

## Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June 10:00- 12:00

Online

**Welcome and introductions:** Steve Phaure (SP), CVA's CEO introduced the event

This is the fifth of a series of Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance meetings that CVA has organised on the Council's financial crisis. CVA has been urging the Council to resist cuts to the voluntary sector but also look into longer term solutions by supporting Croydon Renewal Plan and, within that, the Community Renewal Plan (which incorporates issues such as mental health, poverty etc).

**Council's Financial Challenges and Plans for Inclusive Sustainable Growth:**

Councillor Manju Shahul- Hameed, Cabinet Member for Communities and Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnerships

See attached presentation

**Discussion:**

**John Gilhooly, Croydon Neighbourhood Watch** – Our grant has gone this year

**Q. Marylin Smithies** – Are you looking into the state of housing on Regina Road?

**Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed:** We have taken a paper to Cabinet in May on this, actioned it, spoken to residents involved and recruited an Interim Director for Housing.

**Q. Elsie Sutherland:** Is it correct that free walks in the park, which have been a life line for older people, will be taken away?

**Gavin Handford:** I will enquire, a response to be provided next week

**Q. Mark Healey, Metro Charity:** with regards to the E-representative panel, will it have representation from LGBTQ communities? Sexuality and gender identity were not mentioned in the presentation.

**Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed:** Because the Panel will inform Council's decision making, there will be an open and transparent recruitment process that will make sure Croydon's profile and population is fully represented.

**Q Sara Milocco, CVA:** CVA has recently elected 23 voluntary sector representatives with great expertise and commitment, who will surely be interested and willing to be involved.

**Q. Susie, Shirley Neighbourhood Care** - What is the timeframe for rent subsidies and Year 3 Community Fund funding?

**Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed** Uncertainty is an issue at present, with the recent elections, COVID19, the Council's financial restraints and internal restructure. We will give groups 6 month notice and will write to all contacts as soon as possible. There are also a number of steps that need to be taken; the re-cost is presently going through the Review Panel and the Improvement and Insurance Panel.

**Gavin Handford:** We are expecting final decisions in the next two weeks on rent subsidies; groups will be heard in June. Draft budgets are expected in October; groups will hear in October about Year 3 funding, hopefully November.

**Q. Norman, CNCA** – we are looking forward to knowing in November/December about the Year 3 funding. The VS provision for the elderly population in Croydon is crucial as preventative and it would be a disaster if groups were to close. Is the Council discussing with Health on how some of this provision could be moved to their budget? How is One Croydon support going to materialise before November/December?

**SP:** this question to be answered by the next presentation.

**Q. John Gilhooly: What are the priorities in the Council's spending?** Crime needs to be a priority if you want to attract investments in the borough.

**Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed:** Croydon is seeing crime incidents, especially since COVID restrictions have been eased, but other London boroughs are going through the same. Safer Neighbourhood teams are working closely with the Metropolitan Police but are lacking resources. The Council is working with the Safer Croydon Partnership on a number of areas, including Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, with the MPs and the Croydon Bid Board.

**SP** – CVA has brought in 3/4 million pounds into London Road through a tremendous partnership chaired by Anthony from PJ Services. Anthony and I were at the GLA yesterday, where Croydon was held up as the model of partnership work with the Police in London, because of the way the project supports the Metropolitan Police to approach violent reduction in a different way.

**Q John Gilhooly** – This is very much appreciated but Croydon's reputation as a violent and knife crime centre in London is extremely bad. And what about online crime?

**SP** -We will invite the Metropolitan Police Commander to the next meeting.

**Q. Gerrie Ozah, Croydon Neighbourhood Care Association** – voluntary does not mean free. Cuts to the voluntary sector are counter-productive; as groups close, more and more residents we were supporting will turn to the statutory sector. So, what are the priorities?

**Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed:** The priority is to balance the budget, while supporting VS organisations. The Council has allocated £2,6M to the Community Fund and £243,000 to rent subsidies. We are one of few London boroughs that are also using rent relief.

**Q- Which sites are up for disposal?**

**Gavin Handford:** Here is the link to the asset disposals list that went to Cabinet in February:  
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s27502/Appendix%2520A%2520list%2520of%2520assets%2520recommended%2520for%2520disposal%2520in%2520Tranche%25201.pdf>

**Maddy Orobator:** With CVA, we have started a conversation with the Council (including Gavin) on whether a partnership of voluntary sector groups could set up a Community Asset Trust to manage a handful of these assets.

**Q. Jonathan Baxter** – My question is on Croydon Care and Equipment Service. Is the Council closing it and how are we going to provide equipment to older and disabled residents if this happens?

**Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed:** will talk to Rachel Soni and come back on this.

**Gavin Handford:** For Information here is a link to the papers that went to Cabinet on Monday. The paper on Your Care is page 245-260  
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/g2513/Public%2520reports%2520pack%252007th-Jun-2021%252018.30%2520Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

**Brian Longman, CNCA** – We are very concerned about the closure of Croydon Care and Equipment Service. This is a mainly pro-active, really important service for older and disabled people, that is preventing them to go to hospitals and has been held as a good practice example at international level.

Further outstanding questions that Gavin Handford offered to report back on:

**Q.** How are the proposed changes to Children's Centre provision affecting commissioned Best Start community projects and how can the voluntary sector collaborate with the Council in those area most affected by centre closure (e.g. Shirley, Purley etc)?

**Q.** Is the Council planning to sell the Children Centre buildings that will be closed (e.g. Shirley) or is it considering an asset transfer for community use?

**Q.** Can we have a chart displaying what groups are on the LVP Board and steering groups?

**Healthy Communities Together Programme and HCT Leadership Model**, Edwina Morris, Independent Chair of the LVP Board - Philippa Thompson, Mind in Croydon

**The HCT Programme** is a national programme of grant funding from the National Lottery and King's Fund, which aims to support partnership working. One Croydon was one of 6 successful partnerships awarded. See presentation for details on the HCT programme.

The role of LVP Board is try to make sure that voluntary and statutory sector partners are equal within the programme. At present, the Board is working to put together a plan that will secure £450,000 over the next 2 to 3 years for Croydon. In order to deliver Phase 1 of the programme (March to November 2021) the work has been divided into 3 areas:

1. Leadership and Representation, led by Ima (ARCC) and Sue McVicker (CNCA)
2. Empowerment and Engagement, led by Steve Phaure (CVA) and Andrew Brown (BME Forum)
3. Funding and Commissioning, led by Rachel Soni

Two of the areas are led by the voluntary sector and membership of the LVP Board also includes many community groups.

**HCT Leadership Model:** the One Croydon Alliance brings together the decision makers across a range of sectors and operates through 10 boards and many associated working groups. It is essential that the voice of the Voluntary Sector is heard. An independent consultant has been supporting One Croydon to map what representative systems/mechanism there are at present; this included:

- The 4 Infrastructure group model
- CVA's CEO Support group model
- CVA's CVSA model
- The self-identifying model

Any other ideas, please let them know. For example, the One Croydon Alliance, including groups such as Mind in Croydon, Off the Record and Croydon Drop In, is presently in conversation on an Alliance on Mental Health. This would see Mental Health support commissioned as one piece to the sector, with groups then deciding how to transformationally use the funding to make sure residents experience a seamless offer.

## Discussion

**Suzy Stoyel** – Can we have a chart displaying what groups are on the LVP Board and steering groups?

**John Gilhooly** – We could have representatives on themes across boroughs. We could also have representatives from the different localities.

**Andy Stranack** – Include groups that are not constituted but very much in touch with residents.

**Sara Milocco, CVA:** CVA recently held its bi-annual elections for voluntary sector representatives. We had 35 candidates coming forward, all bringing exceptional experience and



skills, for a total of 25 representative positions. We elected representatives on 23 roles, with additional ones being in standby because their steering groups/boards were cancelled or changed (for example 6 environmental reps). Details of newly elected reps are on our website at [Local Strategic Partnerships - Croydon Voluntary Action \(cvalive.org.uk\)](http://cvalive.org.uk)