

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET</b> <b>16 November 2022</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>STAGE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM SCRUTINY</b> <b>(OCTOBER 2022)</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	<b>JANE WEST - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES</b>  <b>ADRIAN MAY – INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &amp; SCRUTINY</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ROWENNA DAVIS</b> <b>CHAIR, SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>JASON PERRY, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF CROYDON</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b>	
<p>The Scrutiny recommendations to the Executive (Appendix A) may have financial implications. Following the recommendations being received at Cabinet, the Executive will identify and consider any financial implications as part of their response. If any recommendation is subsequently progressed for consideration and decision by the Executive Mayor in Cabinet, full financial, legal and equalities implications would be presented.</p>	
<b>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE:</b> Not a key decision	

The Executive Mayor has the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations contained within this report:

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Mayor in Cabinet is asked to:

1. Receive the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 11 October (Appendix A).
2. To provide a substantive response to the recommendations (a Scrutiny Stage 2 Report) within two months (i.e. at the next available Cabinet meeting on 25 January 2023).

## **2. STAGE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM SCRUTINY**

- 2.1 Recommendations that have been developed from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and its Sub-Committees since the last Cabinet meeting are provided in Appendix A. The constitution requires that an interim or full response is provided within 2 months of this Cabinet meeting.

## **3. CONCLUSIONS FROM COMMITTEE/SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- 3.1 In order to provide additional context for the Cabinet, a summary of the conclusions reached by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee or relevant Sub-Committee follows.

### ***Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 6 September 2022***

#### *Community Safety Partnership*

- 3.2 Subsequent to its review of the Community Safety Partnership at its meeting on 6 September, Councillor Tamar Nwafor suggested to the Scrutiny & Overview Committee that the training of champions within communities across the borough to spot the signs of domestic abuse, should be put forward for consideration in the preparation of the forthcoming Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. This proposal was endorsed by the Committee at its meeting on 11 October 2022.

### ***Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 11 October 2022***

#### *Council Tax Enforcement, Collection & Recovery*

- 3.3 The Committee thanked the South West London Law Centre and the Croydon Citizens Advice Bureau for their support in helping the Committee to prepare for this item, through convening a community meeting to hear directly from residents about their experience of Council Tax Enforcement. The Committee also welcomed the submissions put forward from these organisations and agreed to request that a response is provided by the Administration to address the issues raised.
- 3.4 The Committee would also like to put on record its thanks to the Head of Payments, Revenue, Benefits and Debt, Katherine Black, and her team for their engagement with the scrutiny process. The sensitivity displayed at the community meeting to the often upsetting evidence provided was commendable and their subsequent response to address the issues raised should be held up as an example of best practice.
- 3.5 From its review of Council Tax enforcement, the Committee identified that a relatively cost effective means of improving the service would be to review the wording of correspondence sent to residents in Council Tax arrears, as the feedback received at the community meeting would suggest that it could be misinterpreted as being more final than the Council's collection processes actual were.

- 3.6 Similarly, the Committee would recommend that information provided on the Council's website is also reviewed to ensure that it was accessible for a range of literacy levels and prominently displayed the support and advice that was available for residents facing financial difficulty.
- 3.7 The Committee was keen to seek further evidence that Council services worked together to support residents with multiple needs. It was agreed that there needed to be a mechanism in place that would demonstrate to all Members that services cooperated effectively for the benefit of residents.

*Call-In: Mayor in Cabinet Decision on Temporary Workers Staffing Contract*

- 3.8 In reviewing the Call-In request made on the Temporary Workers Staffing Contract, the Committee concluded that evidence it received in the report responding to the call-in, together with the evidence heard from the Cabinet Member for Finance and officer sat the committee meeting, provided sufficient reassurance that the issues raised had been addressed. As such it was agreed that no further action was necessary and the decision could proceed with immediate effect.
- 3.9 However, in considering the call-in the Committee also concluded that there were wider issues raised that needed to be addressed. One such issue was the Council application of section 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act regarding the provision of withheld information in Committee reports. The Committee agreed that there seemed to be a lack of clarity over the exact requirements of this provision and that further guidance was required for both Members and report authors to understand what information could and could not be disclosed.
- 3.10 Another key issue raised by the Committee was the information collected by the Council to evaluate the success of its contracts. There seemed to be an emphasis towards the purely financial aspects of contracts, but the Committee agreed that the evaluation process needed to include a qualitative framework as well as standard for all contracts awarded.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The recommendations were developed from the deliberations of either the Scrutiny & Overview Committee or one of its Sub-Committees.

#### **5. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

- 5.1 The recommendations set out in the appendix to this report directly arise from Scrutiny.

#### **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the content of this report. Please see Finance Impact Section above.

## **7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that the recommendations are presented to Cabinet in accordance with the Constitution.
- 7.2 This requires that the Scrutiny report is received and registered at this Cabinet Meeting and that a substantive response is provided within 2 months (i.e. **Cabinet – 25 January 2023** is the next available meeting).

Approved by Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation & Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1 There are no equalities implications arising directly from the content of this report, the report received recommendations from scrutiny, but no decision for recommendation.

## **9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 9.1 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the contents of this report

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from the contents of this report, the report received recommendations from scrutiny, but no decision for recommendation.

## **11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from the contents of this report, the report received recommendations from scrutiny, but no decision for recommendation.

## **12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 12.1 There is a statutory requirement for Cabinet to receive the recommendations made by Scrutiny.

## **13. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 13.1 None

## **14. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 **WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

There are no Data Protection implications at this stage, but that the situation will be reviewed again at Stage 2 when Cabinet provide their response to the proposed recommendations.

**14.2 HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

No.

---

**CONTACT OFFICER:**

Simon Trevaskis, Senior Democratic Services  
& Governance Officer – Scrutiny  
T: 020 8726 6000 X 64840  
Email: [simon.trevaskis@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:simon.trevaskis@croydon.gov.uk)

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – Recommendations from Scrutiny

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 6 September 2022

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=2925&Ver=4>

Meeting of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee held on 11 October 2022

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=3437&Ver=4>