



PUTTING CROYDON'S VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR AT THE HEART OF RENEWAL AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

1. Croydon's Financial Challenge

1.1 The Council's financial position is now requiring a root and branch review of how local residents are best supported to achieve health, prosperity and wellbeing within a safe and sustainable environment. Central within this review must be the need to build on the strengths, assets and reach of Croydon's voluntary and community sector (VCS).

2. The Localities Operating Model

2.1 In planning for renewal, the Council now has the opportunity to reconsider how it can achieve more of the objectives associated with its localities operating model by delivering through its partners in the local VCS. The Council operating model identifies community-led provision as a key objective – both for the purpose of empowering local people and for engaging them in a co-production of services that are more responsive to the needs and opportunities within local communities.

2.2 The Covid19 experience in 2020 has raised the profile of VCS services in Croydon and highlighted how much more agile and responsive they can be. The innovations of local VCS groups in 2020 were highlighted weekly at Croydon's *Local Strategic Partnership* meetings, resulting in a high-level discourse on how a *shifting of resources* is needed to ensure the growth and sustainability of VCS services reaching Croydon's most vulnerable people – and its most enterprising residents.

2.3 This shifting of resources – in the context of Croydon Council's financial position – will have a significant bearing on how effectively Croydon's VCS is now enabled to build on its Covid19 response by supporting people to cope with economic recession and the longer-term impact of the pandemic.

3. The VCS Role in Renewal

3.1 CVA is now preparing to consult widely on a plan of action that puts Croydon's VCS at the heart of the borough's recovery from the calamities of 2020. Two key aims will be to develop the VCS role within the localities operating model and to ensure that the Council's commissioning and procurement practices are responsive to the social value provided by local VCS delivery partners.

3.2 The *VCS Renewal Plan* will also make reference to the GLA's *London Recovery Programme* and its key recovery missions focusing on financial hardship, jobs, mental health and resilient communities. In presenting the Plan to Croydon Council our purpose will be to realign preventative services in the borough, with the VCS commissioned to work side-by-side with local communities in shaping Croydon's renewal.