy 2018-22 considered at the previous meeting, which set out more information on Asset Investment. The Committee raised a number of concerns about the criteria used to identify potential investments and the risks involved in pursuing this approach. From the discussion the Committee identified that it would be important to ensure that the Minority Group on the Council received a briefing before any future investments were made. This recommendation was accepted and a process to ensure consultation was included in the final version of the Strategy.

The Committee considered the Cabinet decision to purchase the Croydon Park Hotel as a commercial investment, which had been subject of a 'call in'. A number of questions were asked about the criteria used to determine whether to pursue the investment or not during the discussion of this item. The Committee were reassured by the responses given

and agreed that no further action was required and the decision could be implemented as intended.

The third item considered at this meeting by the Committee was a report from the Chief Executive, Jo Negrini, which provided an overview of the new locality based approach to service delivery that was being trialled and a wider update on staffing at the Council. From the discussion the Committee were supportive of the new approach to service delivery and were keen to receive an update on the project as it progressed. The Committee welcomed the improvement in staff satisfaction and the action taken to achieve this, in particular it was agreed that the active engagement with staff networks was to be commended.

**30 October 2018**

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 30 October 2018 two main items were considered.

These were:-

- Question Time: Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources
- Review of Co-operation and Social Enterprise in Croydon

From the Question Time session with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Simon Hall, the Committee were particularly interested in the proposed Digital Strategy. As such it was agreed that an opportunity for the Committee to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the strategy would be arranged.

During the discussion it was also highlighted that Members were not being provided with regular updates on Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funds raised in their respective Wards, as previously recommended. It was agreed that this recommendation would be resubmitted to the Cabinet and that the Committee would begin to keep a tracker in order to monitor the progress of their recommendations.

The other item considered by the Committee at this meeting was a review of Cooperation and Social Enterprise in the borough. For this item the Committee were pleased to welcome a number of representatives from cooperatives and social enterprises in the borough, who through sharing their own experiences were able to provide a valuable insight for the Committee, who used the evidence provided to shape their recommendations.

From their questioning, the Committee reached the conclusion that although the Council had signed up to support the ten principles for Cooperative Council's, there did not seem to be an overarching strategy to support this.



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In particular the Committee felt that there seemed to be an emphasis on social enterprise when a wider approach encompassing different social business models was needed. As a result a recommendation was made by the Committee to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs to develop a comprehensive strategy to set out how the Council will provide support for all forms of cooperatism and social enterprise, which was accepted.

### 11 December 2018

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 11 December 2018 three main items were considered. These were:-

- Fairfield Halls Update
- Question Time: Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport & Leisure
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Evening & Night-Time Economy Strategy

The Committee received an update on the ongoing redevelopment of Fairfield Halls, which was scheduled to reopen in September 2019. The Committee agreed that the venue was crucial to the local economy and as such it was important for all Councillors to remain supportive of the venue. From the discussion, the Committee was reassured by the operators of the venue who provided a very cogent account of their business plan. It was agreed that in order to provide reassurance about the accessibility of the redeveloped venue a recommendation would be made for the operators to engage with the Mobility Forum prior to opening, which was accepted.

Arising from the Question Time session with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure, Councillor Oliver Lewis, the Committee was pleased to hear that plans were being developed to create an app to celebrate the borough's musical heritage and agreed to recommend that provision to celebrate Croydon's musical heritage also be included within the Music City scheme, which was accepted with plans being developed for a Musical Heritage Trail.

The Committee also questioned whether the byelaws relating to local parks in the borough remained fit for purpose and as a result recommended that a review of these should be undertaken to evaluate what changes were required. This recommendation was also agreed, with provision made for the review to be undertaken in 2019-20.

At the meeting the Committee was also given the opportunity to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the

Evening and Night Time Economy Strategy. From the discussion of this item the Committee recognised that a significant amount of work had gone into the development of the strategy and commended the Cabinet Members in attendance for their openness to challenge from the Committee.

The Committee was keen to ensure that the strategy was outcome focussed and agreed to recommend that SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time Bound) objectives were used to enable the success of the strategy to be assessed. Other recommendations made by the Committee included the need for the strategy to retain a focus on the evening and night time economy across the borough and that it should also be representative of the diversity in Croydon. All three recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet for inclusion in the final version of the strategy that will be considered for adoption in 2019-20.

### 15 January 2019

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 15 January 2019 two main items were considered. These were:-

- Question Time: Leader of the Council
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Proposed General Fund Revenue Budget 2019-20

During the Question Time session with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Tony Newman, the Committee raised questions on a range of different areas including affordable housing provision in the borough, the loss of senior officers at the Council and the Westfield Project. The Committee agreed that it would like to invite the relevant partners involved in the Westfield Project to a future meeting to provide an update on progress made in delivering this project.

The Committee was also given the opportunity to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Budget proposals for 2019-2020. Reassurance was taken from the answers provided to the Committee's questions which focussed on a number of different areas including asset investment, the predicted growth in car parking income and the level of reserves retained by the Council. Overall the Committee agreed that the budget proposals took into account identified risks where possible.

Looking forward to the budget for 2020-2021, the Committee agreed that it would be of value to invite the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to attend one of



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their meetings in the early stages of the preparation of the budget to allow for a detailed review of the budget setting process. This has been arranged for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 10 September 2019.

### 11 February 2019

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 11 February 2019 three main items were considered. These were:-

- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Development of a Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Development of a Cultural Plan
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Development of a Libraries Plan

This meeting was specially arranged to provide the Committee with three opportunity for further pre-decision scrutiny on the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy, Cultural Plan and Libraries Plan respectively.

Following consideration of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy report, the Committee agreed that the strategy took a positive approach to the Council's engagement with the voluntary and community sector and commended the Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon and Communities for her engagement with the Committee's questions.

The Committee reached a number of conclusions that led to recommendations being made to the Cabinet for inclusion within the final strategy. This included suggesting that the strategy should set out how unmet need in the borough would be identified and how the Council would work with the voluntary and community sector to meet this need, which was accepted and reflected in the final strategy. The Committee also recommended greater flexibility in grant funding to make it easier for smaller, grassroots organisations to apply, which was also accepted. The Committee's recommendation that feedback from service users should be taken into account when monitoring outcomes from grants and to inform future priorities was also accepted.

There was significant concern raised by the Committee about the benefits provided by the infrastructure support organisations, who received funding from the Council to support the voluntary and community sector. As such it was recommended that a fundamental review should be taken to ensure that the expected outcomes were being achieved.

This was accepted, with engagement work with the sector being used to inform the support commissioned by the Council, to enable clearer outcomes and improved contract monitoring.

For their consideration of the draft Cultural Plan, the Committee recognised that the biggest risks to the success of the plan lay outside of the remit of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure and as such the plan needed to be clear how it would interact with other key strategies and external partners, which was accepted and included in the final report.

The Committee also recognised that the redevelopment of the town centre in Croydon presented a significant risk to the success of the plan and as such recommended that it should cover the three to five year period during the redevelopment and include a focus on district centres across the borough, which was also accepted with an annual review built into the process.

The Committee was broadly supportive of the aims of the Libraries Plan, recognising that usage of libraries had changed from being a primarily book borrowing services to having a wider community remit. As a result the Committee recommended that a wide variety of data be used to inform the plan and the future of the library service going forward, which was accepted by the Cabinet.

### 5 March 2019

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 5 March 2019 three main items were considered. These were:-

- Question Time: Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities
- Review of the Safer Croydon Partnership
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Developing a Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction

During the Question Time session with the Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon and Communities, Councillor Hamida Ali, the Committee asked questions on a number of different areas including the use of CCTV for crime prevention, using social infrastructure in the borough as a means of reducing crime and the restructure of the local Police to a tri-borough arrangement with Sutton and Bromley. The Committee was concerned about the number of working groups under the Cabinet Member's Portfolio, with it questioned whether this could lead to a duplication of effort. It was agreed that this may need to be scrutinised in greater detail at a later date.



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From their session with the various partners from the Safer Croydon Partnership, the Committee agreed that educational organisations in the borough had an important role to play if the outcomes from the partnership were to be successful. As such it was recommended that further consideration be given to how best to engage with local schools on the work of the partnership.

The Committee reached the conclusion that the partnership seemed to be on the right track and agreed that the progress made was positive. The Committee also recognised the commitment from the partners to maximise their use of resources to achieve the aims of the partnership, many of which would only be delivered in the longer term. It was agreed that the partnership would be invited back to a meeting of the Committee in twelve months to review the progress made.

From the Committee’s discussion of the Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction it was agreed that the use of data would be key to informing the approach, with it being a major challenge to ensure that the data required was available. The Committee concluded that the information provided on the approach was promising and recommended that the Cabinet Member use Scrutiny as a resource to provide additional challenge to the Public Health Approach as it developed, which was accepted.

**30 April 2019**

At the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting held on 30 April 2019 two main items were considered. These were:-

- Question Time: Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs
- Proposed scope for the new Digital Strategy

During the Question Time session with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs there were concerns raised about the decline of Croydon as a major centre for employment in comparison to other areas of London over the past twenty years and as such it was agreed that the Cabinet Member would be invited to a meeting of the Committee in 2019/20 to discuss the wider strategic approach to job creation, business attraction and the promotion of the economy in the borough.

The Committee also had the opportunity to feed into the development of the new Digital Strategy for the Council. From the discussion of this item, the Committee was reassured that there was a genuine vision for strategy, but were concerned that the wider culture of Council would hinder its delivery. The Committee also requested that specific reference to improving the Council’s current presence on social media and working to improve openness and transparency of data be included in the final strategy. These recommendations were accepted and agreed to be included within the final strategy to be considered by the Cabinet later in the year.



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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Membership of the Children and Young People Sub Committee**



The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee scrutinises key issues affecting children and young people in the borough as well as the services provided by the Council and its partners. It has the power to scrutinise the functions of the Council as Local Education Authority and examine the Dedicated Schools Grant on a yearly basis.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: [www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

**Overview**

The work of the Sub-Committee focused predominantly on the Children’s Improvement Plan following the publication of the Ofsted inspection report of Children’s Services in September 2017 and the recommendation from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee that the Sub-Committee assume responsibility for scrutinising the progress of the Improvement Plan through 2018/19 and for a report to be made to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on progress and findings.

It was agreed that each meeting would end with a discussion on ‘what difference the meeting had made to the children of Croydon’.

**18 September 2018**

At this meeting the Sub-Committee received the annual complaints report on the Council’s performance in relation to statutory complaints. It was realised that a common theme arising from the complaints were issues in communication and in order to address this the department had resolved to focus on training, sharing of best practice, improvement of

internal processes and building of relationships between teams.

It was concluded that performance against service level agreements was poor and that a clear context of how we communicate as a Council was not evident. It was therefore recommended that an update and overview report on performance be brought to the Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the findings and actions arising from the third Ofsted monitoring visit that took place in July 2018, as well as looking forward to the preparation on the areas of focus for the fourth monitoring visit scheduled to take place in October 2018. Following feedback, the officers were taking action to address areas of concerns highlighted by the visit. This included putting in place measures to tackle high caseloads, recruitment and retention of staff and refining the number of priorities to focus on at any given time out of the 21 recommendations made by Ofsted.

The Sub-Committee was concerned about the pace of change which was vital to the improvement process and officers gave reassurance that they remained confident and reminded the Sub-Committee that it was still the first year of a three year plan. They were clear that in order to improve outcomes, all multi-agency partners must be committed to pooling together their efforts.

It was concluded that further evidence of all the partner’s commitment to improvement was needed and that there was still a lot of work to be done with specific areas highlighted as cause for concern.

A report was also received on staff recruitment and retention which remained an area of concern. The pressure on staff due to large caseloads was being tackled through the provision of extra capacity to assist with the clearance of a backlog of cases. Longer term solutions were also being put in place through the provision of a strong offer for staff, including training for newly qualified social workers. A strategy had been developed to focus on a recruitment and



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retention drive. It was confirmed that the use of agency staff remained high and continued to be key to the workforce.

It was concluded that recruitment and retention of good quality experienced staff remained a challenge, but it was encouraging that the Council was proactively looking at various methods to attract social workers to Croydon.

The annual report of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) 2017/18 was received, which detailed safeguarding arrangements and the commitment to specific priority areas to ensure the effectiveness of its reviews following criticism from the Ofsted inspection in 2017 which cited a lack of focus by the Board.

The Sub-Committee was clear that there was a need for reassurance on the effectiveness of the partnership between the Council, Police and Health Care providers, with a greater understanding of roles and transparency required.

It was concluded that further information was required on the proposals of the new safeguarding arrangements under the revised structure of 'Working Together 2018' and how the partners would manage arrangements.

As a result it was recommended that the partners attend a future meeting of the Sub-Committee to present their proposals, provide evidence on how they were supporting each other, the effectiveness of their work and how they would transition to comply with the new guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

### 27 November 2018

The first quarterly complaints report was presented to Members following the recommendation made at the 18 September meeting. Members were reassured that issues regarding the volume of complaints had been recognised and that officers were taking the necessary steps to deliver improvement.

One year into the Children's Improvement Journey, Members were presented with a report that provided a reviewed and refreshed Improvement Plan which detailed the steps that would be taken to drive forward identified priorities at an increased pace in response to feedback from monitoring visits.

The Sub-Committee concluded that there were concerns regarding the handover of information from interim to permanent staff at a senior level. It was also important to understand how the improvement of Priority 7 of the Improvement Plan 'Creating a culture of shared ownership and social work values' would be realised.

The Sub-Committee requested that evidence on the progress of Priority 7 be provided and agreed that it would be important to invite staff representatives to future meetings to hear their views on the development of the workforce.

A report was received on exclusions and children missing from education, with Members informed that Croydon schools compared favourably nationally in primary and secondary school permanent exclusions. It was agreed that a task and finish group would be formed to further investigate and collate data on children coming off the school roll as there seemed to be a lack of data at present to reach a conclusion on this issue.

### 14 January 2019

This meeting was arranged specifically to receive a progress update on the New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Croydon as directed by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The three named statutory safeguarding partners, the Police, Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group would assume, along with the inclusion of Education in the partnership, the responsibilities previously held by the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board. The partnership would meet regularly to improve safeguarding arrangements in identified priority areas each year and in the first year would be looking at areas of neglect, vulnerable young people and children with disabilities. In order to improve outcomes, the partnership would focus on building strong relationships with community organisations and the voluntary sector.

It was concluded that the meeting enabled an opportunity for clarity and information on the proposed arrangements and that it may be beneficial to scrutinise some of the priorities in greater detail once the safeguarding arrangements had been implemented.

### 5 February 2019

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, Councillor Alisa Flemming, attended the meeting to provide an update and answer questions on her portfolio. During the item there were a number of questions on the improvement journey as well as others on special education needs. It was confirmed that the Children's Improvement Journey following the Ofsted 2017 rating was an ongoing work in process that remained a priority for the Council as well as its partners. The focus on addressing the areas identified for improvement remained at the forefront of service delivery, which aimed to provide the best outcomes for the children, young people and their families.

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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUB-COMMITTEE**

In attendance at the meeting were representatives from the staff workforce who gave an insight on their activities and the improvements delivered since the improvement journey began. They also provided insight on the changing reputation of Croydon which was now being viewed positively at different workforce meetings and conferences.

The Sub-Committee concluded that although the attendance of staff representatives provided a positive insight into the workforce at Croydon, it was still evident that there still needed to be an improvement in the recruitment and retention of good quality social workers. The conversion rate of locums to permanent staff also required further attention.

The Sub-Committee also received the annual Education Quality and Standards Report, the detail and quality of which was commended. Members were encouraged that outcomes for young people in the borough remained high. The priority areas had been recognised and Members looked forward to further improvement in these areas being reported in the next annual report.

There was concern about the viability of Sixth Form provision in the borough and it was concluded that further information was required in order for the Sub-Committee to reach a conclusive view.

The Education Budget 2019/2020 was presented to the Sub-Committee, which provided detail on the budget for the forthcoming year. Of particular importance was the inclusion of further information on the announcement made by the Department of Education regarding the implementation of the National Funding Formula. This included a requirement for local authorities to have a recovery plan in place should the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget fall below 1%

It was evident that the DSG funding allocation was insufficient to meet the needs of pupils, with the Sub-Committee pleased to note that information was being gathered to evidence this, in order to make a case for fairer funding.

It was concluded that as Croydon, as well as other boroughs would fall below the threshold that required recovery plans to be activated, there were concerns regarding the lack of government guidance. As a result it was recommended that the Council and its partners should meet in preparation of the Council finding itself in the position of having to utilise its recovery plan.

**12 March 2019**

At the meeting, Members had the opportunity to hear from young people and their parents who were in attendance for the Special Education Needs Strategy item. The young people expressed their views and experiences. The parents expressed the importance of having being involved in the consultation process for the strategy and highlighted the need for the strategy to improve outcomes for young people. The Sub-Committee acknowledged how vital it was that the voices of young people were heard and how beneficial it was to have the opportunity to engage with young people whose lives were affected by decisions made on their behalf. The Sub-Committee agreed that going forward where possible, the presence of people impacted by decision making processes in meetings would add much needed value.

The meeting also focused on the improvement journey following the latest monitoring visit by Ofsted. Inspectors were pleased with the progress made and the pace of improvement, but emphasised that the service must continue to rise to the challenge of ensuring that consistency of practices remained a priority.

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Members of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee



Cllr Sherwan Chowdhury (C)



Cllr Andy Stranack (VC)



Cllr Pat Clouder



Cllr Toni Letts



Cllr Andrew Pelling



Cllr Scott Roche

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee scrutinises the work of local healthcare organisations and social care services provided to adult residents of the borough. It also, in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities, investigates and respond to emerging health and social care issues and changes affecting more than one borough.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link: [www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

The Sub-Committee were given the opportunity to review the outcomes from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust’s Core Service and Well Led inspection which took place in July 2018. The findings of the inspection raised a number of concerns for the Sub-Committee particularly whether the leadership of the Trust had lost its line of sight over services, which may have contributed to the issues raised by the CQC. As such the Sub-Committee requested that SLaM return to another meeting of the Sub-Committee later in the year to provide an update on progress made in addressing the concerns raised by the CQC report.

Representatives from the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) also attended the meeting to provide an update on their operating plans for 2018-19 and their draft commissioning intentions for 2019-20. The Sub-Committee welcomed the move towards more integrated services, recognising that this would lead to improved outcomes for patients. The Sub-Committee also challenged the CCG on issues such as GP waiting times, children’s mental health services in Croydon and workforce planning in the event of Brexit. Overall the Sub-Committee were pleased to note that the CCG was no longer in special measures and looked forward to monitoring the work to deliver service improvements through partnership working.

The Sub-Committee also had the opportunity to review the Adults’ Safeguarding Board Annual Report, which was commended for being detailed and informative. In particular the Sub-Committee congratulated the Board for its work in highlighting the issue of hoarding. One concern raised about the report was that it did not fully highlight the effectiveness of the partnerships involved and recommended that further evidence of this be included in future reports.

Overview

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee’s work programme for 2018/19 focussed on a range of different issues including the closure of the Community Dental Service at the Parkway Health Centre. The Sub-Committee also scrutinised the Cabinet Member on the strengths weaknesses and challenges within her portfolio, the Care Quality Commission Report for the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) and reviewed the winter preparedness of local health and social care partners.

25 September 2018

At the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee meeting held on 25 September 2018 three main items were considered. These were:-

- South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust – CQC Report
- Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group
- Croydon Adults’ Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2017-18



## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

### 20 November 2018

At the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 November 2018 three main items were considered. These were:-

- King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – Community Dental Service
- Croydon Health Service NHS Trust
- Healthwatch Croydon

During the discussion with the representatives from King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, the Sub-Committee were extremely disappointed to note the closure of the Community Dental Service at the Parkway Health Centre in New Addington. Particularly in light of the fact that the proper consultation process when making a substantial change to service provision had not been followed. There was also concern that no assessment had been made of the equality needs of the local community in reaching the decision to close the service, particularly as it was located in an area effected by deprivation. As such the Sub-Committee recommended that the Trust reconsider its decision to close the service and requested that they return to one of their meetings later in the year to provide an update on the outcomes from this review.

Representatives from Croydon Health Service (CHS) provided the Sub-Committee with an update on the outcomes from their recent CQC inspection. Areas of particular concern that were questioned by the Sub-Committee included the recruitment and retention of staff and the use of technology to drive service improvement. The Sub-Committee was concerned about the synergy between the clinical and community teams, but was reassured that it was a priority for CHS to address these issues with a number of initiatives being developed. A further update on the work being undertaken in this area was requested by the Sub-Committee.

Healthwatch Croydon also provided the Sub-Committee with an update on their current work which included their review of the ability of street homeless to access local healthcare services, such as GPs surgeries. The Sub-Committee welcomed the findings of the report and agreed that the work of Healthwatch Croydon should be commended.

### 18 December 2018

At the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee meeting held on 18 December 2018 two main items were considered. These were:-

- South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust – CQC Progress report
- Winter Preparedness 2018-2019

During the discussion of the report from SLaM, the Sub-Committee was pleased to note the progress that had been made against the improvements identified in the CQC report earlier in the year. Although the progress made was encouraging, the Sub-Committee was concerned that the approach employed may be too management led and questioned whether there were enough opportunities for clinical input. As such a further update was requested for 2019-20 on the implementation of the improvements outlined in the presentation.

At this meeting the Sub-Committee also had the opportunity to question representatives from the CCG, Croydon Health Service and the Council on their preparations for winter. The Sub-Committee raised a number of concerns from the information provided during the meeting particularly whether the Emergency Department at Croydon University Hospital had the ability to cope with a flu outbreak or bad weather given that it was currently operating at near 100% capacity.

The Sub-Committee also questioned whether the guidance provided to GPs on prescription costs and discretionary prescribing would lead to some patients not getting the medicines they required. The Sub-Committee did welcome the use of a multi-service discharge team and thought that this would lead to improved discharge times for patients.

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**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

**26 March 2019**

At the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 March 2019 four main items were considered. These were:-

- King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – Community Dental Service Update
- Question Time: Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care
- Annual Public Health Report 2018
- Croydon Healthwatch – Dementia Carers report

At the meeting the Sub-Committee welcomed representatives from King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust who returned to provide an update on the Community Dental Service in the borough. This followed concerns raised at the Sub-Committee meeting in November about the closure of the Community Dental Service in New Addington. The Sub-Committee was pleased to note that since the previous meeting an equalities impact assessment had been undertaken and work was underway to mitigate against the concerns raised. The Sub-Committee was also pleased to note that King’s College was working with the Public Health team at the Council to explore options for the long term future of the Community Dental Service in the borough. A written update on the future of the service, once finalised, was requested.

From the Question Time session with the Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care, Councillor Jane Avis, the Sub-Committee reached the conclusion that there were a number of significant challenges facing the Cabinet Member in her portfolio in the coming year. This included staffing issues arising from Brexit, an ever increasing demand for services and continued uncertainty over funding. The Sub-Committee identified the need to make

better use of data to inform service improvements as key and recommended that work should be undertaken to gain an understanding of the Council’s performance in this area compared to other local authorities.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the report from the Director of Public Health which highlighted the importance of the support provided to parents and their children. It was also impressive to note the level of engagement from partner organisations towards achieving the 34 recommendations set out within the report.

The report from Healthwatch Croydon on their study of the experience of dementia carers in the borough accessing health care services was commended by the Sub-Committee who was supportive of the recommendations set out in the report. It was agreed that the subject would be revisited in 12 months to review the progress made against these recommendations.

**13 May 2019**

At the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee meeting held on 13 May 2019 the plans for closer integration between Croydon Health Service and the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group was considered.

Given the scale of the changes proposed, the Sub-Committee had a number of concerns about the practical details of the new organisational arrangements, such as how decision making on local services would be made and the need to ensure that the Council continued to be involved in the plans, where possible, to guarantee that services could be aligned to reduce any unnecessary bureaucracy. The Sub-Committee welcomed the openness of both organisations to scrutiny, but agreed that given the scale of the plans it would be important to receive regular updates to be able to monitor progress.



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**STREETS, ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

**Members of the Streets, Environment and Homes Sub-Committee**



The Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee has a broad remit. It investigates services and issues relating to housing, public and private transport, Croydon’s highways, waste management and environmental issues. In all its work, the Sub-Committee seeks to promote sustainability and to promote the health and wellbeing of Croydon’s residents.

You can view the agendas, reports and minutes of this Sub-Committee by clicking on the link:  
[www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

that there had been some notable successes and that it would take a number of months for any changes to be fully embedded.

Several conclusions were reached by the end of the meeting and it was recognised that the timetable changes were needed and would have been welcomed had the delivery not been problematic. It was concerning that GTR did not react appropriately despite the issues identified through the assurance process and it was clear that there was a failing in the rail industry-wide assurance process, including the Department of Transport. The significant changes that affected Croydon in particular were noted.

It was recommended that a robust plan to rebuild the trust between passengers and operators be devised as well as a public apology to the people and businesses of Croydon with the provision of generous compensation for passengers. The importance of clearly communicating information to passengers with as much advance notice as possible was emphasised by the Sub-Committee.

Recommendations were made to the Department of Transport, GTR, Network Rail as well as the Office of the Rail Regulator, with GTR and Network Rail invited to attend a future meeting to provide responses and updates on the recommendations made.

**9 October 2018**

The Sub-Committee received the annual presentation and question time session on the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon, Councillor Stuart Collins, as well as an update from the South London Waste Partnership.

Members were pleased to learn that Croydon was on the path to establishing leadership in effective waste management and sustainability with 45.5% recycling rates for Q1 of 2019/2020 and a target to achieving over 50% for 2019/20.

Members welcomed the success of the roll out of the new bins which had been successful in many areas, but highlighted that there had been issues in some areas and with certain

**Overview**

The Sub-Committee identified at the beginning of the year, a theme around Croydon Housing. The work programme evolved in response to current affairs such as the changes to the National Rail timetable and in response to emerging areas of work such as the Grounds Maintenance Service.

Through the work of the Sub-Committee, recommendations were made on a range of topics such as the breakdown in the delivery of the rail timetable, waste and recycling programme and encouraging businesses and contractors to pay the London Living wage.

**26 June 2018**

The first meeting of the municipal year focused on the introduction of the new rail time table, which was having a detrimental impact upon the residents of Croydon. Representatives from Network Rail were in attendance, as well as representatives from passenger groups. Officers from Network Rail gave a presentation on the recovery plan enacted following the issues arising as a result of the implementation of the new timetable. It was acknowledged





## STREETS, ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

types of properties, in particular for homes above commercial premises. There was concern about the size of the bins and the one size fits all policy adopted through the decision to supply the largest capacity bins. While it was acknowledged that this had been done to encourage more recycling and to future proof the scheme, it was felt more consultation should have taken place prior to the decision being made.

As a result it was recommended that the Council should review its policy on large capacity bins in particular for households that produced less waste. A report on the finding from the review of difficult properties such as those above commercial premises in the bin roll out programme was also requested.

The Members were keen to ensure that following the rescheduling of collections and recycling dates that there would be no further timetable changes in the near future and were pleased to be reassured by officers that now there was stability in the service, no further changes were planned.

The Sub-Committee also concluded that they had concerns about the performance of the contractor Jett, used by Veolia for the delivery of their bins and agreed to recommend that their performance be closely monitored.

Discussion took place on the Free Bulky Waste service which the Cabinet Member advised would be reviewed and monitored as was normal practice for all council services in order to ensure that it continued to fulfil its purpose and was cost effective. The Cabinet Member was clear that there were no plans to withdraw this popular service.

It was agreed by Officers as well as Members that tackling environmental issues through improved recycling was a priority and recommendations were made to support this campaign with the Council actively engaging with residents to promote its importance. Additionally it was recommended that information should be communicated to residents on the journey and results of the waste that was recycled.

### 6 November 2018

The Acting Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Regeneration (Job Share), Councillor Stuart King, gave a presentation on his portfolio which highlighted the rapid growth that was being experienced in the borough through investment in social infrastructure, public realm and transport as part of the growth zone.

The Sub-Committee discussed the progress made on the work on the Blackhorse Lane Bridge which had experienced delays and learned that a robust challenge had been made to the contractor to ensure no further delays were experienced.

The work that had been completed on public realm such as the regeneration of Thornton Health High Street, the pedestrianisation of Croydon High Street as well as other activities was noted and it was confirmed that an evaluation would take place to assess the impact from these changes to ascertain whether the intended outcomes had been realised.

A review of housing in Croydon was considered at the meeting with representatives from registered housing providers, Optivo and Croydon Churches Housing Association as well as representatives from housing support organisations, CAYSH and Thames Reach in attendance to inform the discussion on social housing in Croydon.

Members were pleased to learn about the development programmes and the commitment to the provision of affordable rental homes for families and households on a lower income. In particular the partnership between the Council, Optivo and Thames Reach on the Housing First initiative to assist vulnerable homeless people to secure accommodation and maintain their tenancy.

The housing providers expressed concern about their ability to respond to the demand for homes which remained a challenge and assisting tenants through the challenges of the process of Universal Credit which had impacted upon not only the residents themselves but also the housing providers financially.

As a result of the discussion, Members recommended that it was vital for housing providers to coordinate their work with each other effectively to ensure the best use of their resources. It was also highlighted that improvement was needed in partnership working between the Council and providers. However, the work of the Gateway Service was considered to be positive and the Housing First Initiative was innovative.

All of the representatives were encouraged to continue to work extensively to ensure that their contractors paid the London Living Wage to staff.

### 22 January 2019

The Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services, Councillor Alison Butler, attended this meeting to answer questions on her portfolio. During this item there were a number of questions focused on the action being taken by the Council to increase the provision of homes for lower income families. The Sub-Committee was pleased to learn about the Council's commitment to improving outcomes through the Croydon Affordable Homes Scheme and the changes made to the Council's Allocation Policy to enable lower income families



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in work to be given priority, as this had not previously been the case. Members were encouraged by the continued success of the Gateway Service.

Members noted the ongoing challenges which included the limited support and resources available for young people to help them enter the housing market and recommended that different ideas and initiatives be explored.

The housing shortage in Croydon along with the rest of the country was acknowledged and a recommendation made for the Council and Registered Housing providers to work on reinforcing their partnership. The Sub-Committee agreed that improved collaborative working would lead to improvement in tackling homelessness and managing the implications of welfare reform as well as providing opportunities to share good practice.

The Council decision to utilise Article 4 conditions on the conversion of properties to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) was applauded and recommended that this usage be on a borough wide basis and not Ward by Ward.

The Sub-Committee received the Brick by Brick business plan 2019/20 and a presentation on progress made. Members were informed that the first schemes for sale would be launched early in 2019 and Croydon residents would have an exclusive period of access to purchase which was welcomed. Members of the Sub-Committee had visited some of the sites prior to completion and were pleased with progress.

### 19 February 2019

Representatives from the trams operator, Trams Operations Limited attended to give a presentation and provide an update on their work to improve passenger safety since the tram derailment in November 2016. It was noted that the investigation into the derailment was ongoing and several actions had been put in place since the incident. An emphasis had been placed on improving the competency and expertise of drivers and the Guardian device which would be used to identify driver fatigue, raising an alarm should it detect any changes had been introduced. Members were encouraged by the extensive work that was being done to improve passenger safety as well as taking into consideration the driver's wellbeing.

The Sub-Committee received reports from Thames Water as well as SES Water on water resources, managing leaks and plans that were in place to manage the impact of adverse weather on the water supply. Members were keen to receive further information on additional infrastructure investment planned for Croydon and any issues that may affect water pressure.

An update on the Grounds Maintenance service being brought back in house was given to the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that the previous contractor had found it difficult to provide the service at the level specified in the contract without experiencing financial losses and as such the expected standards were not being met.

Although there were many difficulties experienced, the contract was not terminated and had come to a natural end. An assessment was undertaken on the different options available and from analysis it was evident that the cost to contract out or bring back in house would be broadly the same. A decision was made to bring the service back in-house as it would afford more flexibility on decision making.

Members were supportive of the decision to bring the service back in-house, but agreed that Scrutiny should have been consulted prior to the decision to change the method of delivery and would have welcomed an opportunity to review the business case for the decision. The Sub-Committee was pleased to note the plan to ensure that all staff who transferred over from the previous contractor would be paid the London Living Wage.

It was recommended that a further update be requested and the Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon be invited to attend a future meeting to provide an update on the service review and future plans for Ground Maintenance.

### 19 March 2019

The focus of this meeting was on the private sector housing, in particular the impending renewal of the selective licensing scheme which came into force in 2015 and was due to expire by 2020. Members were presented with information on the need for the scheme, which helped to improve the relationship between the Council, landlords and their tenants.

It was acknowledged that there was a heavy reliance on the private rented sector within the borough and a semantic link between poor housing and health had been made which impacted on the life outcomes for people, in particular low income families with a family member in work. This group had now overtaken those living in social rented housing in terms of living in deprivation.

The scheme enabled landlords to recognise their duties and responsibilities to their tenants with the Council providing information, resources and monitoring to enable them to ensure that their tenants were living in properties maintained to a good standard.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the housing theme would be carried into the work programme for 2019/20 to enable further scrutiny to take place.



# Scrutiny

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