

# YourCroydon

ISSUE 14 - FEBRUARY 2008

*'A place to be proud of'*

**Up with the best in London  
- and now we're going the  
extra mile on your behalf**

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**Top score in  
watchdog study**

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**PayPoint promises to  
make payment easier**

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**Your chance to reward  
excellent service**

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The next edition of **Your Croydon** will be published on Wednesday 27 February 2008. Commercial advertising is welcome, but inclusion of an advertisement does not indicate council endorsement of any products or services mentioned.

# Leading lines

## New year, same old funding story



In this first *Your Croydon* of 2008, we would like to explain why, as the council's leadership team, we will use the magazine to help residents better understand some of the pressures the council is facing. We'll be doing this individually, reflecting on some of the subjects that affect so many households – fear of crime, standards of education and behaviour in our schools, caring for our environment.

But perhaps nothing is as important as the way the council manages the money you're obliged to pay in council tax. And, while it may be a new year, we're dismayed to report it's the same old approach from the Government as far as funding services is concerned.

Like most London councils, we rely on a greater proportion of council tax to fund our services than we do on support from Government. This is a consequence of the ever-decreasing funding we get from central Government. So the news that, for 2008/09, we're again getting the lowest increase in grant support of any council in the country is deeply disappointing – especially at a time when a growing and ageing population is bringing more demanding pressures. With inflation running at more than 4%, an increase in grant of 2% is a cut in real terms.

Thankfully, our determination to transform Croydon into one of the most efficient councils in the country is paying off. The unprecedented £15m of efficiency savings has ruled out the need for hefty cuts in services. But, if we got a fair deal from the Government – and some metropolitan councils have got a 3.6% increase – the efficiencies we've become so good at would allow further investment in our key services or lower council tax bills.

Some consolation has come with news that independent watchdog the Audit Commission now rates Croydon alongside the established local government pace setters – Wandsworth and Westminster – in terms of how we use our resources.

In Croydon, the need to make every penny count has never been greater. We won't shirk from making tough, and sometimes, perhaps, unpopular decisions as we concentrate on spending only what we can afford. We didn't expect running the council would be easy. It would have been nice, though, if Croydon residents could have relied on the Government for fair funding treatment.

**Mike Fisher**  
Leader of the council

**Dudley Mead**  
Deputy Leader

**Steve O'Connell**  
Deputy Leader

## Council officers' prompt action on Christmas fire

**Holiday disaster destroys Upper Norwood block and leaves residents out in cold**

Christmas proved to be somewhat less than joyous for the residents of an Upper Norwood block of flats.

The occupants of the council-owned block, in Marston Way, found themselves homeless when a devastating fire ripped through the four-storey building, destroying everything inside.

But, thanks to the prompt action of council emergency duty officers called out late on Christmas night, the victims were cared for and found temporary accommodation.

And, from Boxing Day on, officers from the housing, adult services, children's services, finance and press offices formed a team that worked across the festive holiday period and into the new year to ease the burden of the 12 affected families.

Fortunately, nobody was injured in the fire and, in addition to accommodation, the residents received cash and shopping vouchers from the council to deal with their immediate personal needs.

Jon Rouse, the council's chief executive, praised the work of staff: "So many officers worked together, seamlessly as a team, to deal with the situation and to put the needs of residents first.

"I'm immensely proud of the way the council responded to this incident and then dealt with the aftermath, doing all we could to help the people who lost their homes, their personal possessions, even the Christmas presents they'd received earlier that day.

"It was a job well done under very difficult circumstances."



## Booking a place in the country's top ten

**Librarian Josie Crimp has been selected by her peers as one of the country's best**

Helping improve people's quality of life – a fine thing to do but not, possibly, what most would associate with the working day of a librarian.

But that positive attitude is one of the attributes that helped win Josie Crimp recognition as one of the country's top ten new librarians.

In a competition run by national campaign Love Libraries, Josie, 25, who has worked for Croydon Library Service as a children's librarian for a little over two years, was named one of the top ten inspiring individuals who have entered a new career in public libraries.

The ten winners were chosen for their creative efforts and commitment in making a difference to library users.

The judges were looking for entries that challenged outdated perceptions of librarianship as a "stamping books and tidying shelves" career, and negative views of librarians as quiet and boring.



Selsdon resident Josie loves her job as a children's librarian and was delighted to be named a winner.

She said: "I go home every day knowing, absolutely, that I've made at least one person's life better.

"We reach out to many vulnerable groups: housebound individuals, people with special needs, young people, families on a low income, people living alone who may not have had a conversation with anyone else that day.

"We don't save lives, but we provide a quality of life – which in many ways is a far more difficult task."

Josie has been particularly involved in the development of services to teenagers and is passionate about encouraging young people to use libraries

She believes that libraries play an important role in the lives of towns and the people who live in those towns, and is always looking for new ideas to improve services.

## £1m for your business idea

**Got a great idea but no funding? Croydon Enterprise could help**

Croydon Enterprise has announced a £1m loan fund, designed to help anyone in the borough who wants to start, or grow, their own business.

For anyone who has been refused finance by banks and other mainstream sources, the fund offers loans of between £2,001 and £50,000.

An African-inspired catering company, a rag-doll maker and a website designer are just three of the businesses that Croydon Enterprise has recently helped to start up.

Stella Okeahialam, director of the Croydon Enterprise programme, said: "When TV Dragon Peter Jones visited Croydon last

summer he was seriously impressed with what he saw.

"Throughout the borough there are people with great business ideas; what's holding many back is the money to help those ideas grow."

Since its 2006 launch, Croydon Enterprise has offered help and advice to nearly 2,000 people across the borough.

Throughout 2008, the Croydon Enterprise programme will be holding special events to ensure that everyone with a business idea has the chance to make it happen.

Anyone interested in finding out more should call **020 8680 6161** or visit **[www.croydonenterprise.com](http://www.croydonenterprise.com)**

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# Croydon joins capital's best

## Audit Commission ranks council alongside London's top-performing authorities

A record-breaking £15m-worth of efficiency savings is underpinning Croydon Council's confidence in predicting a balanced budget for 2008/09.

At 6.7% of the Town Hall's budget, this is more than double the previous best and reflects the administration's determination to strengthen its financial position and concentrate on ensuring value for money for the borough's residents.

Independent watchdog the Audit Commission has recognised the council's grip on finances. It now ranks Croydon alongside Wandsworth, Westminster, the City and Kensington & Chelsea as the capital's best councils for "using resources".

To be recognised as a flagship borough alongside some of the established local government stars reflects the significant progress made by the council.



But so much of the council's good work could be undermined by the Government continuing to give Croydon the very worst deal in terms of funding support.

With inflation running at 4%, a 2% increase for 2008/09 is a real-term cut. It takes no account of population pressures and rising demand for many of the services that the Government says the council must provide.

The reduction means depending more than ever on making efficiencies to maintain services, so it is just as well the administration set early sights on transforming Croydon into one of the most efficiently run councils in the country.

What's disappointing, however, is that, because of the low level of funding support Croydon receives in comparison with most other councils, the huge efficiencies it is delivering are having to be used to cover the central Government shortfall, rather than reducing council tax bills.

Council tax pledges will, however, be delivered.

# Council supports police support team

## Back-up unit ready to respond anywhere in the borough

A nine-strong team of police officers and police community support officers has been formed, with significant funding from Croydon Council.

The borough's first safer Croydon support team (SCST), another step in the council's response to residents' safety fears, will be posted as back-up wherever extra uniformed support is needed to tackle anti-social behaviour and crimes such as fly-tipping.

The council will contribute £170,000 a year to the cost of the team, comprising a police sergeant, a police constable, and four police community support officers. Croydon police is funding three further constables.

Croydon regards its investment as a means of strengthening its joint approach with local police, and a way of addressing a pressing public concern.

The latest initiative follows last year's £1m launch of neighbourhood enforcement officers (NEOs) as part of ongoing efforts to reassure residents that crime in the borough really is falling, and that the chance of becoming a victim is less in Croydon than in most other parts of London.



Like each ward's safer neighbourhood team, the SCST will concentrate on the kind of unpleasant behaviour and quality-of-life crime that leaves residents feeling vulnerable and detracts from their enjoyment of Croydon.

It is the antics of a relatively small number of perpetrators that cause so much unease within communities.

Maintaining a visible presence of police and enforcement officers is seen as a sure deterrent to crime and antisocial behaviour.

And, by "tooling-up" in terms of resources, the council and police are sending a strong message that such behaviour is unacceptable and will attract an immediate response from those upholding law and order in the borough.

## Cutting the red tape

**Campaign aims to provide better service**

Council staff are being urged to get involved in a drive to cut red tape to allow them to serve Croydon's residents better.



The Blitz on Bureaucracy campaign asks staff to identify ways in which they feel they could do their job in less time and with less fuss.

Featuring prominently on the council's intranet home page, the campaign asks workers if they know of a process that seems to be a waste of time and gives the customer a bad experience.

And they are being urged to speak up if they feel a tweak in service delivery could result in better delivery of good-quality services in a friendly, effective and efficient manner.

Tagged a long-term campaign, Blitz on Bureaucracy will result in a better service at lower cost – good news for Croydon's council taxpayers.

## Council contractor lands top award

**Contract saving council taxpayers  
£1m a year lands top industry award**

Croydon Council and its partner, Interservefm, have jointly scooped the Premises and Facilities Management partners in public service awards for 2007.

The working relationship enables the council to reduce its energy consumption, improve internal recycling, and extend the availability of fair trade products through food-refreshment outlets in the civic complex.

In the first year of operation, efficiencies of around 15% were achieved. Administration costs were driven down, invoice processing procedures streamlined, and investment in new equipment is resulting in reduced print and mail costs.

This achievement is set to improve year on year, allowing more of the council's hard-pressed finances to be diverted to providing front-line services.

## Taking on the bullies



### Kids and the council unite to draw up a new anti-bullying campaign

Schoolchildren from across the borough have joined forces with the council to fight bullying.

Primary- and secondary-aged children were asked their views on, and helped devise an agreed definition of, bullying in Croydon.

While many schools have an anti-bullying policy in place, the council is developing the overall plan to make sure there are no gaps in support.

During the recent Anti-Bullying Week, thousands of schoolchildren – including those with special needs, young carers, and excluded children – took part in a survey that gave them the chance to share their views and experiences anonymously.

The charity Beatbullying is using the survey information to help develop a new anti-bullying campaign for Croydon.

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviour, including text bullying and happy slapping (the filming on a mobile phone of somebody being attacked), that can have a seriously detrimental effect on a youngster's life, both in and out of school.

Children are reminded that if they are being bullied it's not their fault and it can be stopped.

They should tell somebody they trust, such as a parent or teacher, or call Croydon Council's bullying helpline on **020 8760 5570**.

## Boost to over-60s and military personnel

**Concessions offered as incentive  
to keep fit and to say thank-you to  
servicemen and women**

Keen to see more of the borough's over-60s taking regular exercise, the council now offers free swimming to members of that age group.

All residents aged 60 and over can now get into their cozzies and swim for free at Croydon's leisure centres.

Documented evidence indicates that participating in physical activity later in life brings many benefits and helps to maintain health and mobility.

In order to qualify for free swimming at the centres, customers need to provide proof of age, residency and identity.

A further initiative, to coincide with the start of the new 10-year partnership with leisure-management company Fusion, is concessions to military servicemen and women.

The council has decided to offer service personnel a 50% discount at all health and fitness, swimming and sports hall facilities across the borough's leisure centres.

The concessionary discount can be obtained on the production of a current military identification card, with proof of residency or being stationed within the borough.



# Girls draw on road-safety knowledge to win prizes

## Pupils win cash prize and place in calendar

For the budding young artists of Winterbourne Junior Girls School, this year's calendar is particularly special.

Year 6 pupils won a £100 cheque for the Thornton Heath school after taking part in the 2007 LSCP Road Safety Poster Competition, run by the London Safety Camera Partnership and Croydon Council road-safety officers.

And year 6 student Zhane Edwards received a special prize of a £15 voucher for being one of the 12 winning entrants in the competition. Her design (pictured bottom right) will feature as September's page in the 2008 LSCP Road Safety calendar.



School head, Janet Godfrey, said: "We're delighted that the London Safety Camera Partnership invited pupils from our school to take part in this competition.

"Year 6 have learnt a great deal about road safety and the dangers that their age group faces, and they're thrilled to have their work featured in the calendar.

"The competition has also reinforced the message that speed can kill."

The Londonwide competition aimed to encourage pupils to use their imagination and illustrate road-safety issues that were important to them or their school environment.

Entries ranged from posters about excessive speed, lollipop patrols, drink-driving and listening to music while using the roads.



# Council's staff among the healthiest

## Croydon's sickness record is now best in the capital

Council staff in Croydon now take less time off sick than those of any other London authority.

And the turnaround from being one of the capital's worst to one of its healthiest means an estimated saving to council taxpayers of more than half a million pounds.

Robust sickness-management and a stepping up of its well-being programme, dealing with ill health before it becomes a problem, are behind the council's rise to the top of London's league table.

In 2005, Croydon had one of the worst records, with an average of 12.9 days lost per employee. The latest figure, of just 6.9 days off sick, means, in addition to less interruption

to public services, a reduction in the need for extra spending when finding cover for illness.

The financial benefits of the improved performance are estimated at £600,000 per year.

Support to staff through the council's well-being programme ranges from preventative flu jabs to workshops for dealing with stress and depression. The provision of medical assistance at work is also playing a part.

All absences must be accounted for and various trigger points -- including sickness on five occasions in a year, or nine days off in 12 months -- will prompt closer attention, with the offer of help if required.

# Croydon gets cut of £50m prize bonanza

## User-friendly green routes promised as result of Big Lottery Fund win

Croydon is set to benefit from the introduction of a network of scenic cycling routes, which will link its parks and open spaces, after helping to win The People's £50 Million Contest, staged by The Big Lottery Fund.

Croydon's Park Links initiative, which forms part of the Sustrans Connect2 scheme to create a UK-wide network of walking and cycling routes, beat off stiff competition from three other finalists: The Black Country as Urban Park; The Edge of Eden (part of the Eden Project) and Sherwood: The Living Legend, to claim the prize.

Each project was the subject of a television programme that invited members of the public to vote for their favourite.

With 42% of the votes, Sustrans' scheme won and was awarded a £50m grant to fund 79 community-based projects around the country bringing new local travel routes to peoples' doorsteps.

Croydon will be handed £550,000 to get its Park Links scheme under way, creating a new network of green trails in the borough, making it easier for people to walk and cycle to work, to the shops, to school and to green spaces.

# Have your say

Croydon Strategic Partnership -- comprising local public, private and community-sector agencies -- wants your views on the priorities for the borough over the next few years.

We want to find out what you think will make a big difference in improving the lives of residents, and in making Croydon a place to be proud of.

To help set the priorities for the borough and decide what local services should do to make a difference, please visit [www.croydon.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/haveyoursay)



# Getting to grips with hate crime

## Team launched to combat offending centred on minority groups

Victims of racism, homophobia, transphobia and faith-hate crimes in the borough are benefiting from a new hate crime team set up by Victim Support Croydon.

Staff and volunteers in the team support such victims as refugees, asylum seekers and black and minority-ethnic owners of small businesses in the borough who are subject to business crime.

Victim Support Croydon wants as many people as possible to use its free and confidential services, recognising that victims from minority groups, especially those who have had a traumatic experience, can find it difficult to trust organisations.

Staff and volunteers are trained to understand the problems that could affect members of minority groups, including refugees, asylum seekers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Through outreach work, the group is building confidence in members of local communities in order that they will feel confident about using its services.

It also tries to make its services accessible by arranging interpreters where necessary, and by providing leaflets in a range of community languages such as Tamil, Urdu, Hindi and Chinese.

Cathy Pleasance, Victim Support Croydon chief executive, said: "We understand that there are many reasons why a victim of a hate crime may not want to report an incident to the police, and we support victims, whether or not the crime is reported."

The hate crime team provides victims with a listening ear and practical information.

Ms Pleasance said: "Explanation of the criminal justice system is available, which is particularly important for people who might be new to the United Kingdom, and may have previous bad experiences of law enforcement, or are unaware of their rights.

### What is hate crime?

Hatred is a strong term that goes beyond simply causing offence or hostility.

The term "hate crime" covers any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by an offender's hatred of someone because of their:

- race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality or national origins;
- religion;
- gender or gender identity;
- sexual orientation; or
- disability.

### Hate crime can take many forms, including:

- physical attacks – such as physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson;
- threat of attack – including offensive letters, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate, and unfounded, malicious complaints; and
- verbal or written abuse and/or insults – offensive leaflets and posters, abusive gestures, dumping of rubbish outside homes or through letterboxes, and bullying at school or in the workplace.



**"I'm finally speaking to someone who understands how I feel"**

**Victim of a racist crime, August 2007**

**The hate crime team provides victims with a listening ear and practical information.**

**"We understand that there are many reasons why a victim of a hate crime may not want to report an incident to the police, and we support victims, whether or not the crime is reported."**



"We also provide information about claiming criminal injuries compensation, personal safety, and about other organisations in the borough that may be able to help victims with issues such as benefits and housing.

"We can liaise on behalf of victims with organisations such as the police or the local authority, and can really help people from minority groups who may be hesitant about using some services for fear of meeting prejudice."

The team, pictured right, can meet victims in its offices, but meetings must be pre-booked, and arrangements can be made for victims to talk to staff or volunteers outside of office hours.

Victim Support Croydon's offices are in South Croydon and staff are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, by calling **020 8681 7711**.

For more information, visit [www.victimsupportcroydon.org.uk](http://www.victimsupportcroydon.org.uk)



**Victim Support Croydon provides information about claiming criminal injuries compensation, personal safety and about other organisations in the borough that may be able to help victims with issues such as benefits and housing.**

## Putting brakes on drug-related offending

Agency's work helps put a halt to downward spiral of drugs and lawbreaking

Advice, information, support and treatment for those with substance-misuse problems are being offered thanks to Croydon's Drug Interventions Programme (Dip).

Launched last July, the team works to reduce drug-related crime, providing a real benefit to the local community.

Under a system called Tough Choices, people arrested for committing an offence normally associated with habitual drug use – such as shoplifting, mugging or burglary – are drug tested.

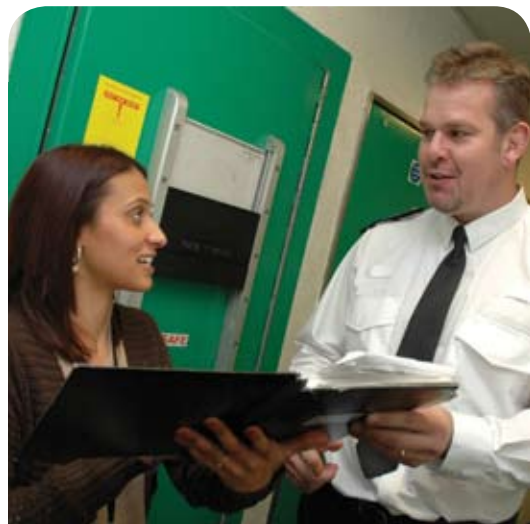
Those testing positive for cocaine or heroin use are seen by a member of the Dip. Formerly, arrestees were tested only when charged.

Croydon's Dip team works closely with agencies such as the police, courts, prison service and treatment providers, to offer help and support. Offenders are tracked as they pass through the system and offered opportunities to engage in drug treatment.

Individuals who commit crimes to fund their drug use have a greater chance of building an alternative lifestyle if they receive suitable support and treatment at the earliest opportunity.

Sharon Daughter, of Westminster Drug Project, which helps coordinate the programme, said: "We're very excited about our work in Croydon. We're forming partnerships that produce a better quality of life for the whole community.

"Working with those being released from prison, offenders in the community, and people attending court, what we do is vital in breaking the link between habitual drug use and crime, making real differences to communities."



**Those testing positive for cocaine or heroin use are seen by a member of the Dip. Formerly, arrestees were tested only when charged.**

**Launched last July, the team works to reduce drug-related crime, providing a real benefit to the local community.**

**The UK Youth Parliament is a national charity aimed at giving young people aged 11 to 18 a voice at a local and national level.**



**As well as its work in the borough, the group represents Croydon at a Londonwide level by attending regional meetings of the UKYP on a monthly basis.**



## Speaking up for Croydon's youth

### MYPs make sure youngsters' opinions are heard

The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) is a national charity aimed at giving young people aged 11 to 18 a voice at a local and national level.

There are more than 300 elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) in the UK. Each local education authority represents a constituency of the UKYP and young people are elected to represent their constituency on a one- to two-year basis.

In February of last year, Addington High School and Croydon's youth service hosted the UKYP elections, the first for about five years.

Jemma Hastain and Stephen Babalola were elected to represent young people in Croydon and, working hard since their election, have gathered a group of 14 young people to support their work.

The group has conducted a survey to ascertain the main issues for young people in Croydon, and visited youth clubs to gauge the opinions of focus groups.

The results showed that safety, crime and bullying are, by far and away, the greatest areas of concern, followed closely by the lack of facilities for young people.

The group has met with, and presented the survey results to, councillors, MPs and police, discussing the implications for young people.

As well as representing the concerns of young people to those in power, the group is planning several practical projects based on the results of the survey to boost the number of activities available.

Acting on the concerns expressed over safety, crime and bullying, the group intends to continue to work with the police, and to conduct a survey to identify how and where the relationship between young people and the police has broken down.

And there are plans to hold an event in March to look at ways in which the police and young people can better work together.

As well as its work in the borough, the group represents Croydon at a Londonwide level by attending regional meetings of the UKYP on a monthly basis.

Jemma and Stephen also represented Croydon on a national level when they attended the annual sitting of the UKYP in Glasgow, last July.

Young people with an interest in standing as a future MYP can learn more by contacting the group at [ukyp.croydon@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:ukyp.croydon@croydon.gov.uk)





# Zoning out doorstep crime

## "No Cold Calling" signs tell rogue traders they are not welcome

In 2003, in a joint initiative with the Metropolitan Police, Croydon's trading standards service launched the Doorstoppers campaign in an attempt to eradicate doorstep crime.

The initiative was part of a national scheme which, while being trading standards-led, was part of a multi-agency approach to tackling crime committed on, or in, a person's home.

Such crime includes distraction burglary and excessive overcharging for poor or non-existent work to property, the most common targets of which are the elderly and most vulnerable members of society.

Being a relatively affluent borough, with more than 20,000 residents aged over 75, Croydon is a prime target for rogue traders and distraction burglars.

Doorstoppers aims to increase the protection of residents and reduce doorstep crime and distraction burglary.

The campaign now incorporates a pilot No Cold Calling Zone in Shirley, a ward statistically proven to be one of the most likely targets for distraction burglars and rogue traders.

Signs in the zone warn rogue traders they are not welcome in the area, and empower the residents with the confidence and know-how to say "No" to uninvited traders.



### Shirley was chosen to become Croydon's first No Cold Calling Zone because:

- it has 3,500 households in the zone with a high proportion of elderly or vulnerable residents living in owner-occupied properties;
- part of the area coincides with Operation Minstead, the police investigation into the serial rapist who has targeted elderly women;
- the area has a very strong and proactive Neighbourhood Watch scheme; and
- the Shirley Safer Neighbourhood Team works well with the local community and is at full strength.



The zone went live last May, following a period of consultation with residents, neighbourhood watch coordinators and the police.

Residents, overwhelmingly supportive of the introduction of a zone, received packs containing information on how to respond to unwanted calls, advice leaflets, door stickers, report forms and contact numbers for various agencies.

Signs stating the area to be a No Cold Calling Zone, and giving a direct telephone number to Croydon's trading standards service, have been fixed to lamp posts on the periphery of the designated area.

A recent survey of residents living in a zone introduced in Surrey found that 80% felt safer since the No Cold Calling signs were installed.

For further information, contact the trading standards department by email at [trading.standards@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@croydon.gov.uk) or by calling 020 8407 1311.

**"I would just like to say how successful the No Cold Calling Zone has been. Since its inception, we have not been pestered by ANY unwanted callers. I hope that this will be extended to the rest of Croydon." – Resident of Shirley's No Cold Calling Zone**

**Signs in the zone warn rogue traders they are not welcome in the area, and empower the residents with the confidence and know-how to say "No" to uninvited traders.**

# A pat on the back

## Praise for Streetscene workers from residents faced with dangerous litter

Plagued by drug addicts and their unsavoury and hazardous waste, Brian Snow asked the council if a cleaning team could tackle the problem.

On an almost-daily basis, Brian and his neighbours found their pavements awash with urine and littered with used and discarded needles, left by addicts using a derelict house as a base for their illegal acts.

"It was terrible, children on their way to school would have to wade through foul, strong-smelling urine on the pavement," said Brian, in his neat and tidy home in Woodcroft Road, Thornton Heath.

"I don't know how many times I've had to hose down the pavement.

"On one occasion I picked up a needle and was told by one of my neighbours, a retired nurse, that I shouldn't pick them up because I could easily catch hepatitis.

"But how can you just leave it there, where a child could easily see it, pick it up and catch anything?"

In desperation, Brian phoned the council's Streetscene service and has been delighted with the response.

"The guys are now coming round and jet-cleaning, but it's like painting the Forth Bridge – they go from one end of the road to outside here, and then they have to start again," said Brian.

"I don't want to live in a dirty street and it only takes one person to stand up to it – I won't accept it.

"The guys that do the work need a pat on the back, and the road-sweeper should get the George Cross because he's been doing this road for a good couple of years, longer than anybody else has stuck with it.

"They've been great and deserve all the credit."

Brian and his neighbours have, however, had some good news – they've been told the house is to be demolished and they hope this will mark the departure of the drug addicts.



**On an almost-daily basis, Brian and his neighbours found their pavements awash with urine and littered with used and discarded needles, left by addicts using a derelict house as a base for their illegal acts.**



## Muslims' 1001 inventions

### The Clocktower's new exhibition shows how Muslims helped shape our everyday lives

A ground-breaking exhibition uncovering the hidden history of the Muslim world's contributions to science and invention opens at Croydon Clocktower on Saturday, 2 February.

This interactive exhibition brings to life an often-overlooked golden age of discovery and innovation.

It uncovers 1,000 years of scientific and technological innovation by Muslim scholars and inventors across the globe from southern Europe to Asia...the first flying machine, the first university, our numbers 1 to 9, astronomy, algebra, and day-to-day necessities like coffee, soap, clocks, surgical instruments and the camera.

It is a hands-on exhibition and is arranged in seven zones – home, school, market, hospital, town, world and universe. You can find out more about the exhibition at [www.1001inventions.com](http://www.1001inventions.com)

Entrance to the exhibition is free. It is open from 11am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday, until 3 May, in the Museum of Croydon's exhibition gallery on the ground floor of Croydon Clocktower, in Katharine Street.

For the latest information about the exciting and engaging events programme, see Croydon Clocktower's monthly brochure or visit [www.museumofcroydon.com](http://www.museumofcroydon.com)



**This interactive exhibition brings to life an often-overlooked golden age of discovery and innovation.**



# Building from a firm foundation

**Croydon's Annual Report 2006/7 demonstrates to our residents and other key stakeholders how the council has performed during the past year and shows how we have used the available resources to meet our priorities for the borough.**

On taking control of the council in May 2006, we took time to listen to residents and understand what was important to them.

It was very obvious that crime and the fear of crime were major concerns. We were also told that residents expected the council to do more to make it easier for them to recycle, and that the council should be more efficient and responsive to its customers.

We have identified five corporate priorities that reflect the needs and aspirations of local people and have already made progress in refocusing the council to deliver measurable improvement in these priorities.

I am delighted to highlight the efforts of the Metropolitan Police, the council and our partners in the Safer Croydon Partnership in tackling crime. Statistics show a 10% reduction in crime – a real achievement.

We have already seen a dramatic improvement in recycling facilities across the borough and this has helped residents recycle more than ever before.

Our programme of efficiencies has restored sound financial management to the council and placed it on a firm financial foundation. The council is becoming

leaner and more adaptable so that we can respond to the changes and expectations of our services in a more timely and customer-focused manner.

The financial settlement from central Government for the next three years is hugely disappointing and, in effect, a real-term cut in our funding. This reinforces our view that the basis of the funding formula used by Government does not give a fair deal to the residents of Croydon and will place further pressure on the council to achieve significant efficiencies over the next few years.

However, our disappointment will not distract us from continuing to focus on what really matters to local people and continuing to make improvements in the areas which you have told us are the priorities.

Our goal remains to make Croydon a place to be proud of and we are well on our way to achieving this.



Mike Fisher,  
Leader of Croydon Council



**Statistics show that instances of crime are down 10% – a real achievement.**

## Planning for Improvement

**In 2007 we identified five new corporate priorities which were chosen to reflect the needs and aspirations of local people. We will use these priorities to help us become a top-performing council and to help create a Croydon to be proud of.**

We will review these priorities regularly to ensure that they continue to reflect changing local needs.

- **Safer streets** – helping to make Croydon safer
- **Providing a better environment** – making Croydon even greener
- **Retaining Croydon's character** – ensuring sensitive development that meets local needs
- **Providing a sense of community** – aiming to give everyone in Croydon a sense of belonging

- **Value for money** – providing the best services we can as cost effectively as possible

We've set challenging actions and targets to help us judge our performance against these priorities. You can find out more about our priorities in our three-year Corporate Plan at: [www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/corplan](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/corplan)

Our annual Performance and Improvement Plan sets our targets for the year ahead and can be viewed at: [www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/performance/pplan](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/performance/pplan)

In December we reported to Cabinet on our progress to date and the next few pages summarise what we have achieved in the first half of 2007/08.

**A new three-year Corporate Plan and a new annual Performance and Improvement Plan will be published in the summer with details going straight onto our website.**

**Our current plan is on the council's website at [www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)**

# safer streets

“making Croydon safer”



**Overall, crime in Croydon fell by 10% in 2006/7 and, as a consequence, our borough has been ranked the 10th safest, of all 32 London boroughs, in which to live.**

## **So far in 2007/08:**

Over the coming three years we intend to build on this downward trend and have set new targets and priorities focused on making our neighbourhoods and roads safer. We have also set strong deterrents against anti-social behaviour in a bid to make Croydon a safer place to live, work and visit.

- Crime continues to fall – there has been a 3% reduction in overall crime from April to August this year, compared to the same period last year
- Council-funded Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers have been added to Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- We launched the jointly funded Safer Croydon Support Team, acting as a rapid-response support to Safer Neighbourhood Teams
- Through the Safer Shops initiative, 94 small businesses operating in deprived areas of the borough have had locks, bolts and grilles installed on their premises free of charge
- A Gangs Unit has been established to tackle the problem of gang culture in the borough
- A new dedicated police team working to improve safety on and around public transport s now operating in Croydon
- We have signed 69 Acceptable Behaviour Agreements
- 12 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued
- We have closed five premises known to be used for drug taking and/or dealing
- More than 8,000 Sally Ann Alarms were distributed to raise awareness of personal safety issues





# providing a better environment

“making Croydon even greener”

**We want to make Croydon an even cleaner borough with well-managed streets and green open spaces, where it is easier for local people and businesses to adopt greener lifestyles and working practices.**

## So far in 2007/08:

Over the next three years we want congestion to be reduced and people to be able to travel around the borough easily and have access to more sustainable forms of transport.

- More than 38 tonnes of food waste have been collected from Purley and Coulsdon in a pilot collection project
- 500 more businesses are now benefiting from support from Envibe (Environmental Business Excellence)
- 27,000 tonnes of carbon have been saved by improvements to council operations

- 96% of Croydon's streets and highways are free of noticeable levels of litter and detritus according to an independent survey
- The national smoking ban has been enforced without the need for fixed penalty notices
- Happy Valley received a Green Flag Award
- There were 3,008 volunteer days in parks & open spaces





# retaining Croydon's character

"ensuring sensitive development that meets local needs"

**We want Croydon to retain its predominance as the major commercial and employment centre in south London.**

## **So far in 2007/08:**

- We staged a successful Croydon Expo to highlight regeneration and business opportunities in the borough
- The African Caribbean Family Festival, held on 14 July, and the Mela on the following day, saw 23,000 and 15,000 people attending respectively
- The refurbished and modernised South Norwood Leisure Centre reopened
- We have returned 193 private-sector vacant dwellings into occupation
- Renowned architect Will Alsop delivered a new vision of how Croydon could look in the future
- The public enquiry into the Gateway site was completed





corporate priority 4

# providing a sense of community

“aiming to give everyone in Croydon a sense of belonging”

**Croydon is the largest London borough, with more than 340,000 residents, and is one of the most diverse in outer London.**

**So far in 2007/08:**

- A new city academy opened on the Stanley Technical High School site
- 1,935 Bookstart packs have been distributed to babies born in Croydon
- New Learning Disability Resource Bases opened at Beulah Crescent and Whitehorse Road
- There have been more than 1.5 million visits to Croydon libraries
- 2,342 pupils have visited the Museum of Croydon as part of school groups
- The Talk2Croydon website, giving residents a greater say in local services, was launched
- Fusion was awarded the contract to manage Croydon's leisure facilities
- Our adult social services' project "Homes for the future" was short-listed for the Local Government Chronicle Awards





# value for money

“providing the best services we can,  
as cost effectively as possible”

**Focusing on value for money is essential if we are to achieve the best possible outcomes for our residents and, particularly, our council taxpayers.**

## **So far in 2007/08:**

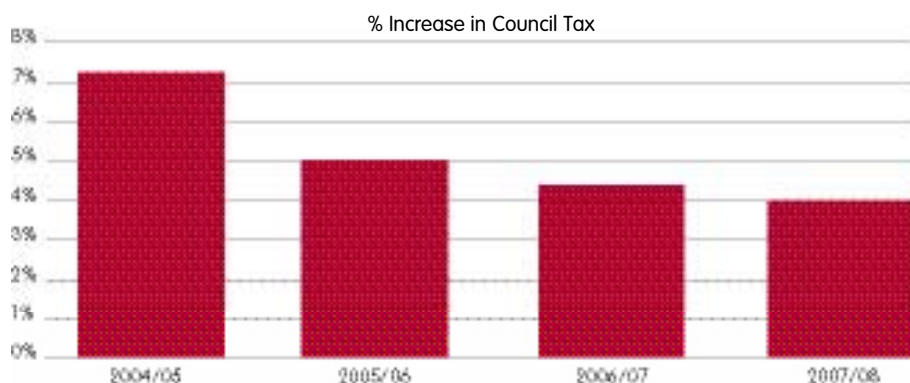
- We have achieved efficiency savings in excess of 3% – greater than the central Government target
- Our new performance development scheme for staff started in April 2007
- The Audit Commission gave us a maximum “4” rating for our use of resources and for our benefits service
- New benefits claims are being assessed in less than 20 days
- Staff sickness was reduced to the lowest level of any council in London
- £856,000 has been saved through counter-fraud activity.
- Our planning department won a Best in Borough Award for its commitment to change and innovation



## Council tax

The budget for 2006/07 was funded by an average band D council tax of £1,013.33. We are committed to keeping any increase in council tax below 4% and, as a result, the increase for 2007/08 was 3.99% – the lowest for five years. Croydon's council tax remains below the average for outer London boroughs.

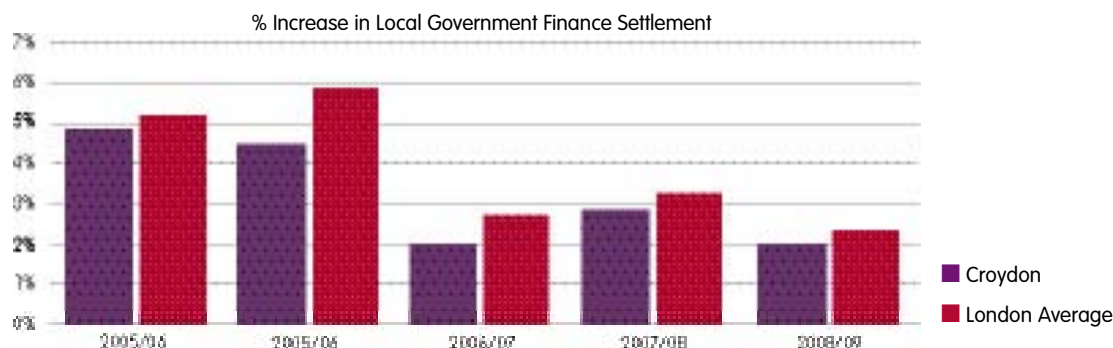
**Graph A: Recent council tax rises**



## Formula grant settlement

Around 60% of the resources received by the council come from central Government in the annual formula grant settlement. The level of increase in the grant to Croydon continues to lag behind both the London and national average. In the next few years, the increase in grant that Croydon receives from central Government will be among the lowest in the country.

**Graph B: Increase in grant from Central Government**



## Managing resources

The Audit Commission, central Government's independent watchdog body, has assessed Croydon as one of the best councils in the country at managing the resources it receives.

The assessment follows a detailed study of the way the council "uses its resources" and shows Croydon achieved the highest possible score in 2007, the first time that Croydon has achieved the top mark for this assessment.

In 2006 just five councils in London – and only 15 across the whole country – achieved top marks.

The commission's evaluation covers all aspects of how Croydon manages and spends its money. It is intended to show residents the importance of their local council having sound financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the council's priorities and improve services.

The Audit Commission's assessment reflects our robust financial management processes and our commitment to efficiency. In 2006/07 the variation from the budget was only 0.2% and our General Fund balances have been increased to £9.2m.

For more detailed information on the council's accounts, see the annual accounts at [www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/budgets/](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/budgets/)

# For Croydon Council services online visit the website at [www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)

## We're making it easier for you to contact us

Most of the work we do for you can be grouped in to just a dozen areas. If you prefer to call, dial one of our 12 distinct phone numbers – each of which will be answered by staff with specialist knowledge.

You can get straight through to someone who really understands your specific needs by calling the appropriate number from the table below.

If you're not sure who you need to speak to, call our general enquiries number – **020 8726 6000**.



|   |                      |   |
|---|----------------------|---|
| <b>Housing</b>                                    | <b>020 8726 6100</b> | For all council tenancy issues, housing options and private sector housing enquiries.   |
| <b>Environmental Reporting</b>                    | <b>020 8726 6200</b> | For reporting pests, dead animals, litter, dog mess, leaves, graffiti, noise, missed rubbish collection and fly-tipping, to arrange bulky waste collections and get information about trade waste and recycling.  |
| <b>Registration Services</b>                      | <b>020 8726 6300</b> | To notify change of address, arrange for the registration of births, marriages and deaths, find out about Croydon crematorium and cemeteries, arrange to attend a citizenship ceremony and get information about election matters.  |
| <b>Children, Youth, Families<br/>Schools</b>      | <b>020 8726 6400</b> | For information and assistance concerning child protection, drug and alcohol services, adoption and fostering, children with a disability and other family social services issues.<br><br>For information about school places, Early Years and childcare, special needs education, general education enquiries, bullying and harassment, student loans, youth services and making complaints about education. |
| <b>Social Services for Adults</b>                 | <b>020 8726 6500</b> | For information and assistance concerning homecare, residential care, drug and alcohol services, mental health, domestic violence, learning disabilities and physical disabilities (including sensory impairment).  |
| <b>Business Advice &amp;<br/>Council Partners</b> | <b>020 8726 6600</b> | For business advice (for rates contact Revenues and Benefits) and working in partnership with the council.  |
| <b>Life in the Community</b>                      | <b>020 8726 6700</b> | For consumer advice, health and safety, crime and disorder, antisocial behaviour and harassment issues.   |
| <b>Planning &amp; Building Control</b>            | <b>020 8726 6800</b> | For advice and application information on planning and building control issues.   |
| <b>Leisure &amp; Continuing<br/>Education</b>     | <b>020 8726 6900</b> | For information and assistance concerning libraries, parks, sports and leisure centres, leisure events, Croydon Adult Learning and Training (Calat) and further education.  |
| <b>Revenues &amp; Benefits</b>                    | <b>020 8726 7000</b> | For advice and applications on housing and council tax benefits, business rates and other benefits, payment of council tax.   |
| <b>Streets &amp; Transport</b>                    | <b>020 8726 7100</b> | For reporting street lighting, street cleaning issues, road damage and safety, trees, abandoned vehicles and parking issues; and advice on supported travel services.   |
| <b>General Enquiries</b>                          | <b>020 8726 6000</b> | For 'Who do I contact?' enquiries, asking for someone by name, general information requests, council job vacancies, council and community meetings information and language support services.   |
| <b>Minicom</b>                                    | <b>020 8760 5767</b> | For hearing impaired customers.   |



# Dragons' Den

Young entrepreneurs in line for funding to launch business ideas

A den of Croydon dragons has been offering money to young people with bright business ideas.

Croydon Education Business Partnership (CEBP), the borough's main link between students and employers, convened a panel of judges, drawn equally from the public and private sectors, at its Scarbrook Road headquarters.

It asked the quartet to assess a series of commercial initiatives submitted by community youth groups in response to an offer of cash help.

The money – about £30,000 in total – is being provided by Croydon Enterprise from a central Government grant given to Croydon Council two years ago as part of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (Legi).

The judges saw nine hopefuls – short-listed from more than 20 applicants – and invited each to make a short pitch and then answer a series of searching questions; a format similar to that of the BBC television programme Dragons' Den.

Among the ideas the judges had to consider was one to recondition and sell used computers; a second to design and market branded T-shirts and caps for aspiring pop groups; and a third to create a PR campaign to retain skate-boarding facilities on the Fairfield site in central Croydon.

Most of the pitches are likely to be successful, but the judges have asked some groups to modify their ideas a little to give the young people involved a more direct say in the decision-making process.

Tony Slonecki, chief executive of CEBP, who acted as one of the judges, said: "The whole idea of this initiative is to give young people as much practical experience as possible, so we want to see them in positions of responsibility rather than simply as the beneficiaries of something being done for them by adults."

Two of the judges came from the private sector – proprietors of small firms in Croydon who have faced the same kind of hurdles that these groups will have to overcome if they are to turn their proposals into reality.

In the coming weeks and months, CEBP will help the successful groups to hone their ideas and provide them with the expert advice they will need to overcome the commercial obstacles that will inevitably litter their path.



**A den of Croydon dragons has been offering money to young people with bright business ideas.**

**Most of the pitches are likely to be successful, but the judges have asked some groups to modify their ideas a little to give the young people involved a more direct say in the decision-making process.**



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# Making payment easier

**Got a council bill to pay? A new facility means you can now do so from far more locations – at a time to suit you**

**The facilities are already in place for the payment of council tax, business rates, sundry debt invoices and housing rent, and more are scheduled to be rolled out.**

Council tax, business rates and housing rent are just some of the services for which people make payments to the council.

Making them is now a lot easier with the introduction of a wider range of places at which cash payments can be made.

The new arrangement has been introduced following the closure of the council's cash-office facilities in Thornton Heath and New Addington, and the scheduled end of services at central Croydon's Fell Road office on 29 February.

The changes allow customers to pay cash for a range of services at any of more than 100 PayPoint outlets and post offices within Croydon, as well as many thousands across the country.

Found in shops, newsagents, garages, supermarkets and other easily accessed locations, in addition to probably being closer to home, these outlets are often open for up to 100 hours per week – in some cases from 7am to 10pm – including weekends.

The new arrangement, in addition to making payment more accessible and efficient, will result in significant savings to the council and its council taxpayers.

The facilities are already in place for the payment of council tax, business rates, sundry debt invoices and housing rent, and more are scheduled to be rolled out.

Payment can be made at any PayPoint terminal using the barcode printed on the bill for those services, or by using the existing swipe cards in place for council tax and housing rent.

Customers who have an older bill without the barcode should contact the council for updated documentation to allow payment.



A full list of PayPoint locations can be found at [www.paypoint.co.uk/locator.htm](http://www.paypoint.co.uk/locator.htm)

These new arrangements add to the existing payment options, such as 24-hour touch-tone payment systems and Direct Debit facilities, offered across various services.

Council tax can be paid monthly on one of a number of instalment dates by Direct Debit and can be set up immediately via the council's website at [www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk) or by telephone.

Housing and garage rent can be paid monthly by Direct Debit on either the 1st or 12th of each month. We'll even give you a £15 one-off incentive payment when you set up a Direct Debit to pay your housing rent.

You can download a Direct Debit form from the website, contact your income officer or visit your local district housing office.

Using the council's website, payments can now be made online for:

- Council tax
- Housing and garage rent
- Housing service charge
- Mortgages
- National non-domestic rate
- Parking and driving penalties
- Sundry debtors
- Trade refuse
- 24-hour touch-tone facilities are in place for:
- Council tax – **0845 606 6683**
- Parking fines – **0845 300 0614**

Further services will be added to both the online and touch-tone facilities in the coming months.

On average, a payment made at a cash office would cost about £1; the same payment, by Direct Debit, costs only about 5p.

By assisting customers to use the cheapest and most accessible services, significant financial savings can be made to help keep council tax bills as low as possible.

Over the coming months, officers will be working to ensure all customers are aware of the new options and have alternative arrangements in place.

**Payment can be made at any PayPoint terminal using the barcode printed on the bill for those services, or by using the existing swipe cards in place for council tax and housing rent.**





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**Ever willing to listen to the views of its residents, the council is staging an event that will bring older people and their carers together with health and social care partners, and voluntary and independent organisations working in the borough.**



# Listening to our elders

## One-day forum should spark service improvements for borough's older folk

Senior members of the community in Croydon are being given the chance to make a real impact on the sort of care they receive from the council and its partner agencies.

Ever willing to listen to the views of its residents, the council is staging an event that will bring older people and their carers together with health and social care partners, and voluntary and independent organisations working in the borough.

Scheduled for 26 February, in Fairfield, it follows a similar event, staged three years ago, that gave older people the opportunity to tell the council what was important to them, and how they would like to see services develop.

### They said that they wanted:

- Local services, near to where they live
- Control over their lives
- Recognition of the contribution they make to the local community
- Practical changes that make a real difference to their lives
- Dignity and respect

### The council, working with its partners, has:

- Introduced the Pop Project – a mobile service point that travels to all parts of the borough
- Offered health coaching and self-assessment with support for individuals
- Opened an equipment shop with a self-service option, to make independent living easier
- Introduced a scheme for older people to support younger readers in libraries
- Increased online services and self-assessment



- Introduced a new "triage" service, dealing with clients' requests through a single point of contact, making it easier to obtain consistent advice and support
- Redesigned more than 2,000 care packages using telecare to maximise independence
- Reduced waiting times for occupational therapy
- Improved access to audiology services
- Installed smoke alarms in 178 homes
- Given cookers and heaters to people whose own appliances had failed or become unsafe
- Removed hazards in people's homes
- Installed security measures in 350 homes
- Introduced active lifestyle programmes including exercise, dance and walks
- Introduced a new direct-payments support service
- Improved palliative care
- Provided greater support for carers.

Having carried out that significant programme of improvements, the council is once again looking ahead to shaping its future strategy, and is hoping that older residents in the borough will attend the meeting, and take the opportunity to share their views on the services they would like to see.

Full details of the Fairfield event had not been finalised as **Your Croydon** went to print, but will be published in the local press at a time nearer the date.

**Scheduled for 26 February, in Fairfield, the forum follows a similar event, staged three years ago, that gave older people the opportunity to tell the council what was important to them and how they would like to see services develop.**





## Going the extra mile

**Everyone receives one service or another from the council. Have you received an outstanding service from an individual and would now like the opportunity to thank them?**

As part of the new Croydon Council awards, the new category of Going the Extra Mile is open to members of the public to make a nomination for a person who delivered a service above and beyond the scope of their role. You can nominate between now and the end of April with announcements made of shortlisted candidates in the summer.

For further information, log on to Croydon Council's website at [www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)

Nominations can be made online at [www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/consultations/excellence](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/consultations/excellence),

by email to [service.review@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:service.review@croydon.gov.uk) or by completing the form on the following page.

When you have completed the form, you can either hand it in at a One-Stop Reception or a borough library, or post it to:

**Croydon Council Awards  
Customer Service Development Team  
Customer Services Division  
Croydon Council  
5th Floor, Taberner House  
Park Lane  
Croydon, CR9 3JS**

- Judging takes place during the year with final decisions in July.
- All nominees will be recognised at a celebration-of-achievements event to be held in October.



**You can nominate between now and the end of April with announcements made of shortlisted candidates in the summer.**

Fill in the form on the following page then cut along dotted line and send back to the address supplied.



# Croydon Council Awards nomination form

Name of individual

Role/where do they work?

Date on which it  
happened

## A. What did this person do that you would like recognised?

Please explain in your own words

## B. What particularly impressed you about the way this person helped you?

Please explain in your own words

## C. How did you feel as a result of the service you received?

Please explain in your own words

If you would be happy for us to contact you about your nomination, please write your contact details below

Name

Contact me at/by

Date received by CSDT:

AC review:

C

A

P

Fill in this form then cut along dotted line and send back to the address supplied.

# Voting for London

## The countdown to the GLA elections has begun – a poll that will decide the capital's Mayor for the next four years

On 1 May, Croydon goes to the polls as part of the Londonwide elections to vote not only for a Mayor, but also for a new Greater London Assembly, the body responsible for deciding the future development of the capital.

As part of Greater London, Croydon is directly affected by those decisions and, like each of the 13 other London Assembly constituencies, will be opening the polling stations to allow you to select who will be representing you for the next four years.

Croydon will provide the returning officer for the Croydon & Sutton constituency.

In the election, you will be voting for a candidate to represent Croydon on the London Assembly. You will also be voting for a Londonwide assembly member and the Mayor of London.

On 1 May, you will be presented with three ballot papers.

One allows you to vote for the Mayor of London, giving you a first and second choice; another will be used to

vote for your constituency assembly member; and the third is to vote for a Londonwide assembly member.

To be eligible to vote, you have to be aged 18 or over; live in London; be a British, Commonwealth or EU citizen; and you have to be on the electoral register.

The official list of candidates will be published on 2 April. Anybody considering standing has to submit a nomination form and deposit by noon on 28 March before they can formally become an official candidate.

If you are interested in standing as a candidate you must contact, as soon as possible, London Elects, the coordinating body behind the London elections. Either call **020 7983 4444** or send an email to [candidates@londonelects.org.uk](mailto:candidates@londonelects.org.uk)

**To be eligible to vote, you have to be aged 18 or over; live in London; be a British, Commonwealth or EU citizen; and you have to be on the electoral register.**

**In the election, you will be voting for a candidate to represent Croydon on the London Assembly. You will also be voting for a Londonwide assembly member and the Mayor of London.**



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# Streetscene Customer Charter

What the council will do in order to ensure that Croydon remains a safe and clean place in which to live and work

**When residents have taken the trouble to contact the council, it is important they can speak to somebody as quickly as possible and that the response is of the highest quality.**



## Communication

When residents have taken the trouble to contact the council, it is important they can speak to somebody as quickly as possible and that the response is of the highest quality.

The council welcomes the opportunity of working with residents and it is important that all communication is of the highest quality.

### The council will ensure:

- Prompt, courteous and full response to correspondence within 10 working days
- That all correspondence is acknowledged within five working days
- Prompt and courteous response to 80% of telephone enquiries within 20 seconds
- Prompt and courteous response to emails within two days
- Courteous face-to-face contact in plain English
- That every Neighbourhood Partnership is attended by council officers
- That there will be regular fortnightly contact with Street Champions
- That the council is able to be contacted between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays



## Clean Streets

The council wants people to see clean streets and will regularly inspect them to ensure they meet the required standards.

People do not want to see overflowing litter bins, so bins will be emptied regularly.

Graffiti is a crime, it is not art. It ruins the street scene and action will be taken against those benefiting from illegal advertising.

Fly-tipping – the illegal depositing of waste – contributes to people feeling fearful.

### The council will ensure:

- That the cleansing contract will be regularly monitored
- Streets in Croydon will be regularly swept
- Graffiti will be removed within 14 days, but 24 hours if offensive
- Fly-posters will be removed within 72 hours
- Fly-tips will be removed within a day



## Recycling

Paper, cans, textiles and glass can be recycled using the recycling box issued to each resident across the borough. Green waste can also be recycled.

### The council will ensure:

- Regular, good-quality kerbside collections
- Clean neighbourhood recycling centres
- Regular good-quality housing estate collections

**Paper, cans, textiles and glass can be recycled using the recycling box issued to each resident across the borough. Green waste can also be recycled.**



## Safe Streets

The council will inspect every street in Croydon at least twice a year.

These inspections will ensure that the footpaths and carriageways are safe for pedestrians and vehicle users.

Where defects are found, repairs will be carried out and, thereafter, inspected by Streetscene Officers.

Streetscene Enforcement Officers will carry out surveillance to ensure that those responsible for damaging the street scene change their behaviour.

This will involve fixed penalty notices being served and people being taken to court.

### The council will ensure:

- Highways maintenance – streets will be inspected twice a year, while shopping parades with more than 12 shops will have monthly inspections
- Highway obstructions will be removed within a day

- Crane, scaffold, materials and hoarding licences will be assessed within one week of application
- Overhanging vegetation will be cut back within one week
- The council will ensure statutory companies make good pavements and roads when they have completed work

## Refuse Collection

Everybody must help to minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill.

If this is not achieved, residents will pay increasing levels of landfill tax.

Wheeled bins will not only assist in minimising waste but are a great help in keeping the streets clean.

### The council will ensure:

- Regular, good-quality collections



## This month, local photographer Frazer Ashford revisits Croydon's High Street

Grant Bros was a large, if rather old-fashioned, department store with an amazing frontage overlooking High Street.

I remember it being full of wood flooring and wood panelling, unlike the modern stores of today.

High Street was a bustling place with a constant traffic flow as it formed part of the main A23 that passed straight through the centre of Croydon.

Over the years, cars and trucks were rerouted, with only buses and local traffic passing the buildings.

Grants itself closed and, after years of decay, a new complex including bars, a multi-screen cinema and a health club opened on the site, bringing a new lease of life to this part of our town.

Thankfully, most of the original Grant Bros frontage

has been retained and continues to give the area a unique look.

I first photographed High Street in 1981 and when I returned, a few months ago, I found it difficult to repeat my original shot due to the trees that now seem to have taken over, giving the area a very pleasant and green feel.

In fact, the area is full of pedestrian-friendly open-air seating, ideal for passing the time of day or grabbing a bite of lunch.

Interestingly, on studying the picture that I took back in 1981, I see that the Grants frontage was covered in bunting. Does anybody remember what was being celebrated? If you know, email [yourcroydon@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:yourcroydon@croydon.gov.uk)




For more examples of Frazer's work, visit [www.frazerashford.com](http://www.frazerashford.com)

# Dates for your diary

## Council

Deadlines for public questions for forthcoming full council meetings (all start at 6.30pm) Noon on each relevant deadline date.

### Meeting

 Monday 25 Feb 2008

### Deadline

Monday 11 Feb 2008

To submit a question for consideration at a full council meeting, email it to [council.questions@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:council.questions@croydon.gov.uk); fax it to **020 8760 5657**; print and complete the form at [www.croydon.gov.uk/councilquestion](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/councilquestion) and post it to Questions for the Council, Democratic and Legal Services, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon CR9 3JS; or call **020 8726 6000 ext 62327**

## Scrutiny

Deadlines for the forthcoming scrutiny and overview committee public question sessions. Noon on the relevant deadline date.

### Meeting

 5 Feb

Scrutiny and overview

### Deadline

28 Jan

### Cabinet Member

Cllr Mike Fisher (council leader)

11 Mar

Community services

3 Mar

Cllr Steve O'Connell (safety and cohesion)

To submit a question to a cabinet member at a scrutiny sub-committee Q&A session, email it to [scrutiny.public.questions@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny.public.questions@croydon.gov.uk); fax it to **020 8760 5657**; post it to Scrutiny Public Questions, Democratic and Legal Services, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon CR9 3JS; or call **020 8726 6000 extn 62529 or 62315**.

## Neighbourhood Partnership

Neighbourhood partnership meetings (all start at 7.30pm)

### Meeting

6 Feb

### Group

New Addington and Fieldway

### Venue

Venue to be confirmed

13 Feb

Broad Green and Waddon

Venue to be confirmed

27 Feb

Thornton Heath, Bensham Manor and West Thornton

Venue to be confirmed


For information on Neighbourhood Partnerships, visit the website at [www.croydononline.org/neighbourhood\\_partnerships/](http://www.croydononline.org/neighbourhood_partnerships/), email [neighbourhood.partnerships@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhood.partnerships@croydon.gov.uk), write to Neighbourhood Partnerships, Democratic and Legal Services, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon CR9 3JS or call **020 8726 6000 extn 62564 or 62396**

## Croydon Community Police Consultative Group Partnership

Meetings of the Croydon Community Police Consultative Group are held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall. All are open to the public and begin at 6.30pm. For further information, go to [www.croydononline.org/ccpcg](http://www.croydononline.org/ccpcg)

**Forthcoming meeting dates are:** Wednesday, 12 March; Thursday, 15 May.

Details of all Croydon Council meetings can be found on the council website at [www.croydon.gov.uk/meetingsofthecouncil](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetingsofthecouncil)

 These meetings are to be transmitted using webcasting. They can be viewed at [www.croydon.ukcouncil.net/site/webcasts.php](http://www.croydon.ukcouncil.net/site/webcasts.php)

# What's On

[www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure)

# February 2008

Croydon Clocktower, Katharine Street, Croydon

Ticket office: tel:020 8253 1030

Email: [ticketoffice@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:ticketoffice@croydon.gov.uk)

Text: 07771 837121

## Live events at the Clocktower February

### Polar Bear

**Friday 1 February**

Spellbinding melodies, electronic soundscapes and driving rhythms, dramatic and absorbing music.  
£12 (£9 concessions)

### Elsewhere

**Friday 15 February 8pm**

The Immortal Orchestra accompanies a parade of circus cabaret.  
£10 (£7.50 concessions)

### Stopgap – Portfolio Collection

**Wednesday 27 February 7.30-9pm**

This dance company with a difference presents an evening of work by four international choreographers.  
£10 (£7.50 concessions)

### Felix Dexter

**Thursday 28 February**

**7.30 (on stage 8pm) – 10.30pm**

£12 (£9 concessions)

### Gwyneth Herbert

**Friday 29 February**

**7.30 (on stage 8pm) – 10pm**

£12 (£9 concessions)



### Exhibition

**1001 Inventions: Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World**

**2 February – 3 May 2008**

**Mondays – Saturdays 11am – 5pm**

Exhibition Gallery, FREE

Uncovering the hidden history of Muslim contributions to science and invention.



### Youth Circus

**Saturdays to 15 March**

**11am-1pm**

For 11-16 year olds  
Roll up, roll up – Come and learn amazing circus skills and even take part in a Clocktower show. FREE, contact the Ticket Office.

### Children's Theatre

**Half Moon Theatre presents  
Icycle Bicycle**

**Friday 22 February, 2-2.55pm**

**Saturday 23 February, 11-11.55pm  
and 2-2.55pm**

For children aged 2-6 years

### The Beautiful Octopus Club: Valentines Party

**Wednesday 13 February**

**7.30-11pm**

A fantastic club night, by and for adults with learning disabilities.

£5 (No concessions)

### Community Events

**Testing 1 2 3**

**Heats: 5 February-7 February,  
7.30pm (onstage 8pm)**

**Grand Final: 8 February, 7.30pm  
(onstage 8pm)**

Come and see south London's finest compete to become Croydon's hottest unsigned music act 2008.  
Heats: £3; Grand Final: £5

### Guided Walks February

**Thursday 7 February**

Morning walk on Mitcham Common

**Wednesday 13 February**

King's Wood banks, ditches & holes

**Friday 15 February**

Littleheath trees in winter

**Saturday 16 February**

Come coppicing in Happy Valley!

**Saturday 16 February**

Before the buds burst

**Sunday 17 February**

Sunday afternoon walk on Mitcham Common

**Tuesday 19 February**

History of a country park

**Thursday 21 February**

What happened here?

## DAVID LEAN – FEBRUARY

**And When Did You  
Last See Your Father? 12A**

**American Gangster 18**

**As You Like It 12A**

**Elizabeth: The Golden Age 12A**

**I'm Not There 15**

**Talk to Me 15**

**Breakfast at Tiffany's – Valentine's  
Day Special PG**

**Charlie Wilson's War 15**

**Lust, Caution 18**

**A Crude Awakening – Oil Crash 15**



American Gangster



The Kite Runner

**The Kite Runner 12A**

**Once 15**

**Les Chansons d'Amour 15**

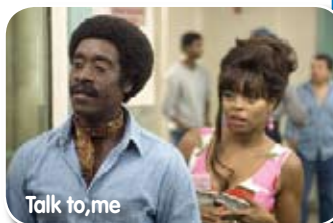
**Stardust PG**

**Nancy Drew PG**

**Ratatouille U**

**Enchanted PG**

**Bee Movie U**



Talk to Me

For further information of these and other walks and wildlife, go to [www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/events](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/events) or call the community partnership officer on **020 8726 6900 ext 64952**



# The many ways you can now pay your bills



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& Post  
Office



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Bank



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|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Council tax                  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Business rates               | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Housing rent                 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ |
| Housing service charges      | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Commercial rents             |   | ✓ |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Housing benefit overpayments |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| General invoices             |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Parking fines                |   | ✓ |   | ✓ |   | ✓ |

*...making it easier for you*

For full details please refer to your bill  
or call 020 8726 6000  
or visit: [www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)