

Subject: How to Fix the Planning Mess & Make Croydon Council Listen

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To: <riddlesdownresidents@gmail.com>

How to fix the planning mess and make Croydon Council listen



Dear All,

Croydon Council does not listen to us, especially on planning. They grant planning consents indiscriminately. Next-door, Bromley and Sutton do not do this. It is Croydon Council's choice. They should prioritise brownfield and town centre sites first for development, but they do not.

Residents' associations, many local councillors in the south of the Borough and I have tried to reason with them and ask for some restraint and common sense. But Croydon Council does not listen at all.

A number of local residents' associations have decided that the only way to fix this mess is to change the way Croydon is run. I am supporting their efforts.

The solution is a Directly Elected Executive Mayor (DEM) to run Croydon, replacing the current system of a Leader. The problem with the current system is that those now running Croydon Council can do so without needing to win any council seats in many parts of the Borough. So they simply ignore those areas (or indeed actively victimise them). People living in Coulsdon, Purley, Kenley, Sanderstead, Selsdon, South Croydon, Waddon, Shirley and Forestdale have experienced this through terrible planning decisions, reduced street cleaning, under-investment and generally poor services.

A further problem is that at present the Leader who runs Croydon is chosen behind closed doors by a handful of councillors on the ruling group – potentially as few as 20. Most of those 20 councillors are then rewarded with lucrative paid positions by the Leader they have just chosen. Accountability to the public doesn't come into it.

Whilst the current 'Leader' is chosen by a few councillors, a DEM is chosen by a majority of all of the voters of Croydon. This means that a DEM could not ignore any part of the Borough as happens

now – they would have to listen to the whole Borough. Instead of the Leader being chosen by 20 councillors behind closed doors, the DEM would be chosen by the public and be answerable to them.

A DEM will also provide a chance to lift the image and profile of Croydon. Our town deserves the enhanced status an elected Mayor will bring. Bedford, Bristol, Copeland, Doncaster, Leicester, Liverpool, Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, North Tyneside, Salford and Watford already have elected Mayors – as does London as a whole.

The current council Leader is, needless to say, not keen on this idea – he is very happy with his current cosy arrangement. Luckily there is a way in law to force the change. We need to collect around 15,000 signatures on paper, which then triggers a Borough-wide referendum, whose result is binding. If the Referendum is a 'Yes' the change to a DEM legally has to happen.

A campaign to have a DEM has been set up by a group of local residents associations, under the name DEMOC. They have already collected nearly half the signatures needed.

They are now having a public launch event on Wednesday 5th February at the Christchurch Primary School, Montpelier Road, Purley, CR8 2QE, at 8.15 pm closing at 9.45 pm. There will be seating for only 200 people and places will be reserved on a first come basis. Please RSVP to chair@democ.org.uk as soon as possible.

I am fully supporting the residents' associations and will be there too. This is the last chance, in my view, to make the Council listen on planning and other issues.

Please help the campaign by:

- Download the petition form and collect signatures from friends and neighbours: <https://democ.org.uk/sign-petition?download=2:petition> (there is an address at the bottom to post it back to)
- Come to the launch event
- Forward this email to friends and neighbours
- Post this email on social media sites, like Next Door and Facebook

This is our last chance to fix the problems. Please help the campaign to save our neighbourhood!

With best wishes,



Chris Philp

Member of Parliament for Croydon South



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