

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	CABINET	
DATE OF DECISION	25th September 2024	
REPORT TITLE:	Public Health Peer Review	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Marie Snelling, Interim Assistant Chief Executive Andrea Fallon, Interim Director of Public Health andrea.fallon@croydon.gov.uk	
LEAD OFFICER:	Andrea Fallon, Director of Public Health	
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Yvette Hopley Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care	
KEY DECISION?	No	n/a
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	n/a
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL	

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1** This report shares the findings from the Public Health Peer review that took place 12th-14th March 2024 including a summary of further actions.
- 1.2** The Mayor’s Business Plan sets out a vision for a future Croydon that focuses on opportunity for all, better health, cleaner and safer communities, enabling children and young people to thrive and on financial sustainability. The Council has also placed prevention and Public Health approaches core to its programme of transformation in order to tackle inequalities and reduce the burden of ill health.
- 1.3** The Council, therefore, invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a peer review to help explore how the role of Public Health (including the Council’s Public Health function) might be maximised in line with the commitments set out in the Mayor’s Business Plan.
- 1.4** The peer review summary report highlighted several strengths and areas for potential development. These range from opportunities for systemwide change to more operational improvements.
- 1.5** Public Health is keen to publish the peer challenge report as part of our wider Council commitment to openness and transparency.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, Cabinet is recommended:

- 2.1** to note the key findings of the Public Health Peer Review contained in appendix A and summarised in section 4.4 of this report.
- 2.2** to note next steps and the transformation the Public Health function is undertaking, an outline summary for which is set out in appendix B in accordance with the peer review recommendations.
- 2.3** to endorse the publication of the peer review report.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** Inviting the LGA in to undertake a Public Health peer review was key in supporting the forward transformation and enhancement of both the Public Health function but also the role of Public Health across the organisation and Croydon as a whole.
- 3.2** The Council is committed to ensuring it maximises the impact of Public Health for the benefit of those who live and work in Croydon and ensuring that all residents, especially those at the greatest risk of poor health, can be supported to live healthy and independent lives for as long as possible.

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

- 4.1** As part of its wider transformation work a Public Health Peer Review was initiated by the Council with support from the Local Government Association (LGA) in March 2024.
- 4.2** The review team was led by former Local Authority Chief Executive Paul Najsarek with support from Cllr Colin Noble (Elected member, Suffolk County Council), with other peer reviewers coming from a range of backgrounds including a former director of Public Health and Public Health specialists, an NHS peer and a VCSE peer.
- 4.3** The review included interviews with more than 50 individuals across a range of partner organisations and an in-depth look at over 50 documents. The review took a sector led improvement approach with peer reviewers acting as 'critical friends'.
- 4.4** Reviewers were very complimentary regarding the depth and range of engagement and general enthusiasm for the process amongst those who took part in the process.
- 4.5** The Peer Review explored three key areas with participants namely:

- 4.5.1 Vision and Strategy
- 4.5.2 Use of Resources
- 4.5.3 Partnership working

The review team provided a set of both operational and strategic recommendations to the Council and partners.

4.6 In summary the headline findings of the review are summarised below:

- 4.6.1 The review noted the strong commitment to Public Health by the Executive Mayor and Cabinet, and that the Council is ambitious to embrace a Public Health approach to tackling inequalities.
- 4.6.2 There was recognition of the tough and impressive journey the Council has been on.
- 4.6.3 There was clear recognition of the significant challenges the borough faces relating to demography, deprivation and inequality.
- 4.6.4 A recommendation was made that given the borough's challenges, it requires an outstanding Public Health contribution, with a Public Health team that is central to Council transformation.
- 4.6.5 Lots of positive examples of operational working by the Public Health team were noted, whilst also noting that there was more work to do on building the foundations of Public Health including system leadership, building relationships and embedding cross Council Public Health working.
- 4.6.6 The review highlighted the importance of maximising the use of resources (Council and partners), noting the work to date to make the best use of the Public Health grant, and noted the importance of making greater impact on Public Health outcomes by taking opportunities to set ambition alongside accountability.

4.7 The findings of the Peer Review have been grouped into four key themes and task and finish groups have been established for each theme to take forward associated actions.

4.8 The membership of each task and finish group comprises Public Health and wider leaders in recognition that most of the recommendations require a whole Council or wider partnership approach in line with the ambitions set out within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

4.9 A summary of the four themes of work underway in response to the recommendations are:

4.9.1 **Theme 1:** Public Health finance, function, and governance.

- Optimal use of resources including the Public Health grant
- Enhanced Public Health commissioning models.
- Strengthened performance monitoring of contracts.
- Revisiting Public Health team priorities/service planning.

4.9.2 **Theme 2:** Public Health leadership, vision, strategy, and visibility (internal focus)

- Enhancing Public Health leadership within the Council.
- Strengthening strategic relationships and collaboration.
- Stronger joint working across departments.
- Increasing our collective impact in relation to progress against Public Health outcomes.

4.9.3 **Theme 3:** Wider system partnership and actions (external focus)

- Strengthened alignment between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health and Care Board.
- Increased collaboration with external system partners (e.g. Integrated Care System (ICS)).
- Strengthening collaboration with voluntary organisations.

4.9.4 **Theme 4:** Evidence based practice – data, intelligence, and strategy.

- Exploring further opportunities to use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).
- Enhancing the use of intelligence across the council and partners.
- Increased use of the Public Health outcomes framework.
- Expanding the use of evidence and evaluation to inform decision making.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Do nothing – not implementing the recommendations from the peer review would mean missing opportunities to increase our system-wide impact of Public Health in relation to health protection, wellbeing and tackling health inequalities. It would also result in sub-optimal use of the Public Health resources of the council and our partners.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The peer reviewers consulted with over 50 partners from a wide range of organisations. The report is a summary of this process and recommendations arising from consideration of the information gathered.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO EXECUTIVE MAYOR'S BUSINESS PLAN

- 7.1 The implementation of the Public Health Peer Review recommendations will make a positive contribution to a range of the Executive Mayor's Business Plan priorities. The Mayors Business Plan sets out a vision for a future Croydon where there are increased

opportunities, where residents experience better health, there are cleaner and safer communities, and where children and young people thrive.

7.2 The plan also sets out clear commitments relating to financial sustainability. The Council has placed prevention and Public Health approaches core to its programme of transformation in order to tackle inequalities, reduce the burden of ill health and thus increase financial sustainability.

7.3 Implementation of the Peer Review recommendations will support the Executive Mayor's plan by:

7.3.1 Strengthening collaboration and joint working with partner organisations and the voluntary community and faith sectors.

7.3.2 Ensuring best use of Public Health grant funding to target prevention which will in turn contribute to the councils overarching goal of financial sustainability.

7.3.3 By forging stronger partnerships with Children's Services and 0-19 service partners we will ensure children and young people have the best chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential.

7.3.4 By working more closely with colleagues in Croydon who focus on stronger 'places' we will help to reduce the impact of homelessness and support community safety.

7.3.5 By working to advance our health in all policies approach, and by working more closely with our NHS colleagues we will support local people to live healthier and independent lives for longer.

7.3.6 With the support of LGA colleagues we will seek to enhance Public Health skills across our system via training and development for members and officers in a range of Public Health related areas.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1.1 Theme 1 (Finance, function, and governance) includes a comprehensive review of the Public Health budget including a four-year proposal for use of the Public Health reserves, this has been a major area of work to date, with further detail to be set out in a separate report and considered by Cabinet at a subsequent meeting.

8.1.2 Implementation of the peer review recommendations will be undertaken within existing resources i.e., the Public Health team and partners, hence no additional expenditure is anticipated as a result of implementation.

8.1.3 Comments approved by Lesley Shields, Head of Finance for Assistant Chief Executive and Resources on behalf of the Director of Finance. 08/08/2024

8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.2.1 The Council has statutory responsibilities under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to take effective action to improve and provide Public Health services for local people in the area. Implementing the recommendations of the peer review supports the Council to comply with its Public Health responsibilities.

8.2.2 Comments approved by the Principal Lawyer Corporate Law & Litigation on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 5th September 2024)

8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the provisions set out in Section 149, Equality Act 2010. The Council must therefore have due regard to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics defined by law are race and ethnicity, disability, sex, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership.

8.3.2 The peer review strengthens the ability for Croydon to understand and address social and health inequalities through developing an improved Public Health function and wider system approach to Public Health.

8.3.2 Comments approved by Ken Orlukwu, Senior Equalities Officer, on behalf of Helen Reeves, Head of Strategy & Policy on 05/09/2024

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.4 No Procurement implications at this point (may follow within theme 1 relating to finance – set out separately for a future Cabinet report). No HR, Crime and Disorder, Property and Asset management, ICT, Corporate Resources, environmental implications noted. No adverse Health implications noted (likely positive implications). No adverse risk implications (likely to reduce risks) and no data protection implications anticipated.

9. APPENDICES

A - Public Health Peer Review LGA feedback

B - Public Health Peer Review Delivery Plan

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

No additional documents